

Language Use and Adaptation Among Iranian Immigrants in Canada: Insights from the COVID-19 Era and Beyond

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced various aspects of life, including the linguistic and social integration of immigrants. This study focused on Iranian immigrants in Canada to explore how the pandemic affected their language use, communication patterns, and adaptation processes. The primary purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of the pandemic on language practices, including the challenges faced in communication due to mask-wearing, the shift to virtual interactions, and changes in language learning and usage. Additionally, the study examined how English language proficiency affected participants' ability to navigate the challenges of integration during this period. The participants in this study included 60 Iranian immigrants residing in different provinces of Canada, with a particular focus on those who migrated before or during the pandemic. Data collection involved a mixed-methods approach: quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaire, while qualitative data were collected via semi-structured interviews. The instruments used were designed to examine language proficiency, communication difficulties, and the impact of social and linguistic barriers. The procedures included distributing surveys and conducting interviews with participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. The results revealed that the pandemic posed significant challenges to communication, particularly due to mask-wearing and reduced face-to-face interactions. Many participants reported difficulties in adapting to virtual communication platforms, which often required higher levels of English proficiency. Despite these challenges, some participants demonstrated resilience by actively seeking opportunities to improve their language skills through online learning or community resources. Findings also indicated that those with higher levels of English proficiency adapted more effectively to the constraints imposed by the pandemic. In conclusion, this study highlights the complex interplay between public health crises and immigrant experiences, emphasizing the critical role of language in social and cultural integration. The findings suggest that language support programs, focusing on pandemic-specific challenges, are essential for immigrant communities. Policymakers, educators, and community organizations should prioritize creating flexible and accessible language learning opportunities to address barriers to integration.

Keywords: Iranian immigrants, COVID-19, language adaptation, integration challenges, English proficiency

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DEDICATION

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1. CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada involve navigating language acquisition, cultural integration, and socio-economic challenges. Proficiency in English, a dominant societal language, is critical for successful integration into Canadian society, enabling access to employment opportunities and enhancing social interactions (Chiswick & Miller, 1994; Chiswick & Miller, 2002). Iranian immigrants often strive to preserve their heritage language, Persian, alongside acquiring English. Bilingualism supports their ability to balance integration with cultural preservation, a process aligned with Berry's acculturation theory, which emphasizes the coexistence of cultural acquisition and participation in the host society (Berry, 1997). This balance allows individuals to retain their cultural identity while fostering connections within their new environment (Nassaji, 2015; DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004).

Maintaining a heritage language plays a crucial role in fostering cultural identity, social belonging, and intergenerational communication among immigrant communities (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Research has shown that bilingual individuals benefit from cognitive advantages, including enhanced problem-solving skills and academic performance (Bialystok & Majumder, 1998). Specifically, for Iranian immigrants, studies have indicated that Persian language retention strengthens family bonds, preserves cultural heritage, and facilitates smoother adaptation within diaspora communities (Kaveh, 2018). Without deliberate efforts to maintain their first language, younger generations risk experiencing linguistic shift, which can weaken cultural ties over time.

Cultural integration for Iranian immigrants is shaped by their ability to affiliate with both their heritage and Canadian culture. Maintaining ties to their heritage through community networks provides a sense of identity and stability while potentially limiting broader societal interactions (Kwak & Berry, 2001). Research highlights that biculturalism—where individuals engage meaningfully with both cultures—facilitates mental well-being, identity formation, and socio-economic success (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002). Effective integration strategies include engaging in cultural practices, participating in the host country's societal norms, and fostering

community connections that bridge both cultural contexts (Jia et al., 2014; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced unique challenges for immigrant adaptation, particularly for Iranian newcomers. Access to language programs and cultural events was disrupted, exacerbating language barriers and limiting opportunities for face-to-face integration (Craig et al., 2021). Immigrants faced challenges in comprehending public health information, highlighting the critical need for accessible and multilingual communication strategies (McMullin, 2021). Despite these challenges, digital platforms became critical for maintaining connections and advancing language skills during the pandemic, reshaping how immigrants interact with their host society (Hanks et al., 2024).

Government and community support play a vital role in facilitating adaptation. Programs offering language training, cultural orientation, and employment support are essential for bridging gaps faced by newcomers (Green & Worswick, 2012). Iranian immigrants, in particular, benefit from culturally sensitive initiatives that celebrate their heritage while promoting integration into Canadian society. These strategies align with findings that systemic support reduces barriers and enhances the sense of belonging and participation among immigrant populations (Picot, 2008).

Recent studies underscore the significance of inclusive policies that address immediate needs, such as language proficiency, while fostering long-term socio-economic stability. Policymakers are encouraged to prioritize equity by addressing systemic challenges and promoting cultural diversity as an integral component of Canadian multiculturalism (Berry, 1997; Zane & Mak, 2003). This approach ensures that immigrants can contribute meaningfully to their new communities while maintaining their cultural identities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The adaptation of Iranian immigrants in Canada is marked by complex interplays of cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic factors, further complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic's far-reaching disruptions. While Canadian immigration policies underscore multiculturalism and inclusivity, systemic barriers continue to impede the integration process for Iranian immigrants. Among these challenges, linguistic barriers and underemployment due to unrecognized foreign credentials feature prominently. Navigating cultural differences while

maintaining their Persian heritage amplifies the duality Iranian immigrants face in striving for integration (Cohen & Yefet, 2019).

Language barriers critically restrict Iranian immigrants' access to essential services, education, and social engagement opportunities. Despite their often high levels of education, the absence of Canadian work experience and the non-recognition of foreign qualifications frequently result in underemployment. This economic mismatch undermines financial security and hinders broader socio-cultural integration (Picot, 2008; Reitz, 2012). These issues are exacerbated by limited interaction with the wider Canadian community, which compounds feelings of isolation and stymies social participation (Nassaji, 2015).

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic introduced unprecedented challenges to the adaptation landscape. Physical distancing measures interrupted in-person language learning and community support initiatives, which are pivotal for newcomers' integration. Immigrants experienced heightened difficulties accessing public health information due to language limitations, alongside diminished avenues for cultural exchange and a lack of digital literacy (McMullin, 2021). Although virtual platforms offered alternative methods for social and linguistic integration, they also accentuated preexisting digital divides, particularly for immigrants with limited technological access or knowledge (McMullin, 2021).

Additionally, the pandemic intensified psychological and emotional pressures, as immigrants struggled to navigate health risks while managing economic strains. The absence of in-person community networks, vital for social and cultural support, exacerbated feelings of isolation. Nevertheless, digital platforms emerged as significant tools for maintaining cultural ties and fostering language acquisition, indicating the potential for innovative solutions to mitigate pandemic-induced barriers (Branche et al., 2022).

To address these complex challenges, a comprehensive approach is essential. This includes bolstering language training programs, recognizing foreign credentials, promoting culturally sensitive employment policies, and enhancing access to digital tools and resources. Research consistently highlights the necessity of systemic initiatives that prioritize equity and inclusion to improve the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants. Such strategies resonate with broader findings that underscore the positive outcomes of equity-driven policies on immigrants' societal contributions and integration success (Berry, 1997; Green & Worswick, 2012; Jia et al., 2014).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore the linguistic and socio-cultural adaptation of Iranian immigrants in Canada, with a particular focus on their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To identify socio-demographic factors influencing adaptation – This includes examining the roles of age, gender, education level, and employment status in shaping the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada.
2. To investigate strategies for balancing cultural preservation and integration – The study explores how Iranian immigrants navigate the process of maintaining their heritage culture while integrating into Canadian society.
3. To analyze the impact of bilingualism on social and economic participation – This objective assesses how proficiency in both Persian (L1) and English/French (L2) affects immigrants' social interactions, employment opportunities, and overall integration.
4. To examine language learning barriers and their effects on integration – The study identifies challenges Iranian immigrants face in learning Canada's official languages and the impact of these barriers on their employment, education, and social interactions.
5. To assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on language use and adaptation – This objective explores how the pandemic reshaped communication patterns, language acquisition opportunities, and digital literacy among Iranian immigrants.
6. To evaluate difficulties with accessing information during crises and suggest improvements for supporting immigrants – The study investigates barriers to obtaining public health and emergency information and recommends strategies to enhance accessibility for immigrant communities.

By addressing these objectives, this study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of immigrant adaptation, language acquisition, and integration policies in Canada.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Cultural integration involves a spectrum of approaches ranging from full assimilation to the preservation of one's cultural identity while participating in the host society. For Iranian immigrants in Canada, maintaining aspects of their Persian heritage often contributes to

emotional well-being and a sense of community, which can support their overall adaptation (Babae, 2014). However, assimilation, where individuals adopt the host country's norms and values more completely, is also a viable strategy for integration, particularly for those who prioritize economic and social advancement over cultural preservation (Sam & Berry, 2010; Zane & Mak, 2003).

Earlier research suggests that the choice between cultural preservation and assimilation depends on individual circumstances, including professional goals, social environments, and the inclusivity of the host society (Berry, 1997; Sam & Berry, 2010). Some studies highlight that biculturalism, where immigrants maintain their cultural heritage while engaging in Canadian culture, is linked to better mental health and social outcomes compared to complete assimilation or cultural separation (Jia et al., 2014). Biculturalism fosters a sense of belonging and resilience, allowing individuals to draw from the strengths of both cultures (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

Nevertheless, for some immigrants, assimilation may present a more straightforward path to integration, particularly when systemic barriers make preserving their cultural identity challenging or when economic pressures necessitate a rapid adjustment to Canadian norms (Berry, 1997; Picot, 2008). Earlier research has documented that immigrants who prioritize assimilation often do so to enhance job prospects and navigate socio-economic barriers more efficiently, though this approach may come at the cost of cultural disconnection (Ertorer et al., 2022).

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to address the objectives of the study:

1. What is the relationship between socio-demographic factors (such as age, gender, education, and employment status) and the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada?
2. How do Iranian immigrants in Canada experience cultural adaptation and integration, particularly with regard to maintaining their native Persian culture while adapting to Canadian society?

3. What role does bilingualism (in English/French and Persian) play in the social and economic integration of Iranian immigrants in Canada, and how does it affect their daily interactions and sense of belonging?
4. What are the key challenges Iranian immigrants face in learning and using Canada's official languages (English and French), and how do these challenges affect their employment opportunities, social participation, and overall integration?
5. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the language acquisition, communication, and social integration of Iranian immigrants in Canada, particularly with respect to access to language programs, digital literacy, and health information?
6. What specific support mechanisms, such as access to information, language assistance, and public health resources, do Iranian immigrants identify as most helpful during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and how can these services be improved?

2. CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Language use and communication are crucial components of immigrants' lives, particularly in terms of maintaining cultural identity and promoting social integration (Derwing & Waugh, 2012). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on language use and communication among immigrant communities (Craig et al., 2021). This chapter focuses on language use among Iranian immigrants and explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on language use and communication among immigrant communities. The chapter is divided into four sections:

1. Language Use among Iranian Immigrants
2. The Impact of COVID-19 and Social Distancing on Language Use Among Immigrants
3. The Role of Technology in Language Use among Immigrants during the Pandemic
4. Concluding remarks

The first section provides an overview of language use among Iranian immigrants in Canada. The second section examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on language use and communication among immigrant communities, including the challenges that immigrants have faced during the pandemic. This section also focuses on the effects of social distancing measures on language use among immigrants, particularly older immigrants with limited English proficiency. The third section explores the role of technology in promoting language use and communication among immigrant communities during the pandemic. Overall, this chapter highlights the importance of promoting language acquisition and communication among immigrant communities during times of crisis. Effective language acquisition strategies and support for immigrant communities are needed to overcome the challenges associated with the pandemic and promote language acquisition and communication.

2.2. Language Use Among Iranian Immigrants

Canada has attracted many immigrant groups, including Iranians, who began arriving in significant numbers after the 1979 Iranian Revolution due to political upheaval and economic challenges (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2015). Prior to this period, Iranian immigration to Canada was minimal, with only a few individuals arriving each year. The 1980s saw a substantial increase, with Iran ranking among the top ten source countries for immigrants by the late 1980s (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1991). Political tensions with the United States post-revolution led many Iranians to choose Canada as their preferred destination (Gharakhlou & Langlois, 2006). According to the 2021 Census, 23.0% of Canada's population is foreign-born, with 1.9% of recent immigrants born in Iran (Statistics Canada, 2021). In 2021, there were 213,160 individuals in Canada who had been born in Iran, with 70,395 having immigrated since 2011 (IRCC, 2022). The number of Iranian immigrants continues to rise, with over 11,000 Iranians immigrating to Canada in 2021, making Iran the eighth most common source country for new immigrants that year (IRCC, 2022).

Language use among immigrants in Canada is complex and multifaceted. Many immigrants seek better economic opportunities and quality of life, often facing the challenge of balancing their native language and culture with the adoption of English or French, Canada's official languages (Derwing & Waugh, 2012). Immigrants tend to use their first language as a means of communication and cultural preservation, serving as a vital connection to their heritage, identity, and community (Fishman, 1972; Portes & Hao, 1998). Over time, factors such as increased proficiency in the host country's language, social integration, and generational shifts can lead to a gradual shift towards the dominant language (Wei, 2000).

Various factors influence the use of an immigrant's first language in the host country. Length of stay plays a crucial role, as prolonged residence often leads to increased use of the dominant language and a decline in first language proficiency (Portes & Hao, 1998). Age is another important factor, with younger immigrants more inclined to adopt the dominant language, while older individuals tend to retain their native language proficiency. Education impacts language use; individuals with higher education levels are more likely to use the dominant language in daily life. Social networks affect language retention, as maintaining contact with others who speak the same native language can help preserve proficiency, whereas connections with dominant language speakers may lead to increased use of the new language. Cultural identity also plays a significant role, as some immigrants feel a strong attachment to

their native language and culture, choosing to continue using their first language even after many years in the new country (Portes & Hao, 1998).

Language shift, the gradual decline in the use of an individual's first language, is a common challenge for immigrants adjusting to a new environment (Wei, 2000). Length of stay in the host country increases exposure to the dominant language, leading to higher usage and a decline in first language proficiency (Portes & Hao, 1998). The linguistic environment is crucial; limited access to the first language, lack of community support, and fewer opportunities for social interactions in the native language can reduce its use and hinder acquisition (Extra & Verhoeven, 2005). Proficiency in the host country's language is closely tied to language shift, as reliance on it for communication, employment, and integration can diminish connection to the first language (Gorter, 2006). Intergenerational differences also play a significant role; first-generation immigrants are typically more invested in preserving their first language, while subsequent generations are more likely to adopt the dominant language (Extra & Verhoeven, 2005). Language acquisition is deeply intertwined with social identity and cultural preservation, with immigrants often viewing their first language as integral to their cultural heritage (Graddol, 2000).

2.2.1. First language (L1) Use and Acquisition by Iranian Immigrants

The first language serves as a means to maintain cultural traditions, values, and identity within the Iranian diaspora. Studies have found that while Iranian immigrants face challenges in maintaining Persian, various strategies are employed to sustain their first language, including language classes and reading Persian literature (Shafiefar, 2018).

First language acquisition is crucial for preserving cultural identity, facilitating communication within families and communities, and contributing to cognitive development. Language is central to cultural heritage, deeply intertwined with one's sense of belonging and connection to their ethnic group (Fishman, 2006). Immigrant communities, including Iranians, often face the challenge of balancing the desire to maintain their native language with pressures to assimilate into the dominant culture of the host country. Maintaining proficiency in the first language fosters intergenerational communication, particularly with older generations who may be more proficient in the heritage language (Fishman, 2006). This process is crucial for preserving family traditions, religious practices, and distinct cultural values. Effective communication within the family and community is facilitated by the first language, allowing

for meaningful exchanges and the transmission of cultural knowledge (Alshihry, 2024). The first language also facilitates connections within the broader immigrant community, forming essential support networks for navigating life in a new country.

The availability of opportunities to use the first language within the home and community is crucial for its preservation. A supportive linguistic environment that values and encourages the use of the L1 is essential. Community institutions, such as cultural centers and religious organizations, play a pivotal role in supporting L1 acquisition by offering language learning opportunities and cultural events. García (2009) discusses the role of such institutions in maintaining cultural continuity and providing spaces for social interaction in the L1.

However, societal pressures for language shift present significant challenges. In contexts where the dominant language is perceived as more prestigious or necessary for economic and social mobility, individuals may feel compelled to prioritize it over their heritage language. This pressure, coupled with limited opportunities for L1 use and negative stereotypes, can lead to a decline in L1 proficiency over time. Gal (1979) examines the social determinants of linguistic change, highlighting how societal factors influence language shift.

Additionally, intergenerational language shift is a common phenomenon among immigrant families. Younger generations, growing up in the host country, are more likely to adopt the dominant language, leading to a gradual decline in the use of the first language within the family. Zhang (2010) explore the patterns of intergenerational language shift, emphasizing the need for deliberate efforts to maintain the heritage language across generations.

Language maintenance is crucial for fostering intergenerational ties. When children grow up in homes where their L1 is spoken, they are more likely to sustain communication with older family members, such as grandparents, who may be more proficient in the heritage language (Valdés et al., 2006). These interactions also help transmit cultural traditions, values, and history, which are vital for preserving the community's identity.

Family and community support also play a critical role in maintaining L1 proficiency. Families that prioritize the use of their native language at home are more likely to see their children retain proficiency in that language (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998). Additionally, community organizations and events that encourage the use of heritage languages further support this process (García & Wei, 2014). For immigrant groups such as Iranians, language

maintenance is central to preserving cultural identity, facilitating communication across generations, and promoting cognitive development (Babae, 2014).

2.2.2. Second Language (L2) Acquisition and L1 Maintenance in Immigrant Communities

The process of language acquisition in immigrant communities involves both learning the dominant societal language (L2) and maintaining the heritage language (L1). While proficiency in English or French is essential for social and economic integration, research highlights the importance of L1 maintenance for cultural identity, cognitive benefits, and academic success (García & Wei, 2014; Cummins, 2000). Iranian immigrants, like many other linguistic minority groups, navigate the dual challenge of acquiring L2 while preserving Persian as an integral part of their identity (Babae, 2014).

L2 acquisition refers to the ability of individuals to develop and maintain proficiency in a second language, which is often the dominant societal language. This is particularly significant for immigrant communities, who face the dual challenge of integrating into a new society while maintaining their cultural and linguistic identity (García & Wei, 2014).

One approach to L2 acquisition is through the use of heritage language programs, which provide instruction in the individual's native language alongside the dominant societal language. A heritage language program is an educational initiative designed to support the maintenance and development of a minority language spoken by an immigrant community (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). These programs aim to strengthen linguistic and cultural identity by providing structured instruction in the heritage language alongside the dominant societal language (Lee, 2012). In the case of Iranian immigrants in Canada, heritage language programs focus on the Persian language, helping families preserve their linguistic heritage while facilitating bilingualism (Babae, 2014). Such programs have been shown to enhance academic outcomes and promote L2 acquisition for students from immigrant backgrounds (Valdés, Fishman, Chávez, & Pérez, 2006).

Bilingualism and first language (L1) acquisition are associated with cognitive benefits, including enhanced problem-solving skills, multitasking abilities, and cognitive flexibility (Bialystok, 2007). Research indicates that bilingual individuals exhibit superior executive control processes compared to monolinguals, which is particularly relevant for Iranian

immigrants navigating multiple linguistic and cultural contexts (Bialystok, Craik, & Luk, 2012).

Maintaining proficiency in both the first language and the dominant language of the host country can contribute to academic success by fostering stronger cognitive development (Barac & Bialystok, 2011). Educational frameworks that support bilingualism, such as bilingual education or heritage language programs, provide structured environments for maintaining the L1 while ensuring that children acquire the necessary skills to succeed in broader society. Cummins (2000) emphasizes the importance of such educational support in enhancing the long-term viability of the first language within immigrant communities.

Despite these benefits, societal pressures to adopt the dominant language can undermine L1 maintenance. In many cases, the perceived prestige or necessity of the dominant language for economic mobility leads to a gradual decline in heritage language use (Gal, 2016). This phenomenon underscores the need for supportive linguistic environments that encourage the use of heritage languages in family, community, and educational settings.

In conclusion, while bilingualism offers cognitive advantages and supports academic success, maintaining the first language within immigrant communities requires a supportive environment, both at home and in the broader community. Educational support and community institutions play crucial roles in this process, but societal pressures and intergenerational dynamics present ongoing challenges to L1 maintenance.

2.3 The Impact of COVID-19 and Social Distancing on Language Use Among Immigrants

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly influenced language use and social integration among immigrants worldwide (Cox et al., 2021). The shift to online communication, combined with social distancing measures, altered how immigrants engaged with both their native languages (L1) and the dominant societal language (L2). These changes created both opportunities and challenges, particularly in language acquisition, education, and healthcare access (Chen, 2021).

One of the most significant effects of the pandemic was the reduction in face-to-face language practice, which impacted both L1 maintenance and L2 acquisition. The Organization

for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD], 2020) noted that while families spent more time at home, leading to increased native language use, immigrants had fewer opportunities to practice L1 in broader community settings due to isolation. Similarly, Werker et al. (2021) found that immigrants in Canada faced heightened difficulties in second language (L2) acquisition as social networks became more restricted. Small (2023) observed similar disruptions in language use and social integration among adult immigrants in South Korea, highlighting the global impact of pandemic-induced isolation on language retention and development.

Another major challenge was the suspension of in-person language programs, which disrupted both heritage language education and second language learning. McMullin (2021) highlighted that the closure of educational institutions left many immigrants without essential language learning resources. Additionally, international students and newly arrived immigrants faced cultural and linguistic barriers that were exacerbated by reduced social interactions (Wolf & Phung, 2019). The OECD (2020) reported that the shift to remote learning slowed L2 acquisition, particularly for immigrants who relied on structured language programs for integration.

The pandemic also increased reliance on digital communication, with platforms such as video conferencing tools, language learning apps, and online courses serving as alternative language-learning avenues (Gacs et al., 2020). However, Cherewka (2020) emphasized how the digital divide disproportionately impacted immigrant households, preventing many from accessing necessary online learning resources. Immigrants who lacked digital literacy or reliable internet connections faced compounded barriers to language practice and integration. Craig et al. (2021) further underscored the unequal effects of the pandemic on multilingual immigrant communities, advocating for equitable policies to support linguistic diversity and digital inclusion.

In addition to education, language barriers in healthcare and public communication posed significant challenges during the pandemic. Germain and Yong (2020) identified significant obstacles preventing immigrants from accessing public health information, leading to delays in medical care. Cohen-Cline et al. (2021) found that non-English-speaking individuals in the United States faced disproportionately higher COVID-19 test positivity rates, reflecting barriers to obtaining vital health information. Ortega et al.

(2020) further emphasized that linguistic barriers exacerbated health disparities during the pandemic, as many immigrants struggled to understand government-issued safety guidelines and vaccine information. Piller et al. (2020) discussed how language policies either facilitated or hindered immigrant integration, reinforcing the need for multilingual public health communication to reduce inequities in crisis response.

For Iranian immigrants, these challenges were particularly pronounced in heritage language maintenance and social integration. Dezhkameh et al. (2021) found that Persian-speaking immigrants faced disruptions in social interaction and education, which, when combined with limited digital access, exacerbated these issues. The lack of Persian-language resources in online learning platforms further hindered L1 maintenance efforts. Craig et al. (2021) similarly highlighted how multilingual communities were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, reinforcing the need for inclusive language policies that support both L1 and L2 development.

These findings emphasize the importance of adapting language education and public communication policies to meet the evolving needs of immigrant communities. As Craig et al. (2021) suggest, equitable policies that promote multilingualism and digital inclusion are critical to supporting linguistic diversity and immigrant integration in a post-pandemic world.

2.4 The Role of Technology in Language Use among Immigrants during the Pandemic

Technology has significantly transformed language learning by enabling remote education. Various platforms, such as Duolingo, Babbel, and initiatives supported by organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have provided refugees with access to language courses in multiple languages, including English, French, and German. These programs aim to support integration and communication for displaced populations (Gacs et al., 2020; UNHCR, n.d.). These initiatives showcased the potential of technology in addressing barriers to language education during the pandemic. However, challenges such as lack of access to high-speed internet, smartphones, and computers persisted, exacerbating existing inequalities (Cherewka, 2020).

Despite the benefits of digital platforms, technology's role in language use has both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, tools like machine translation and speech

recognition software supported immigrants in improving pronunciation, building vocabulary, and refining grammar interactively. On the other hand, technical difficulties, reduced face-to-face interaction, and motivational challenges limited the effectiveness of online language learning (Small, 2023). Iranian immigrants, often characterized by high levels of education and familiarity with technology, have effectively utilized digital tools for integration and language learning. However, access to technology alone is insufficient without culturally tailored support systems to address their unique needs. A study by Dastjerdi, Olson, and Ogilvie (2012) highlights the challenges Iranian immigrants face in accessing Canadian healthcare services, emphasizing the need for culturally appropriate support mechanisms.

Technology also played a vital role in supporting immigrants' efforts to maintain native language proficiency while acquiring a new language. This was especially relevant for children of immigrants, who often had limited exposure to their parents' native language during the pandemic (Garcia, 2020). Immigrants utilized digital platforms such as social media, video conferencing, and messaging apps to maintain communication and cultural ties with family and friends in their home countries (Garcia, 2020). While these tools provided crucial support, unequal access to digital resources created significant challenges (Cherewka, 2020).

The pandemic emphasized the critical role of technology in language learning and social integration for immigrants. While digital platforms provided crucial support, barriers such as the digital divide and unequal access to educational resources hindered many. Policies promoting equitable access to technology, combined with culturally relevant pedagogical approaches, are essential to addressing these challenges. Comprehensive interventions targeting these disparities can help ensure that immigrants' linguistic and social integration needs are met in a post-pandemic world.

2.5 Concluding remarks

Language use and communication are essential components of immigrants' lives, particularly in maintaining cultural identity and promoting social integration. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on language use and communication among immigrant communities, particularly among Iranian immigrants in Canada. This chapter has explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on language use among Iranian immigrants in four sections: Language Use among Iranian Immigrants, The impact of COVID-19 on language use among immigrants, the effects of social distancing on language use among immigrants, and the role

of technology in language use among immigrants during the pandemic. Reviewing different studies provided the importance of promoting language acquisition and communication among immigrant communities during times of crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented numerous challenges for immigrant communities, including language barriers, limited access to technology, and lack of technical skills. Effective language acquisition strategies and support for immigrant communities are needed to overcome these challenges and promote language acquisition and communication. While there is some research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on language use and communication among immigrant communities, there is a research gap in exploring the impact of the pandemic on language use among Iranian immigrants in Canada. In addition, the literature suffers from a lack of studies specifically examining the impact of COVID-19 on language use and acquisition among this population. While there may be some existing research on language use and proficiency among Iranian immigrants in Canada, there is a need for research that specifically focuses on factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on language teaching and learning, access to language resources and support, and the role of digital technologies in language use and acquisition.

The primary objective of this study was to examine the multifaceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on language use, learning, and communication among Iranian immigrants. It focused on exploring how technological access, social isolation, and other pandemic-related factors influenced their ability to acquire and use the host country's language. Another aim was to investigate the role of demographic variables, such as language proficiency levels, age, and gender, in shaping the experiences of Iranian immigrants during this period. The study sought to identify gaps in access to resources, challenges in language acquisition, and communication barriers, particularly in the context of digital tools and online learning platforms.

The research also addressed differences in language use across various groups, assessing whether older immigrants, women, or individuals with lower initial proficiency faced unique struggles compared to others. It aimed to uncover how Iranian immigrants managed pandemic-related disruptions in language education and adapted to remote learning environments. These objectives provided a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic challenges Iranian immigrants encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the study highlighted critical gaps in knowledge regarding Iranian immigrants' experiences, including those with differing proficiency levels and socio-demographic characteristics. The findings were intended to inform policymakers, educators, and community organizations on culturally and linguistically tailored strategies to address the specific needs of Iranian immigrants. This research contributed to broader discussions on immigrant integration, linguistic diversity, and equitable access to technology for language learning during times of global crises.

3. Chapter III: Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed in the study to explore the adaptation experiences of Iranian-Canadian immigrants and the impact of COVID-19 on their language use. The chapter details the processes of data collection, participant selection, and the instruments used, providing a clear framework for how the study was carried out. The research follows a mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing cultural integration, language use, and the challenges faced by immigrants, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mixed-methods approaches have been widely used in immigrant adaptation studies to provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between social, cultural, and linguistic factors. For instance, Riaño (2011) employed mixed methods to investigate the integration of immigrant women in Switzerland, combining survey data with in-depth interviews to explore both structural barriers and personal narratives. Similarly, Tao (2021) employed a mixed-methods framework to examine the acculturation experiences of Chinese migrants, integrating quantitative assessments of psychological well-being with qualitative accounts of cultural challenges. Furthermore, Yakushko et al. (2008) utilized this approach to assess the role of social support and cultural identity among Latino immigrants, offering a holistic perspective on adaptation processes.

3.2 Participants

The participants were 60 individuals of Iranian origin who had immigrated to Canada during or prior to 2020 and had lived in the country for at least three years. Of these, 20 participants also participated in semi-structured interviews. This duration ensured they had formed significant experiences of cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic integration. The study utilized a purposive sampling strategy to recruit 60 participants. This approach ensured that the participants had sufficient experience living in Canada to provide meaningful insights into their adaptation, language use, and the challenges they faced during their settlement process. To identify and engage participants, several methods were employed. First, community outreach was conducted by contacting Iranian community centers, cultural

organizations, and social groups in provinces like British Columbia and Ontario. These organizations played a pivotal role in connecting the researchers with individuals who met the inclusion criteria. Additionally, social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, which are widely used by Iranian immigrants, were leveraged to share recruitment advertisements targeting Iranian-Canadian communities. Online forums and groups dedicated to Iranian immigrants further facilitated the engagement process.

To complement these efforts, a snowball sampling technique was employed, wherein existing participants and community members were encouraged to refer others who fit the study's criteria. This approach took advantage of the social networks within the Iranian community to expand the participant pool and reach individuals who might otherwise have been difficult to engage. Finally, a brief screening process ensured that all participants were of Iranian origin, had been living in Canada during or prior to 2020, and were willing to participate in the study.

While their specific reasons for immigrating varied—ranging from seeking better educational opportunities to escaping political instability or reuniting with family—they shared a common experience of navigating life between two cultural identities. These individuals provided a valuable dataset reflecting their experiences with adaptation and language use in the Canadian context. All participants were adults aged 18 and older, with a mix of genders, educational backgrounds, employment statuses, and immigration histories. Among the participants, there were 21 males and 39 females. Educational backgrounds ranged from high school diplomas to advanced university degrees, while employment statuses included full-time employment, part-time employment, and unemployment. Participants in this study arrived in Canada between 2011 and 2020, in accordance with the study's inclusion criteria. These details allowed the study to examine the ways in which socio-demographic factors, such as gender, education, and employment, shaped their adaptation processes in Canada.

3.3 Instruments

The study utilized two primary instruments to gather comprehensive data: a questionnaire and an interview. These instruments were designed to complement each other, providing both quantitative and qualitative insights into the adaptation experiences of Iranian-Canadian participants. Together, they created a holistic understanding of the complex interplay

between cultural integration, language use, and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a comprehensive tool designed to explore the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada. It consists of 85 items divided into four main sections: demographics, adaptation, language use and proficiency, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The questionnaire used in this study was a detailed instrument designed to explore various aspects of the lives of Iranian immigrants in Canada, including their demographics, adaptation experiences, language use, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was structured into four major sections to address the study's research objectives comprehensively. The first section, focused on demographics, collected essential information such as participants' location in Canada, age, gender, marital status, and employment. It also gathered details about their educational background, immigration process, and reasons for emigrating, alongside comparisons of their social and economic situations in Canada versus Iran. Questions about minority status in Iran and ethnic identity added depth to the demographic profile.

The second section delved into adaptation experiences, assessing participants' sense of belonging, integration, and alignment with Canadian values. Using 5-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," participants evaluated statements such as whether moving to Canada was the right decision and whether they considered Canada their home. Adaptation was measured using four key indicators: Perception of Integration (Table 4.18), Perception of Canada as a True Home (Table 4.19), Alignment with Canadian Values and Norms (Table 4.20), and Fitting into Canadian Life (Table 4.22). Participants rated their experiences on a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

To ensure a more balanced response distribution and avoid sparsely populated categories, 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' were combined into one category. This decision aligns with prior research on survey methodology, which suggests that merging adjacent negative response options improves statistical reliability in ordinal scales (Harpe, 2015).

For cases where participants provided mixed responses across different adaptation indicators, a numerical scoring method was applied. Each response was assigned a numerical

value (1 = Minimal adaptation, 2 = Moderate adaptation, 3 = High adaptation, 4 = Complete adaptation), and an overall adaptation score was calculated as the average of these values. Participants with an average score below 1.5 were categorized as having ‘Minimal Adaptation,’ those between 1.5 and 2.5 were labeled as ‘Moderate Adaptation,’ and those scoring above 2.5 were classified into ‘High’ or ‘Complete Adaptation,’ depending on the highest response category selected. This approach ensured that individuals with mixed responses were categorized based on their overall adaptation tendency rather than an arbitrary classification of a single response.

Since adaptation is a multidimensional construct without a direct measurement instrument, it was treated as a proxy variable, operationalized through self-reported perceptions of integration, belonging, and alignment with Canadian values. Proxy variables are commonly used in social science research when direct measurement is infeasible (Kolenikov & Angeles, 2009). While this approach allows for meaningful comparisons, it introduces potential limitations related to subjective bias and measurement accuracy, which are discussed in Chapter V.

This classification was used to conduct chi-square tests to analyze relationships between adaptation and other socio-demographic variables.

Other questions examined their social networks, participation in community events, and experiences with discrimination. This section aimed to capture the complex dynamics of cultural and social integration in the Canadian context.

The third section focused on language use, evaluating participants’ proficiency in English and French both before and after immigration. It also explored the importance of maintaining Persian and other languages, daily interaction percentages in different languages, and the role of language in family and community communication. Responses to proficiency were captured using a 5-point scale ranging from "none" to "highly fluent," while the importance of language learning was rated from "not at all" to "very important." This section provided insights into the participants’ linguistic adaptation and their efforts to retain their native language while navigating the linguistic demands of Canadian society.

The final section examined the impact of COVID-19 on communication, language use, and social interactions. Participants were asked about changes in their communication methods,

such as shifts between face-to-face and online interactions, and their ability to access COVID-19-related information. Likert-scale options, including "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" and "no problems" to "many problems all the time," were used to assess their experiences with language barriers, stress levels, and access to health resources during the pandemic. Overall, the questionnaire's use of 5-point Likert scales across various sections allowed for consistent and nuanced data collection, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences.

This theoretical grounding influenced the development of items that examined participants' engagement with their heritage and host cultures, including their language use, social interactions, and perceived discrimination. The focus on the COVID-19 pandemic added a contemporary dimension. It captured the unique challenges faced by immigrants during a global crisis, such as disruptions to traditional socialization processes, access to language resources, and community support, which are critical for integration.

The instrument aimed to capture participants' experiences and enable the identification of patterns and relationships among variables, such as age, gender, or employment status, in relation to language use and cultural integration. Its design was informed by established frameworks, including Berry's (1997) acculturation theory, and it incorporated contemporary issues like the role of digital literacy during the pandemic. A comprehensive approach was taken to ensure that both quantitative and qualitative data could be analyzed effectively. The questionnaire in Appendix A offers full transparency regarding the items used. Key questions and their responses are also presented in the Results chapter as they are discussed, providing a clear connection between the data and the findings.

3.3.2 Interview

The interview is an essential tool in this study that gives voice to Iranian immigrants' personal stories and challenges in adapting to life in Canada. It was designed to gather detailed, real-life accounts, focusing on their experiences with integration, language, culture, and the unique difficulties brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The semi-structured interview followed a flexible format that allows participants to share their thoughts freely while still covering key themes of the study.

The interview questions were designed to elicit detailed reflections from participants about their struggles and successes in learning English or French, particularly during the pandemic (see Appendix B for interview questions). Topics included the impact of mask-wearing and social distancing on their ability to communicate, changes in their use of Persian with family, and their involvement in both Iranian and Canadian communities. Additional questions addressed challenges in accessing reliable health information and the increasing reliance on digital tools during the pandemic. These questions aimed to explore not only the practical aspects of participants' lives but also the emotional and relational impacts of the pandemic.

Key questions and participant responses are also presented and analyzed in the Results chapter to contextualize the findings. This ensures that readers can trace the connections between the data collection process and the study's conclusions.

The interviews go beyond the pandemic, exploring how immigrants maintain their cultural identity while adapting to Canadian society. They share stories about the support they receive from family, friends, or organizations and describe how their feelings about Iran and their heritage shape their daily lives. The open-ended format allows them to provide honest and personal answers, which makes the data rich and insightful.

Each interview focuses on the individual's unique perspective while still connecting to the main goals of the study. The questions are designed to feel natural and conversational, helping participants feel comfortable enough to share deeply. This method ensures that their voices are heard and that their personal journeys become an integral part of the research. The insights from these interviews provide a fuller understanding of the immigrant experience, showing not only the difficulties but also the resilience and resourcefulness of Iranian immigrants in Canada.

3.4 Procedures

The data collection procedure for this study was designed to ensure a systematic and ethical approach to gathering information from Iranian-Canadian immigrants. Qualified participants were recruited through purposive sampling, targeting Iranian-Canadians who met the eligibility criteria outlined in the Participants section. Recruitment was done through community organizations, social media platforms, and word-of-mouth, ensuring that a diverse

sample of participants, including both men and women from different age groups and provinces, was achieved. Once participants expressed interest in the study, they were provided with informed consent forms that outlined the purpose of the study, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw at any time.

Data collection began with the distribution of a questionnaire hosted on SurveyMonkey, which was conducted in April and May 2024. Participants completed the survey in English, and they were provided with the researcher's email address in case they required clarification or assistance in understanding any part of the questionnaire. Participants were given a set period (usually one to two weeks) to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. For participants who required assistance in understanding or completing the questionnaire, researchers were available for clarification via email or phone.

Following the questionnaire, 20 participants took part in semi-structured interviews conducted in May and June 2024. While participants were given the option to conduct the interview in either English or Persian, all chose to proceed in English. Each interview lasted between 30 to 60 minutes and was conducted via zoom. The interviews followed an open-ended format, with the interviewer asking broad questions related to cultural adaptation, language use, and the impact of the pandemic. Participants were encouraged to share their stories and experiences in their own words, with the interviewer probing further into relevant topics as necessary. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent. The interview recordings were initially transcribed using Otter.ai and were subsequently reviewed and manually corrected by the researcher to ensure verbatim accuracy.

Throughout the data collection process, strict ethical standards were maintained. All participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and their identities were anonymized in the analysis and reporting stages. Data was stored securely and only accessible to the researcher. This process ensured that participants' rights were respected, and their data was handled with the utmost care and integrity.

The data analysis for this study involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches, aligning with its mixed-methods design. For the quantitative data gathered through the questionnaire, statistical analysis is applied to identify patterns, trends, and relationships among the variables. Descriptive statistics, such as means, medians, and frequencies, summarize demographic characteristics, language use, and adaptation levels. Inferential statistical tests,

such as chi-square are employed to compare subgroups based on factors like age, gender, and years of residency in Canada. Correlation analysis was also used to examine relationships between language proficiency, cultural adaptation, and socio-demographic factors.

The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews is analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involves carefully reviewing the transcripts to identify recurring themes and patterns that reflect participants' lived experiences. Key themes include challenges in maintaining cultural identity, bilingualism, social integration, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communication and access to resources. The analysis prioritizes participant narratives to uncover deeper insights into the emotional and social dimensions of their adaptation journeys.

The integration of these analyses follows a triangulation approach, where the quantitative and qualitative findings are compared and contrasted to provide a more holistic understanding of the research questions. For example, statistical trends in language use are enriched by qualitative accounts that explain the reasons behind participants' preferences or challenges. This complementary analysis ensures that the data not only highlights measurable outcomes but also captures the personal and cultural nuances of the immigrant experience.

4. CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study, which is aimed to explore the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada, with a particular focus on their language use, cultural integration, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their language use. Drawing on both quantitative data from the questionnaire and qualitative insights from in-depth interview analysis, this chapter describes the key factors involved in the immigrant adaptation process. The findings are organized thematically, with each section addressing specific research questions and exploring the complex interactions between socio-demographic factors, language use, cultural adaptation, and the challenges posed by the global pandemic.

The chapter begins by examining the demographic characteristics of the participants, providing context for understanding their diverse backgrounds and experiences. It then delves into their perceptions of adaptation, highlighting both the successes and challenges they have encountered. Subsequent sections explore the participants' use of Canada's official languages and their attitudes toward maintaining their native language, Persian, as well as the connections between language use, adaptation, and various socio-demographic parameters. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communication and access to information is also analyzed, revealing the additional barriers faced by immigrants during this unprecedented time.

4.2 Demographic Information

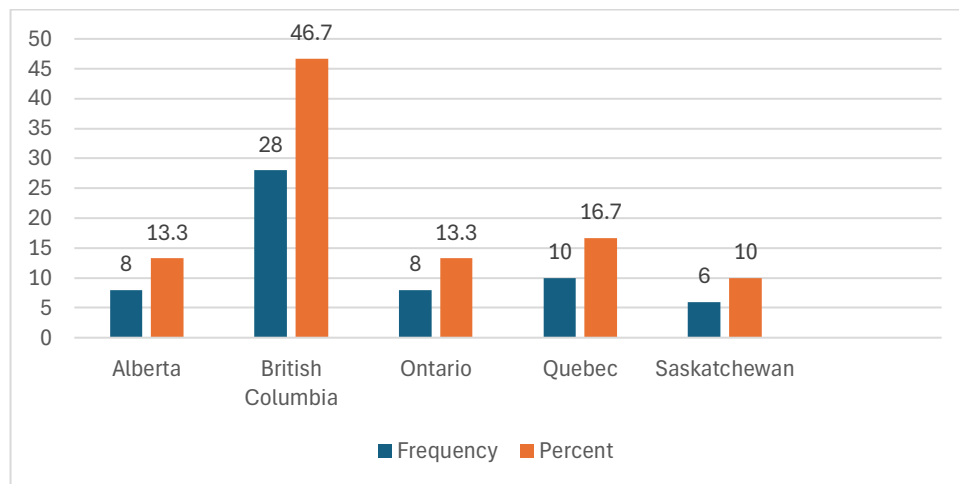
The first section of the results describes participants' (immigrants from Iran in Canada) demographic information based on 22 questions of the survey. This section addresses the first research question of the study, which is:

- What is the relationship between socio-demographic factors (such as age, gender, education, and employment status) and the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada?

Participants' Distribution by Provinces

First, I will summarize the regional spread of the respondents within the sample of immigrants from Iran residing in Canada (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: The Distribution of Participants' Locations



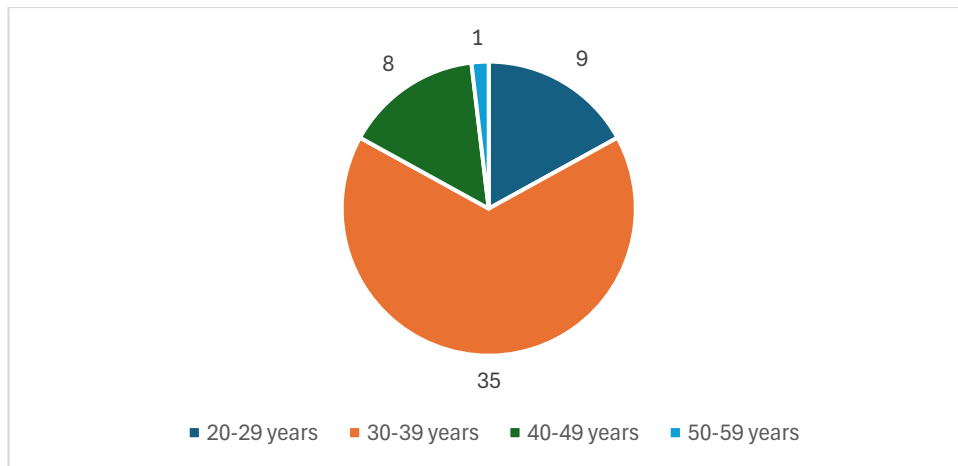
The highest number of respondents live in British Columbia (28 individuals (46.7%)). Quebec is represented by ten individuals (16.7%), and both Alberta and Ontario – by eight individuals each (13.3%). Saskatchewan has the smallest participation among the provinces with six individuals (10.0%). This distribution is explained first, by the recruitment of participants conducted from BC. Second, according to Statistics Canada (2022) on Iranian immigrant populations in Canada, British Columbia, particularly the Greater Vancouver area, has consistently ranked as one of the top destinations for Iranian immigrants in the country. According to the 2021 Census, British Columbia was home to approximately 51,000 people of Iranian descent, with the majority residing in the Greater Vancouver area. This makes it one of the largest Iranian communities in Canada, second only to Ontario, which houses around 95,000 Iranian-Canadians.

The concentration of Iranian immigrants in British Columbia, especially Vancouver, reflects broader immigration trends and is attributed to factors like the presence of established communities, educational opportunities, and employment prospects. This geographic distribution aligns with national data, further validating findings related to Iranian immigrants in the region.

Participants' Age and Gender

Next, we will report the participants' age, as represented in Figure 4.2.

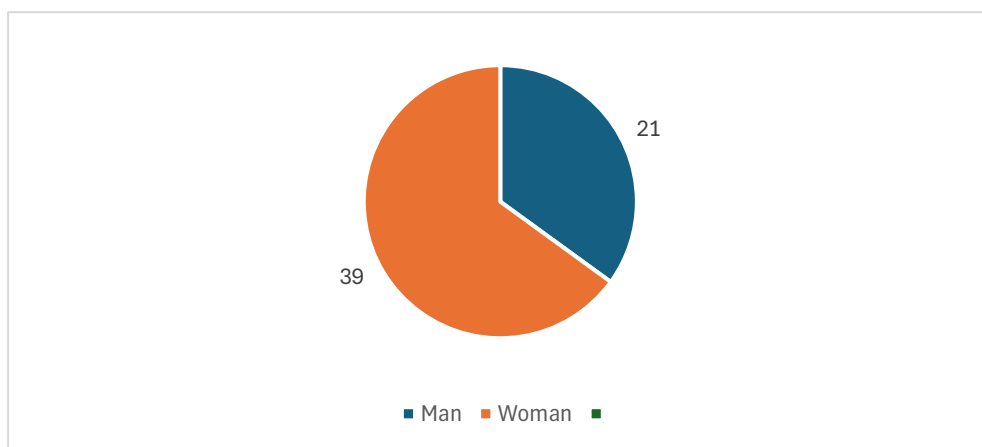
Figure 4.2: Frequency of the Participants' Age



The majority of participants fall within the 30-39 years age group, accounting for 35 individuals. This suggests that most of the respondents are in their early to mid-career stages, which may influence their experiences and perspectives in the study. The mean age of the participants is 34.95 years (StDev=5.09), ranging from 27 to 50 years.

The participants distribution by gender is summarized in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Gender Distribution of the Participants



As Figure 4.3 shows, the sample is not well balanced by gender: the majority of the participants, 39 individuals (65.0%), identify as women. The remaining 21 participants (35.0%) identify as men. There were no participants who identified as ‘other gender’ or preferred not to disclose their gender.

Participants’ First and Second Language

An overview of the first language reported by the participants is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: The First Language of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Persian	59	98.3
Persian/Kurdish	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

Out of 60 responses, all respondents except one identified Persian as their mother tongue 59 (or 98.3%). One participant was bilingual in Persian and Kurdish.

The participants' second languages learned in Iran are summarized in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: The Distribution of Second Languages Learned by Participants in Iran

	Frequency	Percent
Arabic/English	1	1.7
English	44	73.3
English/French	1	1.7
Kurdish	1	1.7
None	2	3.3
Persian	7	11.7
Turkish	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0

The majority of the participants, 73.3%, reported learning English as their second language. One person (1.7%) learned both Arabic and English, while another (1.7%) learned both English and French prior to immigration. Additionally, one participant indicated that Kurdish was their second language. Two participants (3.3%) did not learn any second language. Persian was identified as a second language by 11.7% of the participants, and Turkish by 6.7%.

The results in Table 4.5 raise an interesting point for discussion when compared to the first language data in Table 4.4. In Table 4.4, nearly all participants identified Persian as their first language, with only one person reporting a combination of Persian and Kurdish. However, in Table 4.5, seven participants reported Persian as their second language.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that some participants may have grown up in regions or communities in Iran where a regional or ethnic language (e.g., Azerbaijani, Kurdish, or Arabic) was also spoken at home alongside Persian. While Persian was the official language of education and public life, participants may have considered their regional language as equally dominant during their early years. Additionally, there may have been inconsistencies in how participants interpreted the survey question regarding first and second language distinctions. Alternatively, this discrepancy could stem from the exact phrasing used in the survey questions. Terms such as ‘native language’ might have been interpreted by participants as referring to the "national language" or the language used in Persian language textbooks at school, rather than the language they spoke at home during early childhood. In multilingual contexts like Iran, such confusion is common, as participants might conflate the concepts of L1 (first language), L2 (second language), ‘native language’, and ‘national language’.

It would be prudent to revisit the survey’s wording for the L1 and L2 questions to assess whether the phrasing may have contributed to this misunderstanding. Even with carefully designed questions, these terms might still lead to mixed interpretations among participants due to their complex linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Participants’ Ethnic self-identification

The data representing ethnic self-identification by immigrants from Iran residing in Canada are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Participants’ Ethnic Self-Identification

	Frequency	Percent
Iranian	40	66.7
Iranian Canadian	19	31.7
Canadian Iranian	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

As Table 4.6 demonstrates, most participants self-identify as Iranian (66.7%). Another group of 31.7% identify as Iranian Canadian, reflecting both cultural heritage and integration into Canadian society. Only one person identifies as Canadian Iranian. The strong

representation of Iranian identity among participants highlights their continued connection to their cultural roots while navigating integration in Canada.

Marital Status

Table 4.7 presents the marital status of the participants in the study, offering an overview of their relationship status at the time of data collection. These data may contribute to interpreting other findings in the study, since it is easier to maintain a home language if it is shared with a spouse (Pauwels, 2016).

Table 4.7: Marital Status of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Single	13	21.7
Married	41	68.3
Divorced	1	1.7
Have a partner	5	8.3
Total	60	100.0

A majority of participants (68.3%) reported being married. Singles constituted 21.7% of the sample. Only 1 person (1.7%), indicated they are divorced. Additionally, 5 participants, equating to 8.3%, stated they have a partner.

Parenthood Status

The parenthood status of the participants, indicating the proportion of respondents who have children, is represented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Parenthood Status of the Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	23.3
No	46	76.7
Total	60	100.0

Table 4.8 shows that 14, or 23.3%, of the participants indicated that they had a child or children. The remaining 46 individuals (accounting for 76.7%) reported not having any children. These data are highly relevant for the interpretation of language use and attitudes, since parenthood highlights the issues of home language acquisition and home language policies (De Houwer, 2009)

Employment status

Table 4.9 below provides an overview of the employment status of the participants in Canada.

Table 4.9: Employment Status of the Participants in Canada

	Frequency	Percent
Yes, full time	40	66.7
Yes, part-time	11	18.3
No	5	8.3
Other (please specify)	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0

As Table 4.9 shows, most individuals (66.7%) reported being employed full-time. This suggests that a majority of the respondents have achieved a stable economic status, which is often considered a key indicator of successful adaptation in a new country (Hou & Picot, 2016). Part-time employment was reported by eleven participants, making up 18.3% of the sample, indicating that a smaller segment of the population may still be adjusting to the labor market or balancing other responsibilities such as education. Additionally, five participants (8.3%) indicated they are not currently employed, which could be due to various factors such as ongoing education, job search, or other personal circumstances. Four individuals (6.7%) selected "Other" for their employment status, specifying that they are students.

Occupation in Canada

The following Table (4.10) categorizes participants' current occupations in Canada based on their qualification levels. This classification provides insight into the professional standing of Iranian immigrants within the Canadian workforce. The participants are grouped

into four categories: Extra High Qualifications, Highly Qualified, Qualified, and Unqualified. Participants' occupations were categorized into four qualification levels to analyze their professional standing within the Canadian workforce:

1. **Extra High Qualifications:** This group includes participants engaged in occupations that require advanced degrees and specialized expertise. Examples include engineers, doctors, university professors, and other professionals who hold postgraduate qualifications or highly specialized certifications.
2. **Highly Qualified:** Participants in this group hold roles that generally require a bachelor's degree or professional training in their fields. Examples include accountants, teachers, and other white-collar professions, such as business managers or IT specialists.
3. **Qualified:** This category represents occupations that require moderate training or qualifications, often at the diploma or vocational level. Examples include technicians, skilled tradespeople, and roles such as massage therapists or hair stylists.
4. **Unqualified:** Participants in this group are in occupations that do not typically require formal qualifications. Examples include jobs in sales, general labor, housekeeping, and those who are unemployed or homemakers.

This categorization highlights the range of occupations held by the participants and their varying levels of professional integration. It also reflects how their prior education and experience from Iran translate into their employment prospects in Canada, with a notable portion working in roles categorized as unqualified, which may indicate barriers to finding jobs *that match their skill levels*.

Table 4.10: Participants' Current Occupations Categorized by Qualifications

Category	Frequency in Canada	Percent in Canada	Frequency in Iran	Percent in Iran
Extra Highly Qualified	17	28.3%	20	33.3%
Highly Qualified	13	21.7%	15	25.0%
Qualified	3	5.0%	5	8.3%

Unqualified	17	28.3%	13	21.7%
Students	10	16.7%	7	11.7%
Total	60	100.0%	60	100.0%

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to compare the occupational status of participants in Iran and Canada. The results show a statistically significant difference between the two distributions, $\chi^2(4, N = 60) = 12.10, p < .001$, with immigrants more likely to hold lower qualification jobs in Canada compared to Iran.

This trend is particularly evident in the extra-high qualifications category, which includes professions like engineers, architects, and researchers. In Iran, 33.3% of participants held such roles, but after immigration, this percentage declined slightly to 28.3%. While these professions remained common, the transition into equivalent positions may take time due to certification differences or market demand.

Similarly, in the highly qualified category (e.g., marketing experts, HR specialists, procurement specialists), 25% were employed in Iran, but only 21.7% in Canada. Some participants secured similar roles (e.g., marketing managers, financial advisors), while others transitioned into related but lower-tier positions, likely due to Canadian experience requirements or foreign credential recognition challenges.

The qualified category showed a drop from 8.3% in Iran to 5% in Canada. Though numerically small, this reflects the broader occupational downgrading trend confirmed by the chi-square test.

Conversely, the unqualified category (e.g., sales associates, retail positions) saw an increase from 21.7% in Iran to 28.3% in Canada, suggesting that some immigrants take lower-skilled jobs as a temporary adjustment while navigating the labor market.

Finally, the percentage of participants who were students at the time of migration increased from 11.7% in Iran to 16.7% in Canada. This suggests that some individuals pursued further education in Canada to meet employment requirements or transition into new career paths.

Overall, these findings support existing research on occupational downgrading among immigrants (Vojdanijahromi, 2016), highlighting barriers such as foreign credential recognition, the need for Canadian work experience, and the role of further education in overcoming employment challenges.

Participants’ Self-Evaluation of Their Current Economic Situation in Canada

This subsection focuses on participants' self-assessments of their current economic situation in Canada, as summarized in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Participants’ Current Economic Situation in Canada

	Frequency	Percent
Below average (struggle economically)	19	31.7
Average (OK)	34	56.7
Above average (comfortable economically)	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0

The data in Table 4.11 reveal that 31.7% of participants described their economic situation as below average, a figure that aligns with the 28.3% who reported working in unqualified occupations. This suggests that perceptions of financial hardship may be influenced by occupational downgrading, underemployment, or the high cost of living in Canada, rather than job qualifications alone. Even among those in extra-high or highly qualified positions, financial struggles may persist due to factors such as unrecognized foreign credentials, limited professional networks, or wage disparities. This highlights the complexities of economic integration, where occupational status does not always translate to financial security.

Participants’ Highest Levels of Education in Iran and Canada

Education of the participants can be connected with their employability and adaptation. Table 4.12 presents a comparison of the participants' highest levels of education obtained in Iran versus Canada.

Table 4.12: Comparison of Participants’ Highest Level of Education in Home Country and Canada

Category	Frequency (Home Country)	Percent (Home Country)	Frequency (Canada)	Percent (Canada)
Secondary School Certificate	2	3.3%	-	-
Technical or Vocational Certificate	-	-	1	1.7%
Bachelor's Degree	20	33.3%	5	8.3%
Master's Degree	34	56.7%	25	41.7%
Doctorate Degree	4	6.7%	9	15.0%
Other (please specify)	-	-	3	5.0%
N/A (did not study in Canada)	-	-	17	28.3%
Total	60	100.0%	60	100.0%

The majority of participants (56.7%) held a Master's degree in their home country, followed by 33.3% who had a Bachelor's degree. A smaller percentage had a Doctorate (6.7%) or a Secondary School Certificate (3.3%). In Canada, 41.7% of the participants obtained a Master's degree, which, although slightly lower than in their home country, remains the most common level of education. The proportion of participants with a Doctorate increased to 15.0%, suggesting that some individuals pursued higher education in Canada. However, 28.3% of the participants did not pursue any education in Canada, which might indicate a reliance on their existing qualifications or high costs of education. Additionally, 8.3% earned a Bachelor's degree in Canada, while a small percentage (1.7%) obtained a Technical or Vocational Certificate. A few participants (5.0%) selected 'Other,' specifically referring to RMT (Registered Massage Therapist), a diploma program, or enrollment in a CDA (Certified Dental Assistant) course.

The results suggest that while many participants maintained or advanced their education in Canada, a major number did not continue formal education after immigrating, possibly due to employment, economic, or personal reasons. The increase in Doctorate degrees indicates that some participants took advantage of opportunities to further their education in Canada. Conversely, the reduction in Bachelor's degrees and the small number of Technical or

Vocational Certificates suggest that some participants might have transitioned into the workforce without seeking further education.

The Chi-square test was employed to examine whether there is a significant difference between the education levels of individuals in their home country and their education levels after relocating to Canada. The analysis reveals a statistically significant difference between education levels in Iran and Canada, $\chi^2(6, N = 60) = 35.30, p < .0001$. Specifically, there is a higher proportion of participants holding Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Iran, while more participants hold PhDs in Canada vs in Iran. Additionally, the "N/A" category highlights individuals who did not pursue further education in Canada, and the small numbers in the "Technical/Vocational Certificate" and "Other" categories suggest limited representation of these groups. This difference likely reflects a natural progression in the educational pathway, as individuals may pursue higher education such as a Master's degree in Iran and then transition to PhD programs in Canada, possibly due to immigration policies that favor individuals with graduate-level qualifications.

The reason for this difference is likely a natural progression in education choices after immigration. For example, individuals who already hold a bachelor's degree from Iran would be unlikely to pursue another bachelor's degree in Canada, given the high cost of tuition for undergraduate programs. Instead, they tend to pursue a master's or PhD, which is often a more cost-effective option. Applying for a graduate degree in Canada is one of the common pathways to immigration. In contrast, younger individuals or those without prior higher education in Iran may be more inclined to pursue a bachelor's degree in Canada.

Participants' Year of Arrival in Canada

This section illustrates the distribution of participants based on their year of arrival in Canada. Table 4.13 provides a breakdown of the frequencies and percentages for each year, offering insight into the arrival patterns of participants over the specified years.

Table 4.13: Participants' Year of Arrival in Canada

	Frequency	Percent
2011	1	1.7
2014	3	5.0

2015	1	1.7
2016	2	3.3
2017	3	5.0
2018	8	13.3
2019	13	21.7
2020	29	48.3
Total	60	100.0

As we can see from Table 4.13, the number of immigrants has increased in more recent years, which reflects the general trends in immigration from Iran (CIC News, 2022). Participants who arrived in Canada during or before 2020 were included in the study to examine their COVID-19 experiences. (to gather data on their COVID-19 experiences).

Participants’ age of arrival in Canada

The following table provides an overview of the age distribution of participants at the time of their arrival in Canada. The age upon immigration may influence their integration experience, language acquisition, and employment prospects along with adaptation to a new cultural and social environment.

Table 4.14: Participants’ Age of Arrival in Canada

Age Range	Frequency	Percent
18-29 years	20	33.3%
30-39 years	22	36.7%
40-49 years	18	30.0%
Total	60	100.0%

The data suggest that a portion of participants were in their early to mid-adulthood (18-39 years) when they moved to Canada, with the majority being in the 30-39 age range. This trend might indicate that many individuals chose to immigrate during a period in their lives when they were likely seeking better career opportunities or educational advancements. The 30-39 age range often represents a time when people have gained some professional experience

and may be looking for opportunities to further their careers or provide a stable environment for their families (Buchinger et al., 2022).

Additionally, the presence of a notable proportion of participants in the 40-49 age range suggests that some individuals decided to move later in their professional lives due to different motivations that we consider in the next subsection.

Participants’ Initial Process of Coming to Canada

The table below outlines the participants' initial pathway of entry into Canada.

Table 4.15: Participants’ Initial Process of Coming to Canada

	Frequency	Percent
Other (please specify)	2	3.3
Refugee	2	3.3
Permanent residency	10	16.7
Spousal visa	4	6.7
Working visa	14	23.3
Student visa	28	46.7
Total	60	100.0

The majority of participants (46.7%), reported arriving on a student visa. Fourteen participants (23.3%) came on a working visa, and ten participants (16.7%) through permanent residency. Four participants (6.7%) arrived on a spousal visa, while two participants (3.3%) each reported coming as refugees or through other unspecified means. The detailed responses in the "Other (please specify)" category included arriving as a visitor and having problems with their government. The student visa pathway has often been considered one of the more accessible routes for immigration to Canada, particularly in the context of the evolving immigration landscape. This has historically made it an attractive option for younger individuals seeking to establish themselves in a new country.

Many immigrants choose student visas not just for educational advancement but also as a strategy for gaining entry into Canada, as the requirements for these visas are typically less stringent than those for permanent residency. Once in Canada, international students often have

the opportunity to transition to work permits, making it a viable long-term immigration pathway (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], 2024).

Moreover, prior to recent policy changes that introduced more stringent requirements, student visas provided a relatively straightforward method for gaining entry. This trend reflects the broader appeal of Canada as a destination for academic and professional development, as well as the strong demand for skilled labor in various sectors (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2021).

Participants’ Reasons for Immigration to Canada

The motivations behind participants' immigration to Canada reveal a complex interplay of factors influencing their decision-making process.

Table 4.16: Participants’ Reasons for Coming to Canada

What was the reason for you to come to Canada? Please check as many answers as apply in your case.

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Economic reasons	31	51.7%
Political reasons	27	45.0%
To escape civil unrest	10	16.7%
To escape internal conflicts	11	18.3%
To escape crime and violence	12	20.0%
To escape discrimination	14	23.3%
Refugee	2	3.3%
Came to study and stayed	24	40.0%
Searching for better opportunities for myself	40	66.7%
Searching for better opportunities for my children	11	18.3%
Searching for a better job	24	40.0%
To avoid discrimination	12	20.0%
Just happened so	2	3.3%
Didn't want my children to serve in the army	2	3.3%

Other (please specify): My family was in the Canada; Religious compulsion 2 3.3%

As Table 4.16 demonstrates, the most common reasons for immigration identified by the participants included searching for better opportunities for themselves (40 participants, 66.7%), economic reasons (31 participants, 51.7%), and coming to study and staying (24 participants, 40.0%). Other notable reasons included escaping discrimination (14 participants, 23.3%), escaping crime and violence (12 participants, 20.0%), and searching for a better job (24 participants, 40.0%). Additionally, 45.0% of participants (27) reported escaping for political reasons, making it a significant factor in migration decisions. Fewer participants cited escaping internal conflicts (11 participants, 18.3%) or searching for better opportunities for their children (11 participants, 18.3%).

4.3 Participants' Adaptation to Life in Canada

The second section of the survey relates to the adaptation of Iranian immigrants in Canada. This survey section consists of 12 questions measuring the level of adaptation of Iranians to life in Canada which answers the second research question of the study. In this section, we report the participants' feelings on their decision to move, their integration into Canadian society, and their comfort level with different aspects of Canadian life.

Participants' Perceptions of Their Decision to Move to Canada

The frequency and percentage of participants' perceptions regarding their decision to immigrate to Canada reveal insights into their overall satisfaction with this life choice.

Table 4.17: Participants' Perceptions of the Decision to Move to Canada

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	1	1.7
Neutral	9	15.0
Agree	29	48.3
Strongly agree	21	35.0
Total	60	100.0

The majority of the participants express positive sentiments regarding their decision to move to Canada. Specifically, 83.3% of them agree or strongly agree that moving to Canada was the right decision. A smaller proportion, 15%, neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Only one participant disagreed that their move to Canada was the right decision.

Participants’ Perceptions of Integration in Canada

When participants were asked whether they felt integrated into Canadian society, they produced responses summarized in the following table (4.18).

Table 4.18: Participants’ Perceptions of Integration in Canada

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	3	5.0
Neutral	13	21.7
Agree	40	66.7
Strongly agree	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0

The table shows that the majority of the participants feel well integrated in Canada. Thirteen participants (21.7%) remain neutral, while a small number, 3 participants (5.0%), disagree with the statement.

Participants’ Perception of Canada as Their True Home

Participants were also asked about their feelings toward considering Canada as their true home, their perceptions are shown in the following table.

Table 4.19: Participants’ Perception of Canada as Their True Home

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	3.3
Disagree	6	10.0
Neutral	19	31.7
Agree	22	36.7

Strongly agree	11	18.3
Total	60	100.0

This table summarizes the respondents' feelings about considering Canada as their true home. Over half of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they feel Canada is their home. Nineteen participants (31.7%) remain neutral on this matter. Only 6 respondents (10%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Participants' Alignment of Personal Values with Those Held by the Canadian Majority

Participants were asked about the extent to which their values, norms, beliefs, and attitudes aligned with those of the majority of Canadians.

Table 4.20: Participants' Alignment of Personal Values with Canadian Majority

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1.7
Disagree	7	11.7
Neutral	24	40.0
Agree	27	45.0
Strongly agree	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

The results show that nearly half of the participants (46.7%) feel that their values align with those of the majority of Canadians, while 40% remain neutral. This suggests that many participants either already shared or have developed an appreciation for Canadian values. The neutrality of a significant portion might indicate that they are still in the process of reconciling their values with those in Canada, or they may not feel strongly one way or the other. The small percentage of disagreement could reflect participants who maintain stronger ties to their original cultural values, possibly influencing their adaptation experience. This pattern may suggest that some participants chose to move to Canada because they were already aligned with, or at least open to, Canadian values, while others may have developed this alignment after their arrival.

Comparison of Social Prestige and Economic Situation in Canada vs. Iran

Participants were asked to evaluate the social prestige of their current work in Canada compared to their home country, as well as their economic situation. This comparison offers insight into how immigration has affected both their professional standing and financial well-being. Understanding how participants perceive these aspects of their lives can provide a broader picture of their adaptation process and satisfaction with life in Canada.

Table 4.21: Comparison of Social Prestige and Economic Situation in Canada vs. Home Country

Category	Frequency (Social Prestige)	Percent (Social Prestige)	Frequency (Economic Situation)	Percent (Economic Situation)
It is better in Canada	25	41.7%	35	58.3%
About the same	20	33.3%	15	25.0%
It is worse in Canada	13	21.7%	10	16.7%
N/A - do not work (Social Prestige only)	2	3.3%	-	-
Total	60	100.0%	60	100.0%

Regarding social prestige, 41.7% of the participants believe that the prestige of their current work in Canada is better than what they had in their home country. A slightly smaller group, 33.3%, feels that their work's social standing remains about the same, while 21.7% perceive that their social prestige has declined in Canada. A small minority (3.3%) are not currently employed and therefore did not provide a comparison.

In terms of economic situation, the results show a more optimistic view, with 58.3% of participants reporting that their economic situation has improved since moving to Canada. In addition, a quarter of participants (25%) believe their economic situation is about the same, and 16.7% feel that they are economically worse off in Canada.

These findings suggest that while a substantial portion of participants have experienced improvements in both social and economic aspects of their lives in Canada, the perception of economic improvement is more pronounced. However, a number of participants feel that their social prestige has either remained unchanged or worsened, indicating that the transition to Canada has had a mixed impact on their professional standing and economic well-being.

Participants' Feelings of Fitting into the Canadian Way of Life

Participants were also asked how well they fit into the Canadian way of life and Canadian values.

Table 4.22: Participants' Feelings of Fitting into The Canadian Way of Life and Values

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	3.3
Disagree	28	46.7
Neutral	24	40.0
Agree	5	8.3
Strongly agree	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

The data reveal that the largest group of participants (46.7%) disagreed with the statement that they fit into the Canadian way of life and values, indicating that they do not feel well-integrated into Canadian society. Additionally, 40% of participants remained neutral, which may suggest that while they do not feel entirely out of place, they may still be navigating their integration or are undecided about their fit within Canadian culture.

The smaller percentages of agreement or strong agreement (10%) with the statement indicate that only a minority of participants feel that they fit into Canadian life.

Overall, the results suggest that many participants still feel uncomfortable and misaligned with Canadian values and way of life, while others feel well integrated either because they have successfully adapted or because they already shared similar values before moving to Canada. The neutral responses highlight the possibility that some participants are still in the process of adjusting or may have mixed feelings about their integration into Canadian culture. This reflects a varied and complex experience of cultural integration among the participants.

Participants' Comfort in Communication with Various Groups

Table 4.24 details participants' comfort levels in communicating with different groups in Canada.

Table 4.23: Participants' Comfort in Communication with Various Groups in Canada

Group	Frequency	Percent
Canadians (born and raised in Canada, non-indigenous)	30	50.0
People who speak my first language	43	71.7
People of my ethnic group	26	43.3
People who speak my second language	17	28.3
Immigrants from groups other than mine	24	40.0
Indigenous people	10	16.7
Anyone fits my mindset regardless of language or nation	1	1.7
Missing	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

The data show that the majority of participants feel most comfortable communicating with people who speak their first language, with 71.7% of participants expressing this preference. This trend is observed across various immigrant communities, where communication in the native language strengthens cultural identity and facilitates smoother social exchanges (Schwartz et al., 2014; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002).

Additionally, half of the participants (50%) are comfortable communicating with Canadian-born/raised individuals suggesting that many immigrants feel confident in engaging with the broader Canadian population. The respondents' comfort level is also relatively high with people of the same ethnic group (43.3%), indicating that cultural and ethnic ties play an important role in communication preferences. On the other hand, comfort in communication decreases with groups that may be less familiar or have fewer opportunities for interaction. For instance, only 16.7% of participants reported being comfortable communicating with Indigenous people, which may point to limited exposure or opportunities to interact with this group. The results suggest that while participants are highly comfortable communicating within their linguistic and ethnic groups, they are also increasingly at ease with the broader Canadian population.

Experiences of Discrimination in Canada

Participants were asked to report their experiences with discrimination in Canada.

Table 4.24: Participants' Experiences of Discrimination in Canada

	Frequency	Percent
Never	10	16.7
Rarely	16	26.7
Sometimes	27	45.0
Often	7	11.7
All the time	0	0.0
Total	60	100.0

The majority of the participants have experienced discrimination in Canada. Specifically, 45% reported that they "sometimes" feel discriminated against, and 11.7% stated that they "often" experience discrimination. This means that over half of the participants have encountered discrimination to varying degrees. Additionally, while 26.7% of participants reported that they "rarely" experience discrimination, this still indicates that a portion of the group has faced such challenges at some point. Only 16.7% of participants stated that they have "never" experienced discrimination. These findings highlighted the reality that discrimination is a common experience for many within this participant group, which could have implications for their overall adaptation and well-being in Canada.

4.4 Correlations Between Adaptation and Socio-Demographic Parameters

Spearman's correlations were calculated to assess the relationships between adaptation and socio-demographic parameters. Spearman's correlation was selected because it is a non-parametric measure suitable for analyzing ordinal data and relationships that may not follow a linear pattern (Schober, Boer, & Schwarte, 2018). The results are summarized in Table 4.26.

Table 4.25: Spearman Correlations Between Adaptation and Socio-Demographic Parameters

Age	Employment	Education Iran	Education Canada	Duration of Stay	Adaptation
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Age upon arrival	Rs	1.00	.057	-.002	-.131	.058	.117
	P*	.	.667	.989	.317	.762	.374
	N	60	60	60	60	30	60
Employment	Rs	.057	1.000	.058	.116	-.260	.041
	P*	.667	.	.660	.376	.164	.756
	N	60	60	60	60	30	60
Education Level in Iran	Rs	-	.058	1.000	.327*	-.471**	-.266*
	P*	.989	.660	.	.011	.009	.040
	N	60	60	60	60	30	60
Education Level in Canada	Rs	-	.116	.327*	1.000	-.208	-.189
	P*	.317	.376	.011	.	.269	.148
	N	60	60	60	60	30	60
Duration of Stay	Rs	.058	-.260	-.471**	-.208	1.000	.247
	P*	.762	.164	.009	.269	.	.188
	N	60	60	60	60	60	60
Adaptation	Rs	.117	.041	-.266*	-.189	.247	1.000
	P*	.374	.756	.040	.148	.188	.
	N	60	60	60	60	30	60

*This analysis is two-tailed.

The Spearman's correlation analysis provides insights into the relationships between several key variables, including age, employment, education levels, duration of stay in Canada, age upon arrival, and overall adaptation among the participants. The socio-demographic parameters were coded as follows: employment status (0 for unemployed, 1 for part-time, 2 for full-time) and education levels (1 for high school diploma, 2 for college, 3 for bachelor's degree, 4 for master's degree, and 5 for postgraduate degree). Adaptation was measured on a four-level scale: 1 (Minimal adaptation), 2 (Moderate adaptation), 3 (High adaptation), and 4 (Complete adaptation).

A significant positive correlation exists between education levels in Iran and Canada (*Spearman* $r = 0.327$, $p = .01$), suggesting that participants with higher education levels in Iran are more likely to pursue further education in Canada.

There is a significant negative correlation between education level in Iran and duration of stay in Canada (*Spearman* $r = -.471$, $p = .009$), indicating that those who have been in Canada longer tend to have lower levels of education from Iran, possibly reflecting a trend where earlier immigrants were less educated.

A significant negative correlation is observed between education level in Iran and adaptation (*Spearman* $r = -.266$, $p = .04$). This suggests that higher education levels in Iran may be associated with greater challenges in adapting to life in Canada.

The correlations between employment and other variables such as adaptation, age, and education level are not significant. This indicates that these factors may not have a strong covariance with employment status among the participants.

Chi-Square Test for Gender and Key Adaptation-Related Variables

Table 4.26 presents the chi-square test statistics for various relationships between gender and key adaptation-related variables, such as employment, education levels, duration of stay, and adaptation levels.

Table 4.26: Chi-Square Test Between Gender and Employment, Education Levels, Duration of Stay, Adaptation

	Gender & Employment	Gender & Education Level in Iran	Gender & Education Level in Canada	Gender & Duration of Stay	Gender & Adaptation
X ²	57.467	45.067	43.000	31.600	21.600
df	3	3	5	6	15
P	.000	.000	.000	.000	.119

The chi-square test for independence was conducted to examine the relationship between gender and variables such as employment, education levels (in Iran and Canada), duration of stay, and adaptation levels.

The results revealed a significant association between gender and employment, $\chi^2(3, N = 60) = 57.467, p < .001$. Women reported significantly higher workforce participation rates (45.16%) compared to men (11.76%), highlighting gender-based disparities in employment outcomes.

There was also a significant relationship between gender and education levels. For education attained in Iran, $\chi^2(3, N = 60) = 45.07, p < .001$, and for education attained in Canada, $\chi^2(5, N = 60) = 43.00, p < .001$. The results indicate that men were more likely to hold advanced degrees (Master's or PhD) in Canada than women, which may reflect differences in educational opportunities or motivations between genders before and after immigration.

Additionally, a significant association was found between gender and the duration of stay in Canada, $\chi^2(6, N = 60) = 31.60, p < .001$, suggesting variations in residence duration by gender. However, despite its statistical significance, the practical relevance of this finding is unclear and may reflect sample-specific characteristics.

The relationship between gender and adaptation levels was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(15, N = 60) = 21.60, p = .119$, indicating that adaptation experiences were broadly similar across genders despite differences in employment, education, and length of residence.

Interestingly, the relationship between gender and overall adaptation was also not statistically significant, suggesting that despite the observed gender differences in employment, education, duration of stay, and age upon arrival, men and women in the study do not differ significantly in their overall adaptation experiences in Canada. This could imply that, while gender influences certain aspects of the immigration experience, it does not necessarily determine how well participants adapt to life in Canada.

4.5 Language Use

In order to answer the third research question of the study, this section explores the participants' language use and interaction patterns, both within their linguistic communities and in broader social settings. Understanding how often and in what contexts participants engage with their first and second languages provides insight into their cultural integration and social experiences in Canada. This section examines the frequency of interactions with friends or acquaintances who speak their home language or a second language, as well as their attendance

at community events where these languages are spoken. Additionally, the section explores participants' experiences of discrimination, which may influence their adaptation and integration into Canadian society, particularly in relation to their linguistic and cultural identities. Through this analysis, we gain a deeper understanding of the role that language plays in shaping the social lives and adaptation processes of these individuals in a new cultural environment.

Interaction with Friends Who Speak the First Language

Participants were asked how many friends or acquaintances they interact with who know their first (home) language.

Table 4.27: Participants' Interaction with Friends or Acquaintances Who Speak the Home Language

	Frequency	Percent
2-3	3	5.0
4-6	13	21.7
7 or more	44	73.3
Total	60	100.0

A majority of the participants (73.3%) reported interacting with 7 or more individuals speaking the same home language. Around 21% interact with 4-6 friends or acquaintances, while a smaller group (5%) interacts with 2-3 people who speak their first language.

Attendance at Community Events Where the First Language is Spoken

In terms of community engagement, participants were asked about their attendance at events where their first language is spoken.

Table 28: Participants' Attendance of Community Events Where First Language Is Spoken

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely	15	25.0
Sometimes	21	35.0
Often	23	38.3

All the time	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

We also asked the participants about their attendance of community events where the first language was spoken. The responses showed that most participants (38.3%) attended these events often, while 35% did so sometimes. A smaller portion (25%) attended rarely, and a very small number (1.7%) attended all the time.

Attendance at Community Events Where the Second Language is Spoken

Participants also reported on their attendance at community events where their second language is spoken.

Table 4.29: Participants' Attendance at Community Events Where Second Language Is Spoken

	Frequency	Percent
Never	4	6.7
Rarely	12	20.0
Sometimes	21	35.0
Often	12	20.0
All the time	4	6.7
Does not apply (no second language learnt in the home country)	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0

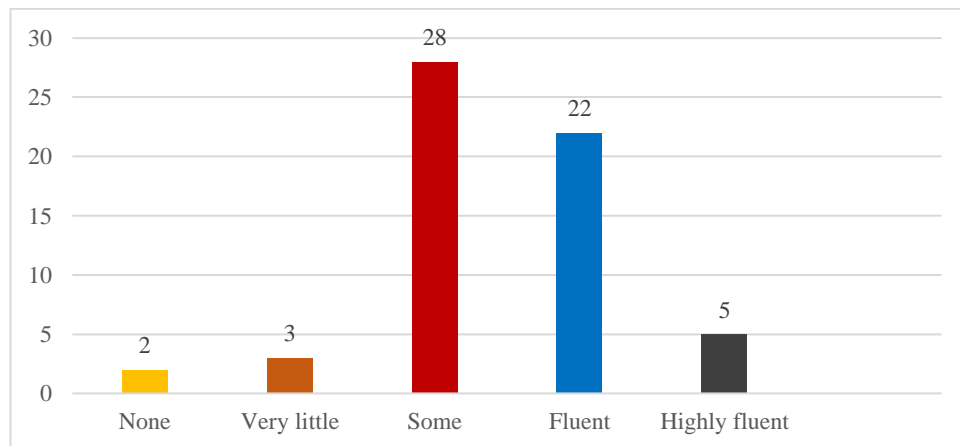
The data indicate that most participants have some level of engagement with community events where a second language is spoken, with 35% attending such events "sometimes." This suggests a moderate level of interest or necessity in maintaining or practicing the second language within a community setting. Additionally, the fact that 20% attend these events "often" and another 20% "rarely" highlights a mixed pattern of engagement, possibly influenced by factors like personal interest, the relevance of the second language in their daily lives, or the availability of such events. Interestingly, 6.7% of participants either "never" attend or attend "all the time," indicating that for a small segment, their participation is either nonexistent or highly consistent.

Finally, the 11.7% of participants who stated that this question does not apply to them likely reflects individuals who did not learn a second language in their home country, which may be due to various reasons such as regional differences in language education or personal choices or as noted earlier regarding the ambiguity of this term. The results suggest a varied level of engagement with second language community events, with the majority participating occasionally, likely reflecting diverse language needs and interests among the participants.

4.6 Language Proficiency and Use in Canada

In order to answer the third and fourth research question of the study, the following questions provide information about the participants' languages and their use in Canada. It asks the participants to rate their current abilities in reading, writing, speaking and listening in both English and French and to estimate the percentage of their daily interactions in English, French, Persian, and any additional languages they specify.

Figure 4.30: Participants' English Proficiency before Coming to Canada

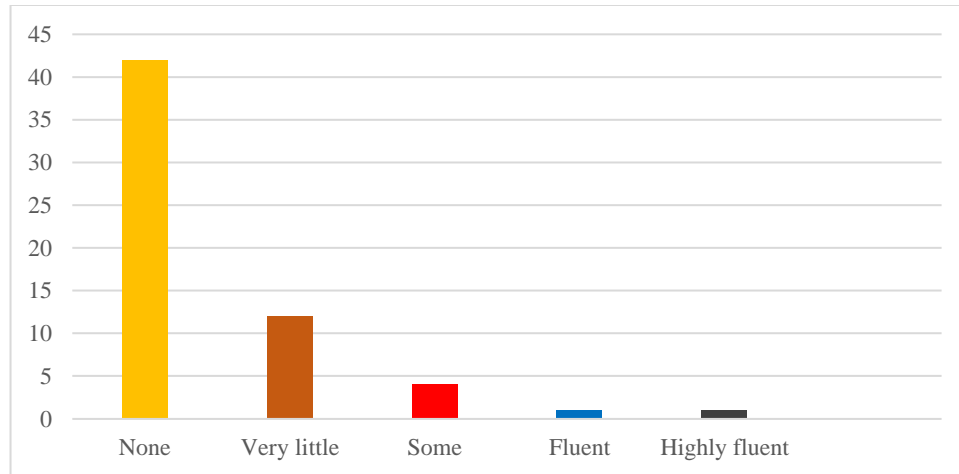


Concerning the participants' English proficiency before coming to Canada, the largest group (46.7%) reported having "Some" proficiency in English. Those who were "Fluent" comprised 36.7%, while 8.3% indicated they were "Highly fluent." A smaller proportion had "Very little" proficiency (5%), and 3.3% had no proficiency at all. This pre-existing knowledge of English among most participants suggests that they likely faced fewer challenges in adapting to their new environment, as they had foundational language skills that would facilitate communication and integration into Canadian society.

Participants' French Proficiency before Coming to Canada

The participants were asked to report their level of French proficiency before arriving in Canada.

Figure 4.31: Participants' French Proficiency before Coming to Canada



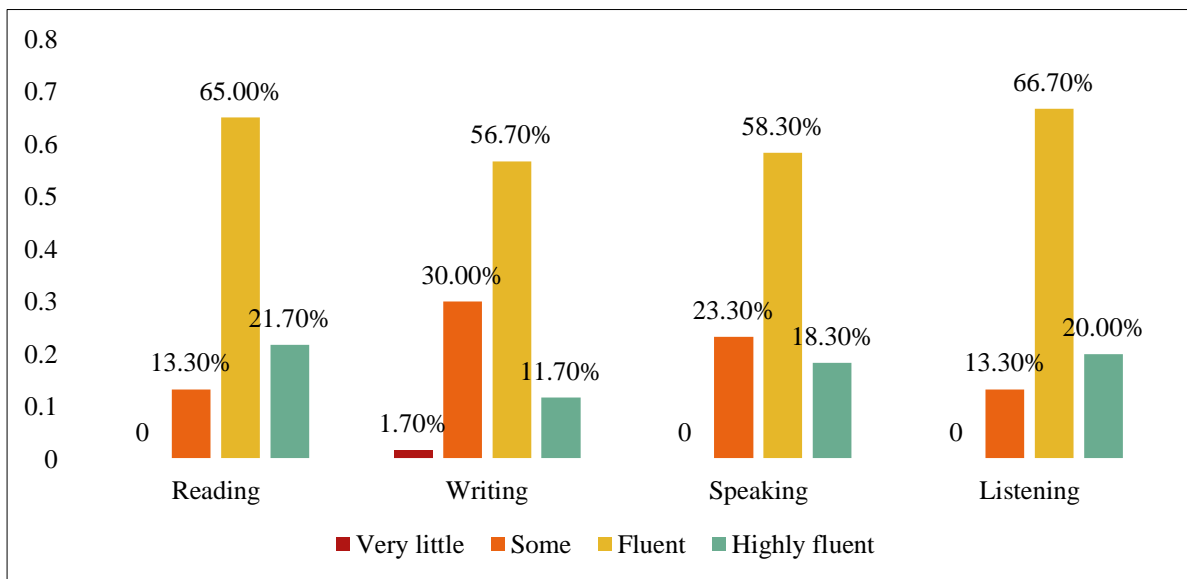
The data in Table 4.35 show that almost all participants had little to no proficiency in French before coming to Canada, with 70% reporting no proficiency and 20% having only 'Very little' proficiency. A minimal number of participants had any level of proficiency beyond this, with only 1.7% being 'Fluent' and another 1.7% being 'Highly fluent'.

Given this lack of French proficiency, it is logical that participants outside Quebec would prioritize addressing their English language needs upon arrival. Their immediate focus would likely be on improving their English skills for communication and adaptation, while French language acquisition may be a higher priority for those settling in Quebec, where it is required for daily interactions and professional advancement. The variation in French learning priorities among participants likely reflects geographic differences rather than a universal lack of interest in acquiring French.

Participants' English Proficiency in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

Participants were asked to evaluate their proficiency in various English language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Figure 4.32: Participants' English Proficiency in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

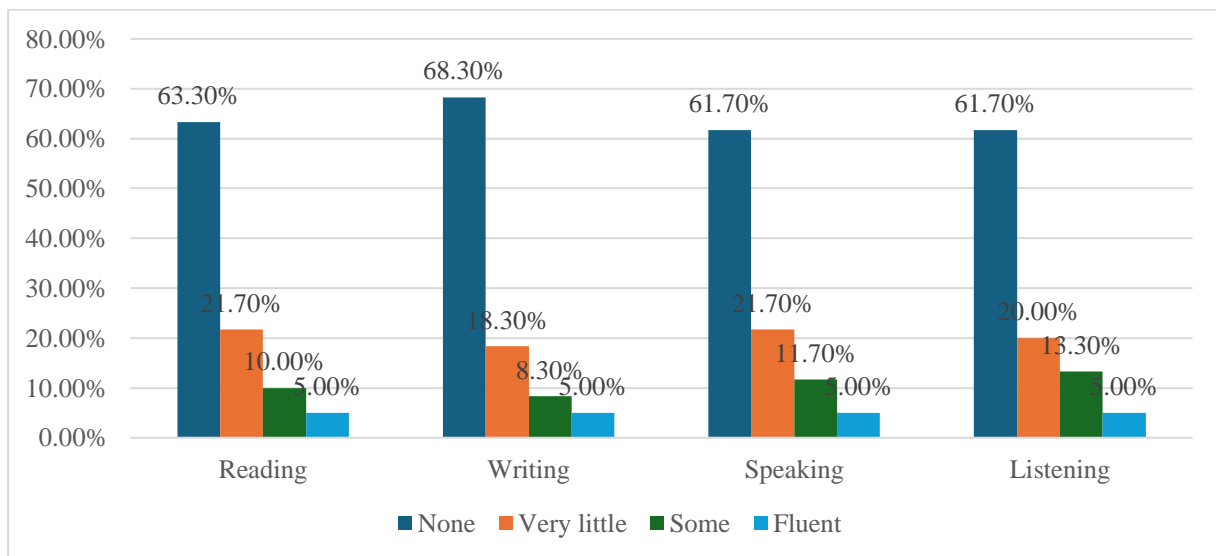


For reading proficiency, the majority of respondents (65%) reported being fluent, with 21.7% being highly fluent, and 13.3% having some proficiency. No participants indicated having very little or no proficiency in reading. In terms of writing proficiency, 56.7% of participants identified as fluent, 11.7% as highly fluent, and 30% as having some proficiency. Only a small number of the participants (1.7%) reported having very little writing proficiency. Speaking proficiency results revealed that 58.3% of respondents were fluent, 18.3% were highly fluent, and 23.3% had some proficiency. No participants reported having very little or no speaking proficiency. Listening proficiency had the highest percentage of fluent participants at 66.7%, with 20% being highly fluent and 13.3% having some proficiency. Again, no participants reported very little or no proficiency in listening.

Participants' French Proficiency in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

Participants also provided self-assessments of their French language skills across reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Figure 4.33: Participants' French Proficiency in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening



These results showed that the majority of participants had very limited proficiency in French across all four skills before coming to Canada, with a small minority demonstrating higher levels of fluency. For reading proficiency, 63.3% reported having no proficiency, 21.7% had very little, 10% had some proficiency, and only 5% were fluent. Writing proficiency had similar results, with 68.3% indicating no proficiency, 18.3% having very little, 8.3% having some proficiency, and 5% being fluent. Speaking proficiency results revealed that 61.7% had no proficiency, 21.7% had very little, 11.7% had some proficiency, and 5% were fluent. Listening proficiency showed 61.7% with no proficiency, 20% with very little, 13.3% with some proficiency, and 5% being fluent. These results indicate that French proficiency was generally low among participants before coming to Canada. However, the importance of French varies by location. For participants settling in Anglophone provinces like British Columbia, French may play a minimal role in daily life. Conversely, for those in Quebec, French proficiency is often essential for social integration and employment opportunities.

Importance of Learning English Among Participants

The importance of learning English is crucial for successful integration in Canada, especially in Anglophone provinces. The table below shows that most participants highly prioritize learning English.

Table 4.34: Importance of Learning English among Participants

Frequency Percent

Not at all	2	3.3
Little	2	3.3
Somewhat	7	11.7
Important	13	21.7
Very important	36	60.0
Total	60	100.0

The majority of participants, 60%, consider learning English "Very important," while 21.7% rate it as "Important." This means that 81.7% of participants place high importance on learning English. Despite most arriving in Canada with some level of English proficiency, the strong emphasis on learning English likely reflects its role as one of the official languages of Canada and its importance for effective communication and integration. Only 11.7% view learning English as "Somewhat" important, and a small minority (3.3%) regard it as "Little" or "Not at all" important.

Importance of Learning French Among Participants

Table 4.39 presents the importance of learning French among the respondents.

Table 4.35: Importance of Learning French among Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	20	33.3
Little	14	23.3
Somewhat	11	18.3
Important	4	6.7
Very important	11	18.3
Total	60	100.0

A portion of participants, 33.3%, consider learning French "Not at all" important, and 23.3% view it as having "Little" importance. This reflects that over half of the participants do not prioritize learning French. Conversely, 18.3% find it "Somewhat" important, and an equal proportion deem it "Very important." Only 6.7% regard it as "Important," indicating that 25% place considerable importance on learning French. The low priority given to French is

consistent with the participants' initial lack of proficiency in the language and its limited functional use in British Columbia and other provinces from which the majority of participants originated. However, if there are participants from Quebec, French might hold greater significance due to regional language policies and practices.

Amount of Daily Interactions in Different Languages

Participants were asked to estimate the percentage of their daily interactions in various languages. Table 4.38 shows the amount of daily interactions in different languages.

Table 4.36: Amount of Daily Interactions in Different Languages

Language	Average Percentage of Daily Interactions
English	66.7%
French	4.2%
Persian	41.7%

The data show that English is predominantly used (66.7%) in daily interactions, followed by Persian (41.7%), with a very small use of French.

Importance of Maintaining Persian and Other Languages Among Participants

Preserving one's native language plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural identity, especially for immigrants (Fishman, 2006). Participants were asked to evaluate the importance of maintaining their home language, Persian, as well as any additional languages they speak.

Table 4.37: The Importance of Maintaining Persian and Other Languages among Participants

Language	Not at All	Little	Somewhat	Important	Very Important	Total
Persian	2 (3.3%)	5 (8.3%)	14 (23.3%)	19 (31.7%)	20 (33.3%)	60 (100.0%)
Other heritage language (HL)	14 (23.3%)	3 (5.0%)	8 (13.3%)	8 (13.3%)	12 (20.0%)	45 (75.0%)
Missing	-	-	-	-	-	15 (25.0%)
Total	-	-	-	-	-	60 (100.0%)

The data show that Persian is highly valued by most participants, with 65% considering its maintenance either "important" or "very important." In contrast, other languages are less uniformly valued, with 33.3% of participants considering them important or very important. This is easily explained by only a small part of the participants being multilingual in home languages.

Primary Languages Spoken by Partners or Spouses at Home

Participants were also asked about the primary languages spoken by their partners or spouses at home.

Table 4.38: Primary Languages Spoken by Partners or Spouses at Home

	Frequency	Percent
English	2	3.3
French/English	1	1.7
No partner or spouse	2	3.3
Persian	52	86.7
Persian/English	1	1.7
Persian/Spanish	1	1.7
Persian/Turkish	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

Table 4.40 shows the primary languages spoken by participants' partners or spouses at home. The majority, 86.7%, speak Persian at home. A small percentage, 3.3%, report speaking only English, while 1.7% use a combination of French and English. Additionally, 1.7% each report speaking a mix of Persian and English, Persian and Spanish, or Persian and Turkish. Notably, 3.3% of the participants do not have a partner or spouse.

Participants' Preferred Languages for Communication

Participants provided insight into their preferred languages for communication. These preferences give a clear picture of which languages they are most comfortable using in daily interactions, both within and outside the home.

Table 4.39: Participants' Preferred Languages for Communication

	Frequency	Percent
English	9	15.0
English/Persian	13	21.7
Persian	36	60.0
Persian/French	1	1.7
Turkish	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

A majority of participants (60.0%), prefer communicating in Persian. Another 21.7% are comfortable using both English and Persian, while 15.0% favor English alone. Only one participant felt more comfortable communicating in a combination of Persian and French, and another - in Turkish.

The Languages that the Participants Enjoy the Most

Participants were asked to identify which languages they enjoy using for communication.

Table 4.40: The Most Enjoyable Languages for Communication among Participants

	Frequency	Percent
English	18	30.0
English/French	1	1.7
English/Persian	7	11.7
French	1	1.7
French/Spanish	1	1.7
Persian	31	51.7
Turkish	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

The majority, 51.7%, prefer communicating in Persian. English is enjoyed by 30% of participants, followed by 11.7% who enjoy both English and Persian. Other languages such as

French, French/Spanish, English/French, and Turkish are less preferred, each being favored by only 1.7% of participants.

4.7 Communication Changes and Language Learning Experiences during COVID-19

In order to answer the fifth research question, one part of the questionnaire addressed communication changes and language learning experiences during COVID-19. We describe participants’ responses to these questions in this section. It shows how COVID-19 affected communication in various settings, language development in children, and opportunities to learn English or French.

Communication Methods with Friends Before COVID-19

Participants were asked how they typically communicated with friends before the COVID-19 pandemic. This question aimed to explore the various ways in which they stayed connected with their social circles, whether through in-person meetings or digital means. The data reflects the diversity of communication methods used, ranging from traditional phone calls to modern platforms like social media and messaging apps.

Table 4.41: Communication Methods with Friends before and after COVID-19 among Participants

Method	Before COVID-19 (Frequency, Percent)	After COVID-19 (Frequency, Percent)
In person	51 (85.0%)	12 (20.0%)
Texting	34 (56.7%)	35 (58.3%)
Social media	33 (55.0%)	40 (66.7%)
Phone	31 (51.7%)	28 (46.7%)
Apps like WhatsApp, FaceTime, etc.	33 (55.0%)	42 (70.0%)
Online (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.)	9 (15.0%)	41 (68.3%)
Other (please specify)	1 (1.7%)	2 (3.3%)

Before COVID-19, the primary method of communication with friends was in person, with 85% of participants reporting this. Texting (56.7%) and social media (55%) were also popular means of communication, while phone calls (51.7%) and apps like WhatsApp and

FaceTime (55%) were used by more than half of the participants. Online platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams were used by only 15%, indicating lower engagement with these methods prior to the pandemic. A small percentage (1.7%) indicated they used other methods, such as Instagram.

After the onset of COVID-19, there was a noticeable shift in communication methods. In-person communication dropped significantly to 20%, while texting (58.3%), social media (66.7%), and apps like WhatsApp and FaceTime (70%) saw an increase in usage. Online communication platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams became much more popular, with 68.3% of participants utilizing these methods post-pandemic.

Impact of COVID-19 on Stress Levels

Participants were also asked whether the COVID-19 pandemic added stress to their lives.

Table 4.42: Impact of COVID-19 on Stress Levels among Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	12	20.0
Disagree	16	26.7
Neutral	12	20.0
Agree	14	23.3
Strongly agree	6	10.0
Total	60	100.0

The participants’ opinions are split on the subject. Approximately 47% of the participants do not feel additional stress due to the pandemic. On the other hand, 33% experience increased stress because of COVID-19. The remaining 20% of participants are neutral on the topic.

Participants’ Perceptions of Information Sufficiency on COVID-19 Spread

Participants were asked whether they felt they had sufficient information about how COVID-19 spreads.

Table 4.43: Participants' Perceptions of Information Sufficiency on COVID-19 Spread

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	8	13.3
Neutral	13	21.7
Agree	28	46.7
Strongly agree	11	18.3
Total	60	100.0

Specifically, 65% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they have enough information about COVID-19 spread at the time of the study. This indicates that the majority are confident in their knowledge regarding the virus's transmission. Conversely, 13.3% disagreed, suggesting that a small proportion of participants do not feel sufficiently informed. The remaining 21.7% of participants remained neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing about having enough information.

Perceived Sufficiency of COVID-19 Vaccination and Booster Information

Participants were asked whether they felt they had enough information about COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters.

Table 4.44: Perceived Sufficiency of COVID-19 Vaccination and Booster Information among Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	1.7
Disagree	4	6.7
Neutral	8	13.3
Agree	31	51.7
Strongly agree	11	18.3
N/A -do not care	5	8.3
Total	60	100.0

A majority of 51.7% agree that they have enough information, with an additional 18.3% strongly agreeing. This indicates that a portion of participants feel adequately informed. On the other hand, 6.7% disagree and 1.7% strongly disagree, suggesting a smaller proportion who feel they do not have enough information. 13.3% are neutral on this issue, and 8.3% indicated they do not care about this information.

Access to COVID-19 Information and Language Barriers

To assess whether participants faced language barriers in accessing COVID-19-related information, participants were asked about their experience with understanding public health information during the pandemic.

Table 4.45: Access to COVID-19 Information and Language Barriers among Participants

	Frequency	Percent
No problems at all	40	66.7
Some problems	15	25.0
Occasional problems	2	3.3
Frequent problems	1	1.7
Many problems all the time	1	1.7
NA -do not care	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

A majority of the participants (66.7%) indicated they had no problems accessing information in the official languages. However, 25% reported some problems, indicating occasional difficulties. A smaller percentage encountered occasional (3.3%), frequent (1.7%), or persistent (1.7%) problems due to language barriers. Only 1.7% expressed that they do not care about this issue.

Preferred Languages for Receiving Emergency or Crisis Information

Participants were asked to specify the languages they preferred to receive emergency or crisis-related information in situations such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4.46: Responses Regarding Preferred Languages for Receiving Emergency or Crisis Information

Language	Frequency	Percent
English	50	83.3
Persian	43	71.7
Turkish	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

The majority of participants (83.3%) prefer receiving emergency or crisis information in English, but a substantial portion (71.7%) also prefers Persian, likely due to the availability of information in Persian. The preference for Persian indicates its importance among participants for accessing critical information. However, this preference does not necessarily reflect the widespread availability of Persian-language resources. While some emergency information may have been translated into Persian, official updates and crisis-related guidelines were primarily distributed in English. This suggests that Persian is valued by participants for comprehension, even when English is the dominant language of information dissemination.

English-Only Information and Access to Vital Information

Participants were asked whether they felt that English-only information restricted their access to essential updates and crisis-related information.

Table 4.47: Participants' Views on Whether English-Only Information Restricts Access to Vital Information in Emergencies

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	8	13.3
Disagree	20	33.3
Neutral	16	26.7
Agree	14	23.3
Strongly agree	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0

A combined 46.6% of participants disagree or strongly disagree that English-only information restricts their access, suggesting that nearly half of the participants feel confident in their ability to access information in English. However, 23.3% agree and 3.3% strongly

agree, totaling 26.6%, who believe that English-only information does restrict their access to vital information. Additionally, 26.7% remain neutral on this issue.

Participants' Experiences with Understanding COVID-19 Restrictions

Participants were asked about their experiences with understanding COVID-19 restrictions, including vaccination procedures and other related information.

Table 4.48: Participants' experiences with understanding COVID-19 restrictions

	Frequency	Percent
Some problems	14	23.3
Occasional problems	8	13.3
No problems	38	63.3
Total	60	100.0

Table 4.48 presents the participants' experiences with understanding COVID-19 restrictions, vaccination procedures, and other COVID-related information while in Canada. A majority of participants, 63.3%, reported having no problems understanding COVID-19 information, 23.3% of participants indicated they had some problems comprehending the information, and 13.3% mentioned they experienced occasional problems.

Perception of Language Barriers in Understanding COVID-19 Information

Participants were asked if they believed language barriers contributed to their difficulties in understanding COVID-19-related information.

Table 4.49: Participants' Responses to a Statement That Language Barriers Contributing to Difficulties in Their Understanding COVID-19 Information

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	4	6.7
Disagree	9	15.0
Neutral	7	11.7
Agree	16	26.7
Strongly agree	1	1.7

NA-no problems	23	38.3
Total	60	100.0

Table 4.49 presents the participants’ perceptions regarding whether the problems they faced in understanding COVID-19 restrictions, vaccination procedures, and other related information were due to language barriers (insufficient command of English or French). A minority of 6.7% strongly disagreed that language barriers were a cause of their problems, while 15% disagreed. Furthermore, 11.7% were neutral on the issue. In contrast, 26.7% agreed that language barriers contributed to their difficulties, with 1.7% strongly agreeing. The majority of the participants, 38.3% indicated they had no problems understanding the information, suggesting that language barriers were not an issue for them.

Perception of Information Accessibility as a Barrier

Participants were asked whether they found accessing COVID-19-related information difficult, and whether this posed a barrier to understanding public health guidance.

Table 4.50: Participants’ Agreement with a Statement That Information Accessibility Was a Barrier to Understanding COVID-19 Information

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	5	8.3
Disagree	22	36.7
Agree	10	16.7
NA-no problems	23	38.3
Total	60	100.0

A small proportion of participants, 8.3%, strongly disagreed that finding the information was a problem, and 36.7% disagreed. Conversely, 16.7% of respondents agreed that difficulty in finding information was a contributing factor to their understanding issues. Again, 38.3% of respondents indicated they had no problems understanding COVID-19 information.

Impact of COVID-19 on Family Communication in First or Second Languages

Participants were asked whether COVID-19 had impacted their communication with family members in their first or second (home) languages.

Table 4.51: Participants' Response to a Question About COVID-19 Having an Impact on Family Communication in First or Second Languages

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	10	16.7
Disagree	17	28.3
Neutral	15	25.0
Agree	14	23.3
Strongly agree	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0

Table 4.51 evaluates whether COVID-19 impacted communication within the family in participants' first or second (home) languages. Among them, 16.7% strongly disagreed and 28.3% disagreed that COVID-19 affected their family communication. A quarter of the respondents (25.0%) remained neutral on the matter. However, 23.3% agreed and 6.7% strongly agreed that COVID-19 had an impact on communication within their families. This indicates that while a majority did not feel that family communication in their home languages was significantly affected by COVID-19, a notable portion did experience some impact.

Participants were also asked how COVID-19 impacted their face-to-face and online communication with family members in their first or second languages. Table 4.58 provides insight into changes in communication patterns during the pandemic.

Table 4.52: Impact of COVID-19 On Face-to-face and Online Communication in First or Second Languages Within the Family

Communication Type	Frequency	Percent
Face-to-Face		
Strongly decreased	10	16.7
Decreased	22	36.7
Not affected	19	31.7

Increased	5	8.3
Strongly increased	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0
Online		
Strongly decreased	1	1.7
Decreased	2	3.3
Not affected	23	38.3
Increased	24	40.0
Strongly increased	10	16.7
Total	60	100.0

The impact of COVID-19 on family communication in participants' first or second languages varied between face-to-face and online interactions. Face-to-face communication generally declined, with 53.4% of participants reporting a decrease. However, 31.7% noted no change, and 15% experienced an increase. Conversely, online communication increased for most participants, with 56.7% reporting an increase and only 5% noting a decrease. This highlights a shift toward greater reliance on online communication within families during the pandemic.

Impact of COVID-19 on Communication in English (or French) Within the Family

Participants were asked about the impact of COVID-19 on their communication in English or French with family members, both face-to-face and online.

Table 4.53: Impact of COVID-19 on Communication in English (or French) within the Family

Communication Type	Frequency	Percent
Face-to-Face		
Strongly decreased	11	18.3
Decreased	19	31.7
Not affected	21	35.0
Increased	6	10.0

Strongly increased	3	5.0
Total	60	100.0
Online		
Strongly decreased	1	1.7
Decreased	2	3.3
Not affected	27	45.0
Increased	20	33.3
Strongly increased	10	16.7
Total	60	100.0

The impact of COVID-19 on communication in English (or French) within the family shows different trends for face-to-face and online interactions. Face-to-face communication generally declined, with 50% of participants reporting a decrease, while 35% noted no change, and 15% experienced an increase. Online communication, however, saw a positive shift, with 50% of participants reporting an increase and only 5% noting a decrease. These results suggest that some participants experienced an increased reliance on online communication in English or French within their families during the pandemic. However, others reported that their language use remained largely unaffected, indicating that this shift was not universal.

Impact of COVID-19 on Communication with Friends and Acquaintances

Participants were asked how COVID-19 affected their communication with friends and acquaintances in their first or second languages, both face-to-face and online.

Table 4.54: Impact of COVID-19 on Face-to-Face and Online Communication in First or Second Languages with Friends and Acquaintances

Communication Type	Frequency	Percent
Face-to-Face		
Strongly decreased	12	20.0
Decreased	25	41.7
Not affected	17	28.3
Increased	5	8.3

Strongly increased	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0
Online		
Decreased	7	11.7
Not affected	21	35.0
Increased	27	45.0
Strongly increased	5	8.3
Total	60	100.0

The impact of COVID-19 on communication with friends and acquaintances in participants' first or second languages shows distinct trends for decreased face-to-face and increased online interactions. Face-to-face communication significantly declined for most, with 61.7% of participants reporting a decrease. Meanwhile, 28.3% noted no change, and only 10% experienced an increase. On the other hand, online communication saw a positive shift, with 53.3% of participants reporting an increase and only 11.7% noting a decrease. This suggests that online platforms became an essential means of maintaining social connections during the pandemic, compensating for the reduction in face-to-face interactions.

Impact of COVID-19 on Communication in First or Second Languages Within Community Settings

Participants were asked how COVID-19 impacted their ability to communicate within community settings, such as cultural events, language schools, or social gatherings.

Table 4.55: Impact of COVID-19 On Communication in First or Second Languages within Community Settings

Communication Type	Frequency	Percent
Face-to-Face		
Strongly decreased	18	30.0
Decreased	21	35.0
Not affected	15	25.0
Increased	4	6.7

Strongly increased	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0
Online		
Strongly decreased	1	1.7
Decreased	4	6.7
Not affected	23	38.3
Increased	23	38.3
Strongly increased	9	15.0
Total	60	100.0

Table 4.55 reveals the impact of COVID-19 on communication within community settings, such as churches, language schools, and cultural activities, focusing on participants' first or second languages. Face-to-face communication was heavily affected, with 65% of participants experiencing a decrease, and only 10% reporting an increase. This highlights the difficulties in maintaining in-person interactions during the pandemic. In contrast, online communication fared better, with 53.3% of participants reporting an increase, reflecting the vital role of digital platforms in sustaining community connections when face-to-face interactions were restricted.

Gained Opportunities to Develop English (or French) Language Skills During COVID-19

Participants were asked how the pandemic affected their opportunities to develop their English or French language skills in both face-to-face and online environments.

Table 4.56: Opportunities to Develop English (Or French) Language Skills during COVID-19

Response	Frequency	Percent
Online learning activities (Online classes, courses, reading, writing, increased free time for learning, etc.)	19	31.7%
Watching English media (Movies, news, TED Talks)	5	8.3%
Self-studying and research (Reading, studying, research, etc.)	7	11.7%

Using English socially (Speaking, chatting, social media, meetings)	6	10.0%
No impact / No opportunities	18	30.0%
Other (Baking, pet training, fluency, miscellaneous)	5	8.3%
Total	60	100.0%

The above table details the various opportunities individuals had to develop their English (or French) language skills during COVID-19. The most common response, "No impact / No opportunities," was reported by 30.0% of participants, indicating that a significant portion did not find new opportunities for language development during the pandemic.

However, many participants engaged in language-related activities, particularly through online learning platforms. 31.7% of participants utilized online learning activities, which included online courses, reading, writing, and making use of increased free time for learning. This was the most frequently reported method for maintaining or improving language proficiency.

Additionally, self-study and research (11.7%) were frequently mentioned, indicating that some individuals took advantage of extra time during the pandemic to focus on language development. 10.0% of participants engaged in English social interactions, such as chatting with friends, attending online meetings, or using social media.

A smaller group (8.3%) reported watching English-language media (e.g., movies, news, TED Talks) as a method for improving language proficiency, while another 8.3% engaged in miscellaneous activities like baking, pet training, or simply noted that they were already fluent.

These findings suggest that while online platforms played a major role in supporting language learning, engagement levels varied based on digital access, financial stability, available time, and prior familiarity with online learning tools. Participants with reliable internet, financial means to afford online courses, and flexibility in their schedules were more likely to take advantage of online learning opportunities, whereas those with work, family responsibilities, or limited digital literacy faced barriers to participation.

Lost Opportunities to Develop English (or French) during COVID-19

Participants were asked to identify opportunities they lost during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop their English or French language skills.

Table 4.57: Lost Opportunities to Develop English (Or French) during COVID-19

Response	Frequency	Percent
Loss of in-person learning opportunities (Face-to-face classes, IELTS tests, cultural events)	14	23.3%
Loss of in-person communication and social interactions (Meetups, gatherings, speaking in person)	18	30.0%
Reduced exposure to English environments (Limited language practice, fewer cultural/social events)	3	5.0%
No impact / No opportunities (Nothing changed, fluent already)	19	31.7%
Other (Walking, working out, reading, writing)	6	10.0%
Total	60	100.0%

A significant portion of participants (31.7%) reported no impact or lost opportunities, indicating that for some, the pandemic did not disrupt their language-learning or social interactions.

However, for many, the loss of in-person interactions was a major challenge, with 30.0% reporting disruptions in social engagements, face-to-face communication, and participation in community events. This includes lost opportunities for speaking practice, social networking, and informal language exposure in real-life settings.

Additionally, 23.3% of participants noted missing in-person learning opportunities, such as face-to-face classes, IELTS preparation, and cultural events, which would have provided structured environments for language development. The shift to remote learning and social restrictions significantly limited these interactions.

A smaller percentage (5.0%) highlighted reduced exposure to English-speaking environments, such as fewer opportunities for workplace communication, meetups, and public interactions.

Meanwhile, 10.0% of participants reported miscellaneous disruptions related to personal routines, including exercise, leisure activities, and independent study.

These findings highlight the critical role of in-person engagement in language development. While online alternatives were widely used, the survey did not assess whether participants found them equally effective compared to face-to-face interactions. Future research could explore participants' perceptions of online learning effectiveness in greater depth.

Impact of COVID-19 on Children’s Acquisition of Home Language(s)

Participants were asked to assess the impact of COVID-19 on their children's acquisition of their home language(s). Only responses from participants who are parents have been included in the analysis. Non-parent responses were excluded to ensure the findings accurately reflect parental experiences.

Table 4.58: Impact of COVID-19 on Children's Acquisition of Home Language(s)

	Frequency	Percent (Participants with Children)
Strongly decreased	3	11.5
Decreased	6	23.1
Not affected	14	53.9
Increased	1	3.8
Strongly increased	2	7.7
NA- No children or not school age	34	-
Total	60	100.0

Among participants with children, 53.9% reported that the acquisition of their home language(s) by their children was not affected by COVID-19. In contrast, 23.1% noted a decrease, and 11.5% experienced a strong decrease in language acquisition. Only a small proportion observed an increase (3.8%) or a strong increase (7.7%) in their children's proficiency in the home language(s) during the pandemic.

Impact of COVID-19 on Children’s Acquisition of English

This question aimed to explore whether the pandemic influenced children’s ability to acquire English during this period. Only responses from participants who are parents have been included in the analysis. Non-parent responses were excluded to ensure the findings accurately reflect parental experiences.

Table 4.59: Impact of COVID-19 on Children's Acquisition of English

	Frequency	Percent (Participants with Children)
Strongly decreased	3	11.5
Decreased	9	34.6
Not affected	10	38.5
Increased	2	7.7
Strongly increased	2	7.7
N/A- No children or not school age	34	-
Total	60	100.0

Among participants with children, 38.5% reported that their children's acquisition of English was unaffected by the pandemic. 34.6% experienced a decrease, and 11.5% observed a strong decrease in English acquisition. Only 7.7% of participants noted an increase, and another 7.7% reported a strong increase in their children's English proficiency during COVID-19.

Impact of COVID-19 on Communication in English or French at Work (Face-to-Face vs. Online)

Participants were asked to describe the impact of COVID-19 on their work-related communication, both face-to-face and online, in English or French.

Table 4.60: Impact of COVID-19 on Communication in English or French at Work (Face-to-Face Vs. Online)

Communication Type	Frequency	Percent
Face-to-Face		
Strongly decreased	11	18.3
Decreased	18	30.0

Not affected	22	36.7
Increased	6	10.0
Strongly increased	3	5.0
Total	60	100.0
Online		
Decreased	3	5.0
Not affected	29	48.3
Increased	21	35.0
Strongly increased	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0

The above table illustrates how COVID-19 affected communication in English or French at work, both face-to-face and online. For face-to-face communication, a portion of participants experienced a decrease: 18.3% reported a strong decrease and 30.0% reported a decrease. However, 36.7% indicated that their face-to-face communication was not affected, while 10.0% and 5.0% noted an increase and strong increase, respectively.

For online communication, the impact was different. Only 5.0% of participants reported a decrease, whereas a notable 48.3% stated that their online communication was not affected. A substantial portion, 35.0%, experienced an increase, and 11.7% reported a strong increase in online communication during the pandemic.

Participants' Understanding of COVID-Related Vocabulary

To assess the participants' comprehension of COVID-related terminology, they were asked to evaluate how well they understood the relevant vocabulary during the pandemic.

Table 4.61: Participants' Understanding of COVID-Related Vocabulary

	Frequency	Percent
Poorly	7	11.7
Some of it	28	46.7
Most of it	21	35.0

All of it	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0

Among the participants, 11.7% reported understanding COVID-related jargon poorly, while 46.7% stated they understood some of it. A portion, 35.0%, understood most of the vocabulary, and 6.7% reported full comprehension.

While the majority of participants had at least partial understanding of COVID-related terminology, a significant portion (58.4%) still reported less-than-complete comprehension. Grouping "some of it" and "poorly" together reflects the fact that even partial misunderstandings could have affected participants' ability to accurately interpret health guidelines, medical advice, and public safety updates. In health-related contexts, even minor language barriers can have significant implications for decision-making and risk assessment, making it important to consider both partial and poor comprehension as relevant challenges to accessing vital information (Al Shamsi et al., 2020).

4.8 Participants' Perceptions of COVID-19 Information Sources and their Channels for Obtaining COVID-19 Information

The following tables provide information in order to answer the sixth research question of the study, this section focuses on the sources and sufficiency of COVID-19-related information received by the participants. It captures their views on the effectiveness of various information channels, including the mass media, government sources, and social media, in addressing their information needs during the pandemic.

Sufficiency of COVID-19 Information Provided by the Local Government in Canada

Participants were asked whether they felt the local government provided sufficient information regarding COVID-19.

Table 4.62: Participants' Opinions on the Sufficiency of COVID-19 Information Provided by the Local Government in Canada

Frequency	Percent
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Valid	Disagree	3	5.0
	Neutral	10	16.7
	Agree	42	70.0
	Strongly agree	5	8.3
	Total	60	100.0

Table 4.62 indicates participants' opinions on the sufficiency of COVID-19 information provided by the local government in Canada. Among the participants, 5% disagreed that the information was sufficient, while 16.7% remained neutral. A large majority, 70.0%, agreed that the information was sufficient, and 8.3% strongly agreed. This suggests that the majority of participants felt adequately informed by the local government during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Perceptions of COVID-19 Information from the Mass Media

Participants were asked to evaluate the sufficiency of the information they received about COVID-19 from the mass media providing insights into their level of trust and satisfaction with these sources.

Table 4.63: Participants' Opinions on the Sufficiency of COVID-19 Information Provided by the Mass Media in Canada

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	1.7
	Disagree	2	3.3
	Neutral	17	28.3
	Agree	35	58.3
	Strongly agree	5	8.3
	Total	60	100.0

Only 1.7% strongly disagreed and 3.3% disagreed that the mass media provided sufficient information. A portion, 28.3%, remained neutral. However, the majority of participants, 58.3%, agreed, and 8.3% strongly agreed that the mass media provided sufficient information. This indicates that while a notable portion of participants were neutral, most felt adequately informed by the mass media regarding COVID-19.

Challenges in Accessing COVID-19 Health Information

Participants were also asked to identify the specific challenges they faced in accessing health-related information during the pandemic.

Table 4.64: Participants' Challenges in Accessing COVID-19 Health Information in Canada

Specific Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Infection spread rates	14	23.3
Death tolls	15	25.0
Vaccines and their availability	32	53.3
Getting boosters	20	33.3
Different vaccines	28	46.7
Didn't face challenges	1	1.7
N/A	1	1.7
We were confused which one is better	1	1.7

Table 4.64 highlights the specific challenges participants faced in accessing COVID-19 health information in Canada. The issue was obtaining information about vaccines and their availability, reported by 53.3% of respondents. Other notable difficulties included understanding the various vaccines (46.7%), acquiring booster shots (33.3%), and tracking infection spread rates (23.3%) and death tolls (25.0%). A small fraction of participants faced other unspecified challenges (5.0%), and very few reported not facing any challenges (1.7%) or being confused about which vaccine was better (1.7%). Overall, the data indicates that participants did experience difficulties accessing COVID-19 health information.

Language-Related Difficulties in the Post-COVID Transition

As part of the analysis, participants described various challenges during the post-COVID transition, which refers to the period following the easing of pandemic restrictions and the gradual return to pre-pandemic social and professional activities. The survey, conducted between April and May 2024, captures participants' reflections on how their language use and social reintegration evolved as pandemic-related restrictions were lifted.

Table 4.65: Participants' Experiences of Language-Related Difficulties in the Post-COVID Transition

	Frequency	Percent
Being alone most of the time	1	1.7
I am not comfortable with face-to-face communications.	1	1.7
I don't feel comfortable in face to face conversations	1	1.7
I don't have difficulty	1	1.7
I was at home all the time and I couldn't be in a real English conversation	1	1.7
In-person meetings	1	1.7
Nothing	50	83.3
Persian	1	1.7
Postponing the development of face-to-face communication skills	1	1.7
social interaction challenges, adapting to changes in communication norms	1	1.7
speaking	1	1.7
Which vaccine is the best.	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

Table 4.65 summarizes the challenges participants experienced during the post-COVID transition, including both language-related and broader social adaptation difficulties.

The majority of participants (83.3%) reported no difficulties, indicating that most did not experience significant struggles in language use or communication after the pandemic. Among those who did face challenges, several themes emerged:

- Language-related difficulties were mentioned by 6.7% of participants, including challenges in speaking English (3.3%) and difficulties related to Persian or French (1.7% each).

- Social and communication challenges (not necessarily language-related) were noted by 6.8% of participants, including discomfort with face-to-face communication (3.4%), adjustments to new social norms (1.7%), and struggles with in-person meetings (1.7%).
- A small number of participants (1.7%) mentioned personal concerns, such as spending more time alone or delays in developing face-to-face communication skills.

While most participants did not report difficulties, these findings suggest that for a minority, the post-pandemic period involved both language-related and broader social adaptation struggles.

Return to Face-to-Face Communication at Work Post-COVID

This section focuses on participants' experiences of returning to in-person communication at work after the pandemic restrictions were lifted.

Table 4.66: Participants' Extent of Return to Face-To-Face Communication at Work In The Post-Covid Era

	Frequency	Percent
0-10% still online	25	41.7
20-30% still online	6	10.0
40-50% still online	9	15.0
50-60% online	12	20.0
Mostly online	8	13.3
Total	60	100.0

A majority, 41.7%, reported that only 0-10% of their communication remains online, indicating a return to in-person interactions. However, 20% still conduct 50-60% of their communication online, and 13.3% report being mostly online. Smaller percentages, 10% and 15%, indicate that 20-30% and 40-50% of their communication, respectively, remains online.

Methods of Communication with Friends in the Post-COVID Era

Participants were asked to identify the methods they used to communicate with their friends after the pandemic. This section explores the frequency and type of communication methods employed, reflecting the ongoing changes in social interaction practices.

Table 4.67: Methods of Communication with Friends among Participants in The Post-COVID Era

Communication Method	Frequency	Percent
Phone	29	48.3
Social media	40	66.7
In person	56	93.3
Online (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.)	21	35.0
Texting	27	45.0
Apps like WhatsApp, FaceTime, others	34	56.7
Total	60	100.0

The most common method is in-person communication (93.3%), followed by social media (66.7%) and apps like WhatsApp and FaceTime (56.7%). Phone calls are also a method (48.3%), with texting (45.0%) and online platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams (35.0%) being less common but still notable.

Changes in Online Communication After COVID-19

Participants were asked whether the amount of online communication they engage in had changed since the start of the pandemic.

Table 4.68: Changes in The Amount of Online Communication Among Participants Compared to Pre-Covid-19 Level

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly decreased	1	1.7
Decreased	5	8.3
No change	14	23.3
Increased	28	46.7
Strongly increased	12	20.0
Total	60	100.0

The majority of the participants reported an increase in their online communication since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, 46.7% of participants indicated that their

online communication increased, while an additional 20.0% reported it strongly increased. This suggests that two-thirds of the participants experienced a rise in online interactions. In contrast, 23.3% of participants noted no change in their online communication habits. A smaller percentage saw a decrease, with 8.3% reporting a decrease and 1.7% indicating a strong decrease.

Participants’ Practices of Social Distancing Post-COVID

This section explores participants' current behaviors regarding maintaining physical distance from others after the pandemic.

Table 4.69: Participants’ Current Practices in Maintaining Distance from Others Post-COVID-19

	Frequency	Percent
Never	15	25.0
Rarely	20	33.3
Sometimes	18	30.0
Often	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0

The majority of participants indicated that they continue to maintain some level of distance from others post-COVID-19. A portion, 33.3%, reported that they rarely try to keep their distance, while 30% stated they sometimes do. Only 11.7% of participants often maintain distance. On the other hand, 25% of participants never try to keep their distance, suggesting a quarter of the surveyed individuals have returned to pre-pandemic social behaviors without concern for maintaining physical distance.

Sources of COVID-19 information

Participants were asked to identify the sources and languages through which they obtained information about COVID-19. This section examines the variety of media platforms, government sources, and personal networks that individuals relied on during the pandemic to stay informed.

Table 4.70: Sources of COVID-19 Information for Participants

Source	Frequency	Percent
None (do not care about COVID-19)	6	10.0
Canadian media (TV, online newspapers, etc.)	20	33.3
Canadian local government sources like Provincial Health websites	20	33.3
Canadian local municipality sources	8	13.3
Social media	49	81.7
My friends	29	48.3
Media in my home country	17	28.3
Internet in Canada	30	50.0
Internet in my home country	10	16.7
My husband	1	1.7
None	1	1.7

Table 4.70 illustrates the various sources from which participants obtain information about COVID-19. The majority, 81.7%, rely on social media platforms, indicating their role in disseminating information during the pandemic. Additionally, Canadian media (33.3%) and local government sources like Provincial Health websites (33.3%) are also prominent, reflecting trust in official and local sources of information.

Friends are another critical source, with 48.3% of participants obtaining COVID-19 information from them, underscoring the importance of personal networks. A notable portion, 50%, accesses information through the internet in Canada, suggesting reliance on digital platforms for updates. Meanwhile, 28.3% use media from their home countries, indicating a preference for news from familiar sources. Interestingly, a small group (10.0%) indicated they do not care about COVID-19 information, reflecting varying levels of engagement with pandemic-related news. The findings highlight the diverse channels through which individuals seek information during uncertain times, emphasizing the role of both traditional and digital media in public health communication.

Languages Used for Accessing COVID-19 Information

Participants were also asked about the languages in which they preferred to receive COVID-19 information.

Table 4.71: Languages Used for Obtaining COVID-19 Information among Participants

Language	Frequency	Percent
My first language	39	65.0
English	52	86.7
French	3	5.0
None (do not seek COVID-19 information)	2	3.3
Other (please specify)	1	1.7
Persian and Turkish	1	1.7

The table shows the languages through which participants obtain COVID-19 information. The majority, 86.7%, rely on English, reflecting its widespread use for accessing pandemic-related updates. Additionally, 65% use their first language, indicating comfort and preference for information in their native tongue. French is utilized by 5% of participants, highlighting a smaller but notable segment accessing information in this language. Interestingly, 3.3% of participants do not seek COVID-19 information at all. One participant (1.7%) specified obtaining information in another unspecified language, while another (1.7%) mentioned obtaining information in both Persian and Turkish.

4.10 Analysis of the Interviews

The interview data provided rich insights into the lived experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada, highlighting the linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic challenges they encountered. The qualitative analysis revealed several key themes, including language barriers, adaptation to Canadian society, the impact of COVID-19 on communication and social integration, and the role of digital tools in maintaining connections. Each of these themes is supported by direct quotations from participants, ensuring the authenticity of their voices and perspectives.

Language Barriers and Communication Challenges

One of the most prominent themes emerging from the interviews was the challenge of acquiring and using English or French in daily interactions. Many participants expressed frustration over their struggles with language, which significantly influenced their ability to secure employment and integrate into Canadian society.

Participant ST33 noted, "At some point, I feel like a fish out of water. I cannot follow what's going on. And it's very bad. It's been very bad to me." This sense of disorientation and difficulty in navigating conversations, particularly in professional or social settings dominated by native English speakers, was echoed by several interviewees.

Similarly, DA19 described how language barriers affected their professional life: "I sometimes feel like, as an immigrant, as somebody who's new to this country, I'm not always taken seriously. Sometimes my skills and abilities are underestimated." This highlights the broader issue of underemployment and the struggle for recognition in the Canadian labor market.

Adaptation to Canadian Society

Another recurring theme was the complex process of cultural adaptation. Many participants described their efforts to balance maintaining their Iranian heritage while integrating into Canadian culture.

Participant DA19 shared, "I do try to celebrate the things that we have, our roots. And I do try to sometimes, you know, talk about this with other people who are not from my country, showing them the true us and our true culture through traditions." This reflects a broader effort among immigrants to preserve their cultural identity while actively engaging with Canadian society.

Additionally, some participants expressed feeling a lack of belonging. DA19 stated, "There are times that I feel like an outsider. Especially when there are gatherings among, you know, native speakers, I still don't feel comfortable blending in with the crowd." This sense of exclusion underscores the social challenges many immigrants face beyond just linguistic barriers.

Impact of COVID-19 on Social Integration

The COVID-19 pandemic posed additional difficulties for Iranian immigrants, particularly in terms of social isolation and limited access to language learning opportunities.

Many participants reported that lockdowns and social distancing measures restricted their ability to practice English or French in real-life settings, slowing their language acquisition and integration.

Participant SM64 described how pandemic restrictions affected their language development: "I can say, it [Covid-19] limited in-person practice opportunities. It slowed my learning, especially for French. In Quebec, I can say this was the biggest impact for me."

Similarly, A2S1 reflected on how digital communication replaced in-person interactions: "Everything became online. I would say we had less interaction with professors, students, and our friends. It definitely affected us negatively." The shift to virtual communication was a common challenge, with many participants struggling to engage in meaningful conversations without the nuances of face-to-face interaction.

Role of Digital Tools in Language Maintenance

While digital platforms were widely used during the pandemic, their effectiveness in supporting language learning varied. Some participants found them helpful, while others struggled with accessibility and engagement.

Participant NH77 stated, "I just tried to find information on official government websites and get the most reliable." Similarly, AW55 shared, "During its peak, I usually went to the online website for like BC health to find the sources and information."

Several participants expressed frustration with online learning. AM03 mentioned, "I know a lot of people around me who were greatly affected by that. Because as far as I know, all the classes were canceled. So people were not able to participate in any kind of in-person or even online classes." This highlights the difficulty of adapting to virtual language learning environments, particularly for those who were accustomed to in-person interactions.

Despite these challenges, some participants noted that digital tools helped them stay informed and connected. FA56 explained, "I think definitely, one of them would be World Health Organization website. And then for specific information in Canada, just the Government of Canada website." This suggests that while language learning was hindered, digital platforms still played a role in providing access to critical information.

Although many interviewees spoke about their experiences with virtual communication, specific mentions of digital tools for language learning were limited.

However, some participants found digital platforms beneficial for maintaining their native language skills and staying in touch with their families.

DA19 noted, "I think it wasn't... it could be affected but not in a negative way. Because communication was online, I spent more time chatting with them or having video calls with them over the phone. So I think my Persian language skills were more improved. I had lots of time talking to my family and friends." Similarly, MR93 highlighted how online communication maintained ties with their home country, stating, "I searched both in Farsi and in English. So I searched in English to know what's going on in Canada. But sometimes I looked at some Persian doctors who were active on social media."

Additionally, MG21 emphasized the importance of having access to reliable digital resources in their native language, saying, "When it comes to health, like something that related to health, I prefer to use my mother tongue, not other languages." This highlights the role of digital tools in ensuring that vital information remains accessible across languages.

While digital tools did not fully replace the value of in-person interactions for language learning, they did provide alternative means for individuals to stay informed, connected, and engaged with their communities.

In conclusion, the interviews provide a deeper understanding of the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada. While language barriers and cultural differences remain significant challenges, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated these issues by limiting social interactions and access to language learning opportunities. However, the resilience of participants is evident in their efforts to maintain their heritage while integrating into Canadian society. The findings suggest that more tailored language support programs and community initiatives could enhance the integration experience for Iranian immigrants, ensuring that they feel a stronger sense of belonging in their new home.

4.11 Discussion

Relationship Between Socio-Demographic Factors and Adaptation Experiences:

This section addresses Research Question 1: *What is the relationship between socio-demographic factors (such as age, gender, education, and employment status) and the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada?*

This study reveals several key findings regarding the adaptation of Iranian immigrants in Canada. First, the demographic profile of the participants shows a geographically diverse distribution across Canada, with the highest concentration in British Columbia (46.7%), followed by Quebec and Ontario. This can be justified by the fact that British Columbia, particularly Vancouver, is known to host one of the largest Iranian communities in Canada, as supported by recent immigration data from Statistics Canada (2021). The prominence of this province in the sample could be influenced by both pre-existing social networks and the recruitment of participants through local Iranian communities, as research has shown that social and family networks play a role in determining settlement patterns among Iranian immigrants (Bozorgmehr, 1998; Babae, 2014). Most participants were in their 30s, reflecting a prime working-age group seeking career advancement or educational opportunities abroad, which aligns with global immigration trends showing that many Iranians immigrate in pursuit of better educational and career prospects (Abbasi-Shavazi et al., 2008). The higher representation of women (65%) also aligns with global immigration trends where women increasingly migrate for family reunification or to pursue personal and professional development (Donato et al., 2006).

Interestingly, it was found that participants with higher education levels in Iran faced more challenges in adapting to life in Canada. However, another key factor influencing this relationship is the correlation between education level and length of stay in Canada. Participants with lower education levels may have resided in Canada for a longer period, allowing them more time to adapt to the social, cultural, and economic environment. In contrast, highly educated immigrants may be more recent arrivals who have not yet had sufficient time to integrate into the workforce or develop strong social networks. This suggests that the challenges faced by highly educated immigrants may not solely stem from credential recognition or employment barriers but could also be partially attributed to their relatively shorter duration of residence. Future research should consider controlling for length of stay to provide a clearer understanding of the complex interplay between education and adaptation. This finding is also consistent with existing literature, which suggests that highly educated immigrants often experience higher levels of frustration due to underemployment or the non-recognition of foreign qualifications (Sweetman, 2017). Immigrants who have attained high levels of education may encounter difficulties in finding jobs that match their skills and expertise, resulting in a sense of dissatisfaction and a perceived loss of professional identity (Bauder, 2003). Highly educated individuals might have higher expectations of quickly

integrating into the Canadian workforce at a level commensurate with their qualifications. However, systemic barriers such as the need for re-certification or limited recognition of foreign degrees hinder their ability to secure employment in their fields, contributing to a prolonged adaptation process (Bauder, 2003). As seen in the case of Iranian immigrants, "brain waste," where skilled immigrants are employed in jobs that do not match their education or experience, is a common phenomenon that exacerbates the challenges of social and economic integration (Bauder, 2003; Dossa, 2004).

In summary, socio-demographic factors significantly influence the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada. Age, education, and employment are key determinants, while gender plays a more nuanced role. These findings underscore the importance of targeted support mechanisms to address the diverse needs of immigrants during their settlement journey. Specifically, immigrants with lower levels of formal education may benefit from accessible, community-based training programs focused on developing workplace and social communication skills, whereas highly educated immigrants may require specialized employment services, such as credential recognition programs, networking opportunities, and mentorship initiatives tailored to their professional fields. Additionally, given the gendered disparities in employment, policies aimed at increasing access to childcare, bridging programs, and workplace inclusion initiatives could further support female immigrants in securing stable employment. These targeted interventions can help mitigate the challenges associated with cultural and economic integration, ensuring that immigrants from various educational and occupational backgrounds have the resources necessary to succeed in Canada.

Cultural Adaptation and Integration of Iranian Immigrants

This section addresses Research Question 2: *How do Iranian immigrants in Canada experience cultural adaptation and integration, particularly with regard to maintaining their native Persian culture while adapting to Canadian society?*

In terms of adaptation, the majority of participants expressed positive sentiments about their decision to migrate, with 83.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing that moving to Canada was the right choice. Additionally, more than half (56.7%) of participants stated that they consider Canada their home to some extent, even if they did not strongly affirm this. However, only 18.3% strongly considered Canada their home, reflecting a nuanced perspective on long-term integration. This suggests that while many immigrants develop a sense of belonging in Canada,

the strength of this attachment varies, with some maintaining strong emotional ties to their country of origin while still identifying with their new home. This suggests that many immigrants maintain strong ties to their country of origin, especially in the early years of settlement, as they navigate the challenges of establishing a new life in a foreign country (Babae, 2014). While nearly half (45%) felt their values aligned with Canadian values, 46.7% either disagreed or remained neutral. This result can be justified by Berry's (1997) acculturation theory, which posits that successful integration depends on the alignment between an immigrant's cultural values and those of the host society. The slower process of integration, or lack thereof, is often seen in immigrant groups who experience greater cultural distance from the host society (Berry, 2019). As demonstrated in prior studies of Iranian immigrants in Canada and the USA, the acculturation process is often complex, requiring individuals to balance their attachment to Iranian culture with their efforts to adopt the norms and values of the host country (Bozorgmehr, 1998; Dossa, 2004).

In summary, Iranian immigrants in Canada experience cultural adaptation by balancing the preservation of Persian cultural practices with integration into Canadian society. The survey results show that while 45% of participants agreed that their values align with Canadian values, 46.7% either disagreed or remained neutral, suggesting varied levels of cultural adaptation. Additionally, 56.7% of participants indicated that they consider Canada their home to some degree, although only 18.3% strongly identified Canada as their home. These findings reflect a dual cultural identity, where Iranian immigrants integrate into Canadian society while maintaining connections to their heritage. The high level of cultural retention, combined with moderate levels of integration, highlights the complexity of the bicultural identity. This supports Berry's (1997) acculturation theory, which suggests that integration depends on the ability to balance cultural maintenance with engagement in the host society. This underscores the need for policies that support both cultural preservation and integration.

The Role of Bilingualism in Integration

This section examines Research Question 3: *What role does bilingualism (in English/French and Persian) play in the social and economic integration of Iranian immigrants in Canada, and how does it affect their daily interactions and sense of belonging?*

The study's exploration of language use further highlights the importance of English proficiency for daily interactions, with 66.7% of participants speaking English as their primary

language, while Persian remained significant, accounting for 41.7% of daily interactions. This result is consistent with previous research on Iranian immigrants, which shows a strong dual-language pattern, where the native language is maintained for personal and cultural ties, while the dominant language of the host country is used for professional and public life (Portes & Hao, 1998; Khosravi, 2020). The high importance placed on learning English (60% rated it as "very important") contrasts with the relatively low importance attributed to learning French, with only 18.3% deeming it "very important." This difference can be explained by the participants' geographic location, as the majority reside in English-dominant provinces, where French is not commonly used or required. This finding also reflects the broader pattern among Iranian immigrants in Canada, where the need to learn French is often minimized, except for those residing in Quebec, where bilingualism is necessary (Shafiefar, 2018).

In conclusion, bilingualism plays a pivotal role in the integration of Iranian immigrants in Canada. English facilitates economic and social participation, while Persian maintains cultural continuity and emotional support. This duality reflects the complexity of immigrant integration, highlighting the value of policies and programs that support bilingual development.

Challenges in Learning and Using Canada's Official Languages

This section examines Research Question 4: *What are the key challenges Iranian immigrants face in learning and using Canada's official languages (English and French), and how do these challenges affect their employment opportunities, social participation, and overall integration?*

The study shows that while 66.7% of participants reported speaking English as their primary language, proficiency levels varied. Specifically, 35% reported "good" or "fluent" proficiency, 46.7% described their proficiency as "some," and 18.3% had little to no proficiency before arriving in Canada. While a significant portion of participants had at least functional English skills, the fact that nearly half reported only "some" proficiency suggests that language barriers may have still played a role in certain aspects of adaptation.

Regarding employment, while some participants successfully transitioned into highly skilled jobs, others experienced downward occupational mobility. This is evident in the chi-square analysis ($\chi^2(4, N = 60) = 12.10, p < .001$), which revealed a significant relationship between occupational status in Iran and Canada. These findings indicate that while some participants transitioned into lower-skilled jobs, others pursued further education in Canada,

increasing the percentage of students from 11.7% in Iran to 16.7% in Canada. This suggests that employment shifts were influenced not only by job market challenges but also by educational opportunities. Participants with lower English proficiency may have faced additional difficulties in securing jobs that matched their qualifications, as language barriers often impact professional communication, networking opportunities, and credential recognition (Sweetman, 2017).

Thus, while a majority of Iranian immigrants demonstrated English proficiency, varying skill levels, particularly among those with only "some" proficiency, may have influenced their employment outcomes and overall adaptation process. Addressing these disparities through targeted language training and credential recognition programs can help facilitate smoother integration. In addition, Time constraints, financial limitations, and less effective online courses during COVID-19 hindered participants' ability to improve language skills, which in turn contributed to underemployment and restricted social interactions, reducing participants' ability to integrate fully into Canadian society.

These findings align with Berry's (1997) acculturation model, which underscores the critical role of language in both economic and social integration. Additionally, the challenges identified are consistent with previous research by Derwing and Waugh (2012), which highlights systemic and individual barriers to immigrant language learning.

In conclusion, language proficiency plays a significant role in integration, particularly in areas such as employment and social participation. The data shows that 66.7% of participants reported speaking English as their primary language, yet 46.7% assessed their proficiency as "some," and 18.3% had little to no proficiency. While a majority had functional skills, those with lower proficiency levels faced difficulties securing jobs that matched their qualifications. Research also supports that language barriers can limit employment opportunities and social engagement for immigrants (Derwing & Waugh, 2012; Sweetman, 2017).

Impact of COVID-19 on Language Acquisition, Communication, and Integration

This section examines Research Question 5: *How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the language acquisition, communication, and social integration of Iranian immigrants in Canada, particularly with respect to access to language programs, digital literacy, and health information?*

This study shows that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted key aspects of integration for Iranian immigrants in Canada. Language acquisition was hindered by the shift to online programs. Several participants noted that online language learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was less effective due to reduced interaction opportunities, technical difficulties, and digital literacy challenges (Interview Data). As one participant described, “I didn’t find online classes very useful; they weren’t as interactive, and I felt like I was just listening rather than practicing.” This aligns with broader research indicating that digital learning can pose challenges, especially for language acquisition, due to the lack of real-time engagement and conversational practice (Cherewka, 2020). Communication was also affected, with reduced face-to-face interactions limiting natural language practice, while participants relied more on online platforms to maintain social connections. Additionally, while 70% of participants agreed that local government information was sufficient during the pandemic, some participants expressed difficulties in understanding technical terminology related to COVID-19. For instance, one participant mentioned, “I understood basic information, but when it came to medical terms, I wasn’t always sure.” This aligns with research showing that linguistic barriers in healthcare can affect immigrants' ability to access and comprehend critical health information (Al Shamsi et al., 2020).

These findings align with research by Cherewka (2020), which emphasizes the role of digital literacy in immigrant integration during crises. Similarly, Werker et al. (2021) observed that reduced in-person interactions hinder language practice, echoing the experiences of participants in this study.

In summary, the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing challenges in language acquisition, communication, and access to resources, underscoring the need for improved digital literacy programs, multilingual health resources, and accessible in-person language learning opportunities.

Support Mechanisms During Crises

This section examines Research Question 6: *What specific support mechanisms, such as access to information, language assistance, and public health resources, do Iranian immigrants identify as most helpful during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and how can these services be improved?*

This study shows that Iranian immigrants in Canada rely on specific support mechanisms during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to clear, multilingual information from local governments was crucial, with 70% of participants agreeing that local government information was sufficient. The findings indicate that while many participants could follow general COVID-19 guidelines, some struggled with medical terminology and public health directives. A participant noted, “Some of the terms in the announcements were too complicated. I had to ask friends for clarification.” This reflects existing research showing that technical language in public health messaging can create accessibility barriers for non-native speakers (Al Shamsi et al., 2020). Language assistance also played a key role, as many participants valued accessible programs but noted the limitations of online-only formats during the pandemic. Given the restrictions on in-person learning during the pandemic, most participants relied on online language programs. However, some expressed that online-only instruction was not as effective for improving fluency. This highlights the importance of future hybrid learning models, which could combine online accessibility with in-person interaction once public health conditions allow. Additionally, the lack of culturally and linguistically tailored public health resources was a significant barrier. Although Persian-language health resources were available, some participants still faced comprehension difficulties due to complex terminology and the official nature of the translations. This suggests that beyond simply providing information in Persian, ensuring clarity and accessibility remains crucial.

These findings align with research emphasizing the importance of culturally competent support systems (e.g., Craig et al., 2021) and highlight systemic gaps in resource distribution, particularly for immigrant communities. Addressing these gaps requires enhanced multilingual communication strategies, improved language education models, and culturally sensitive health services.

In conclusion, Iranian immigrants identified multilingual information, hybrid language programs, and culturally tailored health resources as critical for effective crisis support. Implementing these improvements can help mitigate barriers and promote equity during future crises.

The findings of this study align with existing research on immigrant adaptation, language use, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (Berry, 1997; Derwing & Waugh, 2012; Cherewka, 2020). Iranian immigrants in Canada experience both integration successes

and systemic challenges, particularly in employment and credential recognition. Language barriers, limited recognition of foreign qualifications, and socio-economic constraints impact their ability to fully participate in Canadian society, as evidenced by participant responses regarding employment struggles. Strong community networks and bilingualism contribute positively to their adaptation, with many participants continuing to use Persian alongside English for cultural and social interactions. Additionally, participants identified the COVID-19 pandemic as a disruptive factor in language learning and employment opportunities, increasing reliance on digital communication for social interactions. These findings suggest that adaptation experiences vary across individuals based on socio-demographic factors rather than following a uniform progression. Given these complexities, targeted support mechanisms, such as credential recognition programs, bilingual education resources, and employment bridging initiatives, are essential to addressing the diverse needs of Iranian immigrants in Canada.

Chapter V: Conclusion, Implications, and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1 Overview

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the findings, highlighting their implications and addressing the study's limitations, delimitations, and directions for future research. The chapter begins with an overview of the implications, which are tailored for key stakeholders, including teachers, learners, and curriculum developers. These implications aim to bridge the gap between research and practice, offering actionable recommendations that can be implemented in educational settings to enhance the experiences and outcomes of both learners and education.

Next, the chapter outlines the limitations of the study. These limitations acknowledge the constraints that may have influenced the research process or the generalizability of the findings. Addressing these limitations ensures a balanced interpretation of the results and sets the foundation for future improvements in similar research designs. Alongside this, the delimitations are outlined to clarify the specific scope and boundaries established during the study. These delimitations were necessary to ensure the research focus remained clear and manageable. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future studies, offering several directions for further exploration.

5.2 Conclusion

This study provides insights into the adaptation experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada, highlighting key socio-demographic factors, language use, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings reveal that adaptation is influenced by a combination of personal resilience, access to resources, and systemic barriers.

Demographic trends indicate a strong Iranian presence in British Columbia, where social networks and established communities play a crucial role in shaping migration patterns. Participants reported mixed experiences regarding integration, with many maintaining strong connections to their heritage while engaging with Canadian society.

Language emerged as a key factor in adaptation. While most participants reported using English in daily life, Persian remained important for cultural and social connections. Limited English proficiency was identified as a challenge for some participants, affecting employment and social participation.

Employment barriers, particularly for highly educated immigrants, were another significant challenge. The study found that professional underemployment and the non-recognition of foreign credentials contribute to dissatisfaction and hinder economic integration. Policies aimed at improving credential recognition and employment support services could facilitate smoother transitions for skilled immigrants.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced additional challenges, particularly in language acquisition and access to health information. Some participants struggled with understanding technical terminology related to public health messaging, highlighting the need for clearer, multilingual communication strategies.

Overall, the findings underscore the complexities of integration, with varying experiences influenced by individual backgrounds and systemic factors. While some immigrants successfully navigate their new environment, others face persistent challenges. Addressing these barriers through targeted support services, credential recognition programs, and accessible language training could enhance the integration process for Iranian immigrants in Canada.

5.3 Implications

The implications of this study offer valuable insights for teachers, learners, and curriculum developers, all of whom play pivotal roles in shaping the educational experience of Iranian immigrants in Canada. For teachers, the study underscores the importance of embracing culturally responsive pedagogy. Teachers can create inclusive classrooms by acknowledging and integrating their students' cultural backgrounds, values, and experiences. Recognizing and honoring the heritage of Iranian immigrant learners fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion. Language support also remains a crucial focus area. Teachers should prioritize programs that address the diverse levels of English proficiency in their classrooms. This can include integrating language learning into subject matter, promoting interactive conversation opportunities, and offering explicit vocabulary instruction. Furthermore, teachers should be

aware of the socio-emotional challenges that immigrant learners often face, such as isolation, cultural adjustment, and discrimination. Building strong relationships, fostering peer support programs, and incorporating social and emotional learning curricula can help students develop resilience and feel more supported in their new environment.

The findings also highlight the need for teachers to create spaces where female learners feel empowered and recognized, given the high proportion of female Iranian immigrants. Establishing mentorship programs and promoting gender-sensitive practices can ensure women feel valued and respected. Professional development for teachers is also essential. Continuous training on issues that affect immigrant populations—such as cultural differences, discrimination, and unique learning barriers—will enable teachers to better understand and respond to their students’ complex realities.

For learners, the study reveals the dual importance of developing English proficiency and maintaining their native language, Persian. While English proficiency is vital for academic, professional, and social integration, preserving one’s cultural identity remains equally significant. Learners can engage in activities that promote bilingualism, connect with community groups that celebrate Iranian culture, and find ways to maintain their cultural ties while enhancing their language skills. The study also suggests that self-advocacy is key to navigating the challenges of a new educational landscape. Learners can benefit from actively seeking resources such as language classes, professional development, or mental health support to promote personal growth and resilience.

Social connections and community engagement also offer vital pathways to integration. Building networks with peers, mentors, and established communities can provide guidance, reduce isolation, and create a greater sense of belonging. Immigrants may need to adapt their skills, pursue additional credentials, or retrain to match local job market requirements. Additionally, the study addresses the possibility of facing discrimination or prejudice. Immigrants should develop strong support systems, report discrimination when it occurs, and engage in efforts that challenge stereotypes and promote awareness.

For curriculum developers, the study highlights the importance of developing flexible language programs that account for the varied proficiency levels of immigrants. The findings indicate that Iranian immigrants rely on Persian for cultural connections while using English

for professional and social interactions. Language programs that incorporate bilingual support mechanisms and emphasize practical communication skills could better support integration.

Additionally, given the challenges related to credential recognition, curriculum developers could consider creating specialized training modules focused on professional language use, workplace communication, and industry-specific terminology to facilitate smoother employment transitions for immigrants. Developing structured pathways for immigrants to enhance their language skills while addressing employment needs may improve integration outcomes. Creating curricula that validate diverse identities promotes inclusion and helps learners connect with their heritage. Flexible language programs that balance English acquisition with native language preservation can help meet the needs of immigrant learners, accommodating different levels of language proficiency through differentiated instruction. Curricula should also address the socio-emotional aspects of learning, providing programs that focus on resilience-building, cultural awareness, and emotional support.

The study emphasizes the need for curricula to offer pathways for foreign credential recognition, requalification programs, and bridging courses. These programs can reduce underemployment among highly educated immigrants and allow them to achieve their career potential. Career-oriented and skill-based training should be included, focusing on job-market readiness, soft skills development, and technical certifications. Gender-sensitive programming should also be a priority, ensuring female learners feel supported and valued through mentorship opportunities and empowerment initiatives.

Curriculum developers should also prioritize anti-discrimination education, promoting diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence within educational settings and the broader community. By challenging stereotypes and fostering cross-cultural understanding, educational content can prepare learners to thrive in diverse communities. Lastly, curricula must reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, incorporating content on public health literacy, mental health support, and adaptations to virtual learning environments.

5.4 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Several limitations must be acknowledged to provide a balanced understanding of the findings. First, the study focused exclusively on Iranian immigrants in Canada, limiting the generalizability of the results to other immigrant groups or nationalities. Cultural, linguistic,

and socio-economic factors unique to Iranian immigrants may not be representative of other populations. Second, the study relied on self-reported data from questionnaires and interviews, which are subject to biases such as social desirability or inaccurate recall. Participants might have over- or underestimated their experiences, particularly regarding their challenges or successes in adapting to life in Canada.

A key limitation of this study is the use of adaptation as a proxy variable rather than a standardized acculturation scale, such as the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Testa et al., 2019). While proxy measures are useful when direct measurement is not available, they introduce several concerns. First, the absence of a validated scale limits the comparability of these findings with previous studies that used established instruments. Second, the validity of the adaptation construct remains uncertain, as no psychometric analysis was conducted to confirm whether the proxy variable accurately reflects adaptation. Third, without proper scale validation, it is unclear whether the adaptation variable is unidimensional or represents multiple underlying factors. Additionally, since the study relied on self-reported perceptions of integration, belonging, and cultural alignment, responses may be influenced by personal interpretation, social desirability bias, and situational factors (Perry & Felce, 2002). Future research should incorporate standardized measures to enhance the reliability and generalizability of findings while also considering qualitative approaches to capture nuanced aspects of adaptation (Flake et al., 2022).

Another limitation was the relatively small sample size, which may not fully capture the diversity within the Iranian immigrant community in Canada. Variations in educational background, socio-economic status, and regional differences within Iran could influence the findings but may not be adequately represented in the sample. Furthermore, the study primarily examined participants who immigrated to Canada before or during 2020. This may limit insights into the experiences of Iranian immigrants who arrived after 2020.

Additionally, the research did not employ a longitudinal design. While the data provided insights into participants' experiences at a specific point in time, it did not capture the progression of their adaptation and integration over a longer period. A longitudinal approach could have revealed how challenges and achievements evolved as participants spent more time in Canada. The lack of control over external variables, such as the COVID-19 pandemic's

impact on immigration trends and settlement experiences, may also have influenced the outcomes.

Finally, the study focused primarily on academic and linguistic adaptation and less on other dimensions of integration, such as social, political, or economic integration. Future research could expand the scope to include these areas, providing a more comprehensive view of the immigrant experience.

The study's delimitations were established to maintain a clear focus and manage the scope of the research. One delimitation was the choice to examine only Iranian immigrants in Canada. This decision was made to explore the unique cultural and linguistic challenges faced by this specific group and to provide targeted recommendations for educators and policymakers. The study excluded immigrants from other nationalities, as their experiences might differ significantly due to varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The research also concentrated on participants who immigrated before a particular cutoff year, 2020, to ensure they were residing in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision was made to focus on the experiences of individuals who faced the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic while living in Canada. Immigrants arriving after 2020 were excluded, as they may not have experienced the pandemic in the same way within the Canadian context.

In terms of methodology, the study used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. While this provided rich and triangulated insights, it deliberately excluded other research designs, such as purely ethnographic or experimental studies, to maintain coherence and feasibility within the study's timeframe. Additionally, the study focused on academic and linguistic adaptation, with less emphasis on other aspects of integration, such as cultural or social dimensions. This focus aligned with the primary aim of understanding language learning and educational needs but left other areas for future exploration.

Finally, the instruments used, such as questionnaires and interviews, were designed to gather data related to language proficiency, educational experiences, and perceptions of integration. These tools were not intended to measure broader constructs, such as psychological

well-being or economic success, which were outside the study's scope. The delimitations ensured that the research remained manageable while addressing its core objectives.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Future research can explore the experiences of Iranian immigrants across different countries to compare how varying immigration policies and cultural contexts influence their adaptation. Investigating the impact of immigration on other dimensions of life, such as social integration, economic success, or psychological well-being, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences. Expanding the focus to include these areas would enrich the findings and offer a more holistic perspective.

Further studies can adopt a longitudinal approach to track the adaptation journey of Iranian immigrants over several years. This would help identify patterns and changes in their challenges and achievements over time, offering insights into long-term integration processes. Researchers can also examine how different factors, such as age, gender, or socio-economic status, shape the immigrant experience. This would reveal variations within the community and allow for more tailored recommendations.

Examining the role of host communities and their attitudes toward immigrants could also offer valuable perspectives. Understanding how local support systems, social networks, and policies facilitate or hinder integration would provide practical insights for fostering inclusive societies. Future studies could also include immigrants from diverse backgrounds to identify shared and unique challenges across different nationalities and cultural groups.

Another area for exploration involves the use of digital tools and online platforms in helping immigrants adapt to new environments. Researchers can assess how technology supports language learning, access to services, and community building. Additionally, the effects of global events, such as pandemics or economic crises, on immigration trends and settlement experiences can be studied to understand how external factors shape the immigrant journey.

Finally, further research can investigate how second-generation immigrants navigate their cultural identities and educational experiences. This would help in understanding the long-term impact of immigration on families and communities. These suggestions aim to encourage

broader and deeper explorations into the multifaceted experiences of immigrants and their integration into new societies.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Participation criteria:

Being an immigrant from Iran who came to Canada during or prior to 2020.

Being 18 years or older

Speaking Both Farsi (Persian) and English

Survey Questions

Please construct and enter your participant code consisting of 2 letters, 2 numbers in any order, (e.g., MK45, L3R9, 14SF, etc.).

Please write down your participant code somewhere you can find it, as you will need it for an interview as well (if you decide to participate in the interview).

Part 1. Demographics

1. Which city/town and province in Canada do you live in?
2. How old are you? (please insert your age as a number)
3. What gender do you identify with? Man/Woman/Other (if you wish, you can specify 'other' ...)
4. What is/are your first language(s), i.e., the language(s) you learnt from your parents at home?
5. What is/are your second language(s) learnt in Iran (if any)?
6. What province or area of Iran are you from?...
7. Would you describe yourself as a minority in your home country?
Not a minority/ethnic/religious/racial/ linguistic/disabled/LGBTQ/ other (please specify).
8. How do you identify yourself ethnically?

Iranian/Iranian Canadian/ Canadian Iranian/ Iranian/ other (please specify if other).....

9. What is your marital status?

Single/married/divorced/ have a partner/ single parent

10. Do you have a child/children? Y/N

11. Are you currently employed?

Yes, full time/ Yes, part-time/ no/ I am a homemaker/ Other

12. What was your occupation in your home country? ...

13. What is your occupation now in Canada?...

14. How do you compare the social prestige of your current work in Canada as compared to your home country?

It is better in Canada /about the same / it is worse in Canada/N/A -do not work/

15. How do you evaluate your economic situation (in terms of your ability to buy necessary items) in Canada as compared to your home country (before the war)?

It is better in Canada /about the same / it is worse in Canada

16. How do you evaluate your current economic situation in Canada (roughly)?

Below average (struggle economically)/average (OK)/above average (comfortable economically)

17. What was your highest level of education in your home country?

N/A (did not study in my home country)

Primary school

Secondary School Certificate

Technical or Vocational Certificate

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

- Doctorate Degree
 - Other (please specify)
18. What was your highest level of education in Canada?
- N/A (did not study in Canada)
 - Secondary School Certificate
 - Technical or Vocational Certificate
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Doctorate Degree
 - Other (please specify)
19. In which year did you move to Canada?
20. How old were you when you moved to Canada?
21. What was the initial process of you coming to Canada?
- Refugee/permanent residency/ spousal visa/working visa/student visa/other
(please specify)
22. What was the reason for you to come to Canada? Please check as many answers as apply in your case.
- Economic reasons
 - Political reasons
 - To escape civil unrest
 - To escape internal conflicts
 - To escape crime and violence
 - To escape discrimination
 - Refugee
 - Came to study and stayed

- Searching for better opportunities for myself
- Searching for better opportunities for my children
- Searching for a better job
- To avoid discrimination
- Just happened so
- Married a Canadian spouse
- Didn't want my children to serve in the army
- Parent's decision to emigrate
- Desire to be reunited with relatives living in Canada
- Other (please specify)

Part 2. Adaptation

1. Do you think that your move to Canada was the right decision?
Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree
2. Do you feel well integrated in Canada in general?
Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree
3. Do you feel that Canada is your home now (not physically, but in terms of your mindset)?
Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree
4. How many relatives do you have in Canada beyond your spouse and children?
None/ 1 family member/ 2-3 family members/ 4 or more family members
5. How many friends or acquaintances do you interact with who know your first (home) language?
None/1 /2-3/ 4-6/ 7 or more

6. How many friends or acquaintances do you interact with who speak your second language (of your home country)?
- None/1 /2-3/ 4-6/ 7 or more/N/A-no second language
7. Do you attend your community events where your first language is spoken?
- Never /rarely/sometimes/often/all the time
8. Do you attend your community events where your second language (of your home country) is spoken?
- Never /rarely/sometimes/often/all the time/ does not apply (no second language learnt in the home country)
9. Have you ever felt discriminated against in Canada?
- Never /rarely/sometimes/often/all the time
10. My values, norms, beliefs, and attitudes on important matters seem to be like that of the majority of Canadians.
- Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree
11. I often feel that I don't really fit into the Canadian way of life and Canadian values.
- Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree
12. I am most comfortable communicating with /click as many as applies in your case/
- Canadians (born and raised in Canada, non-indigenous)
 - People of my ethnic group
 - People who speak my first language
 - People who speak my second language
 - Immigrants from groups other than mine
 - Indigenous people
 - Other (please specify)

Part 3. Languages

1. Did you have any proficiency in English before coming to Canada? None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
2. Did you have any proficiency in French before coming to Canada?
None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
3. How would you evaluate your English proficiency now?
 - reading: None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
 - writing: None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
 - speaking: None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
 - listening: None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
4. How would you evaluate your French proficiency now?
 - reading: None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
 - writing: None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
 - speaking: None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
 - listening: None/very little/some/ fluent/highly fluent
5. How important is it for you to learn English now?
Not at all, little, somewhat, important, very important
6. How important is it for you to learn French now?
Not at all, little, somewhat, important very important
7. What is the amount of your daily interactions in different languages (in percentage 0-100%) now?
 - English
 - French
 - Farsi
 - Other (specify)

- Other (Specify)
 - Other (specify)
8. How important is it for you to maintain the following languages now?
- Farsi Not at all, little, somewhat, important very important
 - Other (specify) Not at all, little, somewhat, important very important
 - Other (Specify) Not at all, little, somewhat, important very important
9. What languages does your partner or spouse primarily speak with you and/or children at home?
10. Which language(s) are you more comfortable communicating in now? ...
11. Communicating in which language is more enjoyable for you? ...

Part IV Covid impact on language learning and maintenance (Primary Research)

1. How were you communicating with your friends before COVID? (roughly of 100 total%)
- Phone
 - Social media
 - In person
 - Online (zoom, Microsoft teams,)
 - Texting
 - Apps like WhatsApp, Facetime, others
 - Other (please specify)
2. Are you now concerned about you or your loved ones catching COVID-19?
- Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree
3. Does COVID-19 add stress to your life now?
- Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree

4. Do you think you have enough information about COVID-19 spread now?
Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree
5. From what sources do you obtain COVID-19 information?
None (do not care about COVID-19)/Canadian media (TV, online newspapers, etc.)/Canadian local government sources like Provincial Health websites/Canadian local municipality sources/social media/my friends/ media in my home country/internet in Canada/internet in my home country/other (please specify)
6. In what languages do you obtain COVID-19 information?/select everything that applies/
My first language /my second language/English/French/other (please specify)/none (do not seek COVID-19 information)
7. Do you think you have access to enough information about COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters now? (disagree=not enough information, agree=enough information)
Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree/NA -do not care
8. Did you have problems accessing COVID-19 information because of the language barrier (all the information issued in the official languages)?
No problems at all, some problems, occasional problems, frequent problems, many problems all the time/NA -do not care
9. Do you wear masks in public now?
No, sometimes, all the time.
10. Do you experience problems understanding people who have masks on when talking?
Never /rarely/ sometimes/often/all the time
11. Do you experience problems being understood if you are wearing a mask in public?
Never /rarely/ sometimes/often/all the

12. In case of emergencies or crises (such as COVID-19), in what languages would you like to receive information about these events? (Select as many as applies)
English/ French /Farsi/ other (please specify)
13. Do you think that release of information about potential emergencies or crisis (such as COVID-19) in English only (and not in your first or second language) restricts your access to the vital information in emergencies?
Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree
14. While in Canada, did you have any problems understanding COVID-19 restrictions, vaccinations procedures and other COVID-related information?
Significant problems/ some problems / occasional problems / no problems
15. Were these problems related to language barrier (insufficient command of English or French)?
Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/ strongly agree /NA-no problems
16. Were problems with understanding COVID-19 information related to difficulty in finding this information?
Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/ strongly agree /NA-no problems
17. Did COVID-19 affect communication in your first or second (home) languages within the family?
Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree
18. How did COVID-19 affect communication in your first or second (home) languages within the family?
a) Face-to-face Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased
b) Online Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased
19. How did COVID-19 affect your communication in English (or French if this is the official language you mostly use) within your family?

- a) Face-to-face Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased
 - b) Online Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased
20. How did COVID-19 affect communication in your first or second languages with your friends and acquaintances?
- a) Face-to-face Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased
 - b) Online - Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased
21. How did COVID-19 affect communication in your first or second languages within your community (church, language schools, cultural activities, etc.?)
- a. Face-to-face Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased
 - b. Online Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased.
22. How did COVID-19 affect your opportunities to develop proficiencies in English (or French)?
- a. Face-to-face Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased
 - b. Online Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased.
23. Which opportunities to develop your English (or French) did you gain during COVID-19?...
24. Which opportunities to develop English (or French) did you lose during COVID-19? ...
25. How did COVID-19 affect your children's acquisition of your home language(s) during COVID-19?

Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased/NA-no children or not school age

26. How did COVID-19 affect your children's acquisition of English during COVID-19?

Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased

27. How did COVID-19 affect your communication in English or French at work?

a) Face-to-face Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased

b) Online - Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased.

28. How did COVID-19 affect your communication in English or French outside home and work? ...

a) Face-to-face Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased

b) Online - Strongly decreased/decreased/not affected/increased/strongly increased.

29. Did you understand COVID-related vocabulary, like COVID-19, PPE, etc.?

Not at all/poorly/some of it/most of it/all of it

30. Do you think that the information provided by the local government in Canada on COVID-19 was sufficient for you?

Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree

31. Do you think that the mass media in Canada provided sufficient information about COVID-19?

Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree

32. What were your specific challenges in accessing COVID-19 health information (select everything that applies) (infection spread rates, death tolls, vaccines and their availability, getting boosters, different vaccines, other (please specify)
33. Which if any, language-related difficulties are you experiencing in the post-COVID transition?
34. Have you switched back to full face-to-face communication at work?

0-10% still online, 20-30% still online, 40-50% still online, 50-60% online, mostly online

35. How are you communicating with your friends now? (roughly of 100 total%)
- Phone
 - Social media
 - In person
 - Online (Zoom, Microsoft teams,)
 - Texting
 - Apps like WhatsApp, Facetime, others

36. Has the amount of your online communication increased (as compared to before COVID-19)?

Strongly decreased/ decreased / no change/ increased /strongly increased.

37. Are you trying to keep your distance from people now?

Never/ rarely /sometimes /often/ all the time

Appendix B: Interview

Effects of COVID-19 on language use and language attitudes by Iranian immigrants in Canada

1. What are your major challenges in Canada now?
2. How did COVID-19 affect your acquisition of English or French?
3. How was your communication in your home language and its maintenance affected by COVID-19?
4. Did wearing face masks make it difficult for you and others to understand each other?
5. How did school closure during COVID-19 affect you in terms of language use?
6. How did ESL school closure during COVID-19 affect you in terms of language use?
7. How did increased social distancing affect you in terms of language use?
8. How was your family affected by COVID-19 in terms of language use (English and Farsi) at home, online and outside home?
9. How was your community affected by COVID-19?
10. What difficulties with health information access did you experience during COVID-19?
11. Was it easy to find reliable information about COVID-19?
12. In what kind of sources did you look for and find information about COVID-19 during its peak?
13. Where did you look to find information about COVID-19?
14. In what languages were you looking for information?
15. What could be done to ease your search for health-related information in emergencies?
16. Are you proceeding with your English or French acquisition after COVID-19? Why?
17. Did you feel lonely or isolated during COVID-19?

18. What kind of support did you get upon immigration from Canadian institutions during COVID-19?

language

cultural

accommodation

financial

19. What kind of support did you get upon immigration from your family or friends in Canada during COVID-19?

language

cultural

accommodation

financial

20. Did you hang out with other Iranians during COVID-19 pandemic?

21. Have you felt a pressure to take care of your family during COVID-19 which may have impeded your personal

goals in immigration?

22. On a 10-point scale, how would you evaluate your computer skills?

23. On a 10-point scale, how concerned are you about COVID-19 now?

24. Why are you concerned or not concerned about COVID-19 now?

25. How have recent events in Iran affected your language and culture attitudes