

The Employment Status of African Immigrant parents and its impact on children's wellbeing in BC, Canada.

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Introduction

Canada is widely recognized for its commitment to inclusivity and diversity, a value that resonates with most Canadians. In recent years, the country has experienced a significant increase in its immigrant population, with a notable surge in African immigrants. The 2021 Census reports that 1.5 million people in Canada identify as Black, with over 32% born in African countries (Statistics Canada, 2023). Despite Canada's welcoming policies, employment has emerged as a critical challenge for African migrants in British Columbia.

The study explored the impact of African immigrant parents' employment status on their children's wellbeing in British Columbia. It used a quantitative approach, following the positivist paradigm, and a questionnaire to collect data from 51 African immigrant parents in BC. The study sought to establish causal relationships between parental employment and children's wellbeing through regression analysis. It also explored some mediating factors like family support and relevant policies to provide insights for policy and intervention development tailored to the needs of African immigrant families in Canada. The study prioritized reflexivity and ethical considerations to ensure the research process is conducted ethically and respectfully. It aimed to contribute valuable insights through empirical evidence, which could inform future studies and aid in developing targeted policies in BC.

Literature Review

This literature review examined various themes, such as the experiences and employment status of African immigrant parents and the well-being of their children. Which includes academic performance, mental, emotional, behavioral/physical, and social well-being.

According to Ager and Strang (2008), cited by Khawaja and Hebbani (2018), employment is fundamental for successful migrant integration, whether full-time, part-time, or self-employed. Parental employment is crucial in shaping parent-adolescent relationships (Bacikova-Sleskova et al., 2010). Income is also a fundamental component of a family's financial wellbeing. However, limited income, often associated with precarious employment among African immigrant parents in Canada (Salami et al., 2020), can have direct consequences on their children's access to basic needs, educational opportunities, and overall quality of life. Beiser et al. (2002) found that 36.4% of new immigrant children aged 4-11 lived in poverty, compared to 13.3% of non-immigrant children and persistent poverty among immigrant families negatively impacts children's behaviour, both internally and externally. Nonstandard work schedules, as defined by Presser, cited by Strazdins et al., (2006), involve work during evenings, nights, and weekends, reflecting the demands of the 24/7 economy. It includes rotating shifts, split shifts, irregular hours, and weekend work, according to Li et al. (2014). Irregular work hours, particularly those associated with nonstandard work schedules can disrupt family life, affecting the time parents have available for their children (Strazdins et al., 2006).

The well-being of children, particularly within the context of African immigrant families in Canada, is a multifaceted concept encompassing various dimensions, including mental, emotional, behavioural/physical, and social wellbeing (Stantam & Chase, 2010). Mental

wellbeing refers to a child's emotional and psychological health, including their resilience, self-esteem, and stability (Keyes, 2007). Beiser et al. 's 2002 findings suggest that persistent poverty has more substantial adverse effects on children's IQs and school attainment. As discussed by Strazdins et al. (2006), nonstandard work schedules also affect parents' ability to actively engage in their children's education, attend school events, or provide consistent academic support at home. In 2010, Han et al. conducted a longitudinal study based on US samples, as cited by Li et al. (2020). The study found that the number of years that mothers and fathers worked evening or night shifts was linked to increased behavioural problems in children between the ages of 4 and 10. Additionally, adolescents whose parents worked evening or night shifts were at a higher risk of developing depression and engaging in risky behaviours such as smoking, drinking, drug use, delinquency, and sexual activity.

Several mediating factors like family support, employment and educational policies come into play when examining how the employment status of African immigrant parents in BC, Canada, affects their children's well-being. Presser (2003), as cited by Strazdins et al., (2006), suggests that parents working a rotating schedule increases the reliance on grandparents for informal childcare. This practice of seeking transnational support is called the "importation of grandmothers" (Salami et al., 2020). Policies that address issues such as employment rights, family support, and education can either mitigate or exacerbate the impact of a parent's employment status on their children. Scholars analyzed a global legislation database that mandates worker support policies for 175 countries. Employment policies like flexible work hours and time off for children's health and educational needs were found to reduce parental stress and improve child health, behaviour, and cognitive achievement (Heinrich, 2014).

Despite issues raised in existing literature, there was limited research on the employment experiences of African immigrant parents in BC, Canada, and how it affects the well-being of their children. This research sought to fill that gap and answer the question: *How does the employment status of African immigrant parents in BC, Canada, impact their children's well-being?* As Canada's immigrant population continues to grow, with BC being the second province after Ontario, with 17.1% (Statistics Canada, 2021), the study aims to investigate how the employment status of African immigrant parents in BC affects the well-being of their children.

Methodology and Ethical Considerations

The study aligned with the Positivist paradigm. According to Arghode (2012), as cited by Rheid et al. (2017), this paradigm is based on the belief that the world exists independently and that objective methods can be applied to acquire truth. Only one set of true events or facts can be discovered in this paradigm. The aim was to establish a causal relationship between parents' employment status (income or nonstandard work schedule) and their children's well-being, including academic performance, emotional and mental well-being. It was primarily quantitative, and questionnaires were used as the primary data collection method, with the data being predominantly numerical. The questionnaire covered broad areas such as demographic information (age, gender, educational background, length of stay in Canada), employment status (income level, work hours, and nonstandard work schedules), and measures of children's well-being, including academic performance, mental, emotional, behaviour/physical and social wellbeing (See Appendix D). The inclusion criteria were African immigrant parents who were residing in British Columbia at the time of survey completion and had children living with them

or had previously lived with their children in BC. African immigrant parents who did not live in British Columbia at the time or had children living in their home country were excluded.

After receiving ethics approval from the Thompson Rivers University Research Ethics Board (Certificate #0000967215), recruitment letters were sent to potential partners. The project was conducted at Thompson Rivers University. Specifically, the survey was completed online and was accessible anywhere at the participants' convenience (private spaces). After obtaining consent, participants received survey links to provide their responses. Participation was voluntary, and participants received a \$10 gift card as a token of appreciation for their time and effort in contributing to the study. The research poster was shared with Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in BC, including Surrey, New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria, as well as with the African Canadian Heritage Association Kamloops and African Friendship Society Vancouver. The recruitment information was shared on their websites, newsletters, and social media channels. Some participants were also recruited from the Burnaby library and African markets/stores in Surrey. Consent forms were sent to interested participants. Once consent was obtained, participants were given access to complete the questionnaire or survey.

Data for the study were collected using the Survey Monkey platform. The questionnaire started with easy questions and progressed toward more difficult or sensitive ones to minimize participant distress (Reid et al., 2017). Participants were made aware of the option to withdraw from the study or to take a break and resume when capable. The data collected was stored on a Canadian server within the Survey Monkey Thompson Rivers University account. An account is fully compliant with privacy and data security regulations. No identifiable information was included in any research documents or publications. The data were analyzed using inferential statistics, specifically correlation analysis, to identify the relationship between the variables

under study. Summarized data were presented by calculating central tendency and dispersion measures, such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies (Reid et al., 2017). Codes were assigned to participants' open-ended responses and categorized. The data underwent thematic analysis, and Faculty mentors reviewed it to ensure its validity and accurate representation. For example, this led to doing a correlation analysis to provide robust support for the findings. Reflexivity, peer review, and debriefing were utilized to identify flaws and biases, improving the study quality and understanding of the data (Reid et al., 2017).

The current approaches to child and family welfare tend to focus on individual problems within families rather than considering broader systemic issues (Esquao & Strega, 2015). Initially, many African immigrant parents I met were hesitant to participate, believing the process was investigative and looking to assign blame. However, after further explanation and my disclosure as an African immigrant parent, a student, and someone passionate about the well-being of immigrant children, they felt more comfortable participating in the survey.

Research Findings

The study's sample consisted of 51 immigrant parents instead of 50, with one partially answering. The majority of participants were women, 62% (n=32) and 37.25% (n=19) were men. More than half of the participants, 50.98% (n=26) were within the 30-39 age category. Regarding the number of children, almost half 48.15% (n=24) of the participants shared that they have two children, followed by 28.85% (n=15) with three children and the others between one and more than four children. A total of 51 participants were recruited from 14 cities across the province of British Columbia. The highest were Kamloops (n=10) and Burnaby (n=8). See Table 1.1 for further details. The majority of the African immigrant parents who participated were originally

from Ghana (n=24) and Nigeria (n=14) and had lived in Canada for a period of 1-2 years, which accounted for 29.41% (n=15). This was followed by 25.49% (n=13) who had been in the country for 10 years or more, as shown in *Table 1.1*. There was a statistically significant positive relationship between length of time in Canada and income level ($r=.586$; $p\leq.001$). There was a statistically significant negative relationship between the length of time in Canada and the highest level of education attained by the participant ($r=-.293$; $p=.037$).

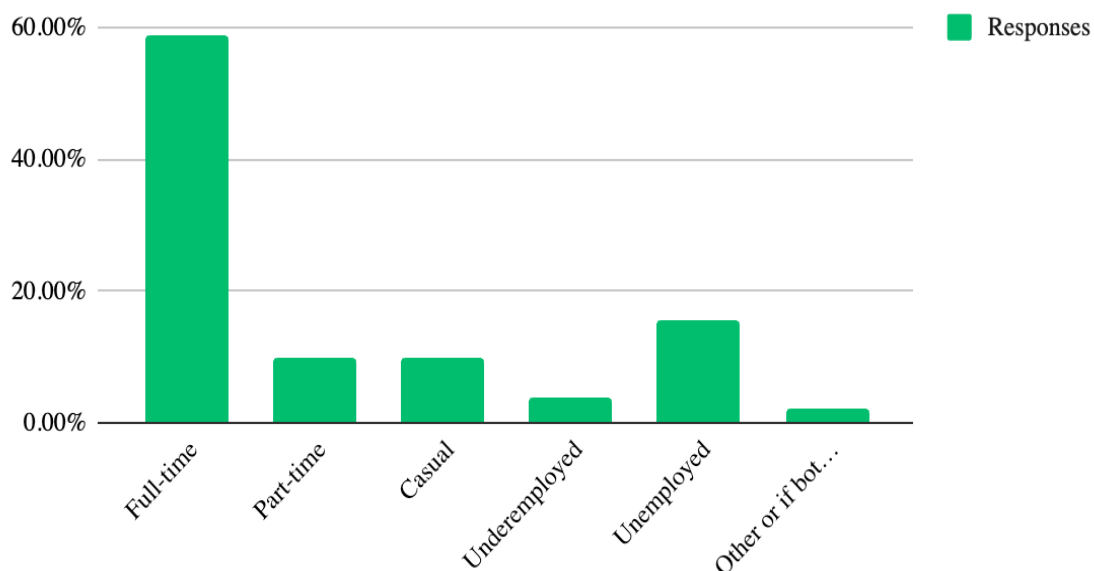
| TABLE: 1.1 Demographics | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| City of Participants in BC | No. of Responses | Percentage % |
| Kamloops | 10 | 19.6 |
| Burnaby | 8 | 15.69 |
| Surrey | 7 | 13.72 |
| Vancouver | 6 | 11.76 |
| Maple Ridge | 6 | 11.76 |
| Victoria | 3 | 5.88 |
| New Westminster | 2 | 3.92 |
| Prince Rupert | 2 | 3.92 |
| Coquitlam | 2 | 3.92 |
| Abbotsford | 2 | 3.92 |
| Prince George | 1 | 1.96 |
| Langley | 1 | 1.96 |
| Nanaimo | 1 | 1.96 |
| Participants' Country of Birth | No. of Responses | |
| Ghana | 24 | 47.05 |
| Nigeria | 14 | 27.45 |
| Kenya | 4 | 7.84 |
| Uganda | 2 | 3.92 |
| Burundi | 1 | 1.96 |
| Eritrea | 1 | 1.96 |
| Ethiopia | 1 | 1.96 |
| Congo | 1 | 1.96 |
| Sierra Leone | 1 | 1.96 |
| Zimbabwe | 1 | 1.96 |
| Length of stay in Canada | No. of Responses | Percentage % |
| Less than 1 year | 9 | 17.65 |
| 1- 2 years | 15 | 29.41 |
| 3-4 years | 7 | 13.73 |
| 5-10 years | 7 | 13.73 |
| 10 years and beyond | 13 | 25.49 |
| No. of children | No. of Responses | |
| 1 | 8 | 14.00% |
| 2 | 24 | 48.00% |
| 3 | 15 | 30.00% |
| 4 | 3 | 6.00% |
| More than 4 | 1 | 2.00% |

Employment and Income

The participants displayed a broad range of employment statuses, with over half, 58.82% (n=30), employed full-time, followed by 15.69% (n=8) who declared unemployed, Part-time and Casual 9.8% each (n=10), 3.92% (n=2) underemployed and 1.96% (n=1) self-employed.

(See Figure 1.1)

Which of the following best describes your current employment status at your primary place of employment?



Some unemployed African immigrant parents shared, *"Race-based discrimination in the job market makes it difficult to get a job, and also opportunities should be devoid of discrimination."* - P.22

"My unemployment situation is significantly limiting my ability to support my children and the entire family" - P.46.

Regarding multiple jobs, 78.43% (n=40) of African immigrant parents shared that they do not have multiple jobs. This could be due to the fact that most of them were employed full-time, with only a few being unemployed (n=8).

A significant portion of the participants, 43.14% (n=22), earned an annual household income below \$50,000, which suggests that economic challenges could impact their parenting and overall family well-being. Interestingly, a higher percentage (53.2%) (n=25) reported earning between \$50,000 and \$ 125,000 or more (See table 1.2). The weighted average for satisfaction with their income was 2.56, which represents the satisfaction level between dissatisfied and neutral. 21 responses of the 51 participants identified that their income sometimes posed challenges, while six (6) reported significant difficulties in meeting family needs, emphasizing the financial stress that these immigrant families may experience.

See Table 1.2

| TABLE: 1.2 | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|
| What is your approximate annual household income? | No. of Responses | Percentage % |
| \$0 to \$9,999 | 8 | 15.69% |
| \$10,000 to \$24,999 | 5 | 9.80% |
| \$25,000 to \$49,999 | 9 | 17.65% |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | 13 | 25.49% |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999 | 6 | 11.76% |
| \$100,000 to \$124,999 | 1 | 1.96% |
| \$125,000 and up | 5 | 9.80% |
| Prefer not to answer | 4 | 7.84% |
| Total | 51 | |

With respect to educational and professional qualifications, 82% of African immigrant parents had completed either bachelor's (n=21) or graduate degrees (n=21).

Work Hours and Non-Standard Schedules

The data revealed that the majority of participants (41.67%, n=22) work standard hours (31-40 hours per week), yet a considerable portion (25%, n=12) also work more than 40 hours weekly. The prevalence of non-standard work schedules, such as night shifts and weekend work, was notable, with 54.90% (n=28) working on weekends and 37.25% (n=19) working night shifts.

This irregularity in work hours is likely to affect family dynamics, particularly children's behavioral and physical well-being, as evidenced by 48.94% of participants acknowledging this impact. A parent shared,

"The length of my shifts (12 hours). Most daycares open later than 6:30 am and close by 6:00 latest. I work 07:15 - 19:15 or 19:15-07:15, which means that I have to rely on my older children to care for their younger siblings, and if they have school or have to be in an activity, it impacts my ability to provide care for my 7-year-old." -P.47735

Overall, nearly half of respondents (46.81%) gave a moderate score (weighted average=2.91) when asked about the extent to which non-standard schedules and work hours impact their children's well-being.

Academic Performance

The academic performance of the children of African immigrant parents in BC presents a mixed but generally positive picture. According to the survey, 50% (n=25) of the participants rated their children's academic performance as above average, with an additional 22% (n=11) reporting it as far above average. This suggests that despite the challenges associated with migration, including potential language barriers and adjustments to a new educational system, many children are excelling academically. However, 24% (n=12) reported their children's academic performance as average, and a small percentage, 2% (n=2), rated it below or far below average. A significant portion of the parents reported that their children are performing well.

The relationship between non-standard work schedules and how parents perceived the academic performance of their child(ren) was not significant ($t=1.719$; $p=.093$). Although not statistically significant, participants who reported irregular work schedules (nights, weekends,

and/or irregular hours of work) rated their child(ren)'s academic performance ($M=3.72$; $n=29$) lower than participants who reported that they do not work irregular hours ($M=4.19$; $n=16$).

Mental Well-Being

The survey results indicate that African immigrant parents have a generally positive outlook on the mental health of their children, with a weighted average score of 3.94. A significant proportion of parents, 40% ($n=20$), rated their child(ren)'s mental health as very good, and 30% ($n=15$) rated it as excellent. However, 24% ($n=12$) of parents rated their children's mental health as good, and 6% ($n=3$) as fair, pointing to a minority who may be struggling. More than half of the parents shared they have not noticed any behavioral changes that may indicate mental health concerns and are very confident their children can access adequate mental health support when needed.

Participants reported a statistically significant relationship between a non-standard work schedule and their child(ren)'s mental health ($t=2.753$; $p\leq.009$). Participants who reported irregular work schedules ($M=3.66$; $n=29$) rated their child(ren)'s mental health lower than participants without irregular work schedules ($M=4.38$; $n=16$).

Emotional Well-Being

The emotional well-being of the children was also rated positively by over half of the parents, with 53.06% ($n=26$) describing their children's emotional state as generally positive. This could be attributed to the emotional support provided by family and friends, as 67.35% ($n=33$) of parents expressed satisfaction with the emotional support they receive from family

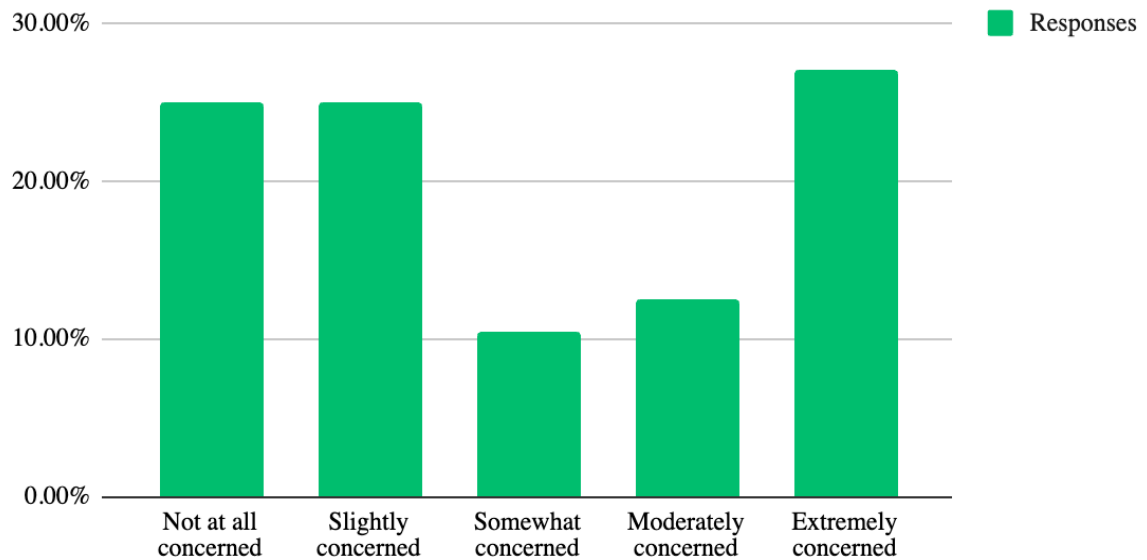
(nuclear and extended) and friends. Almost half of the participants shared that their child(ren) manage and express their emotions quite well. However, the data also suggest that not all children are thriving emotionally, as three parents (6.12%) reported occasionally negative emotional well-being for their children, indicating potential areas for intervention.

There was a statistically significant relationship between participants' work schedule and their rating of their child's overall mood and emotional wellbeing ($t=3.513$; $p\leq.001$). Participants with non-standard work schedules ($M=3.61$; $n=28$) reported a lower average rating for their child(ren)'s mood and emotional wellbeing than participants with a standard work schedule ($M=4.38$; $n=16$).

Behavioral/Physical Well-Being

The behavioral well-being of children is a significant concern for many parents. Nearly half of the participants, 48.94% (23 of 47 participants), indicated that their work hours have a direct influence on their children's behavior and physical well-being. They shared that their children engage in physical or outdoor activities a few times a week. A parent said, *"Working mixed shifts leaves me tired and sleep-deprived. Sometimes I do not have the energy to do activities with my children."* - P.79168 Furthermore, 27.08% (13 of the 48 responses) of African immigrant parents were extremely concerned about their children's behavior, while 21.91% ($n=11$) were moderate/somewhat concerned. (See Figure 1.2)

How concerned are you with your child/(ren)'s behavior or conduct at school and at home?



The relationship between non-standard work schedules and participants' concerns about their child(ren)'s behavioral conduct at school or home was not statistically significant ($t=0.513$; $p=.611$). Participants who reported irregular work hours rated their concerns ($M=2.74$; $n=27$) as lower than participants who reported not working irregular hours ($M=3.00$; $n=16$). The relationship between participant education level and concerns about their child(ren)'s behavior and conduct was statistically significant ($r=.300$; $p=.038$).

Social Well-Being

Social well-being is another area of concern, with 28.26% of parents indicating that their children only occasionally engage in social activities and are somewhat connected to their friends and local community. Participants shared that their children occasionally engage in social activities outside of school. A parent shared that, *"Most immigrants don't have the family and social networks that are essential for family well-being. It would be great if community resources*

could be put in place to fill these gaps, especially support for childcare. Children might not be obviously acting out (even though they are stressed) because they are trying to appear well-behaved". -P.74703

Employment-Related Support and Policy

Forty-six participants answered an open-ended question regarding employment-related resources that could enhance their children's well-being. Parents identified work-from-home opportunities (22/46) and more care days (10/46) as being employment support that could enhance their children's wellbeing. (See Table 1.3)

| TABLE: 1.3 | | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Employment support that could enhance overall children's wellbeing | No. of Responses | Codes |
| Work from home | 22 | |
| More care days | 10 | |
| Other – 14 | 14 | |
| - Flexible work/shorter week | 3 | 76500, 73332, 53713 |
| - (Full-time) work | 4 | 75215, 70896, 57470, 57151 |
| - Wellness program /employee resources | 2 | 75208, 74773 |
| - Day/after-school care | 4 | 73730, 62576, 53713, 53704 |
| - Nothing | 2 | 75379, 60338 |

Two parents shared that implementing an employee wellness program, including monthly mental and wellness checks for employees, especially parents, could significantly improve the well-being of our children.

In terms of Policy, African immigrant parents who participated identified flexible jobs, better community support, recognition of skills and prior work experience from immigrants' home countries, and race-based discrimination in the job market and within the community would enhance their children's well-being. Some participants expressed a strong preference for an *African Nanny System* as a means to maintain and pass down cultural values and promote

child well-being. *“It would preserve our culture while maintaining our way of child upbringing.”-P.17239 (See Table 1.4)*

| TABLE: 1.4 | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Policy support that could enhance overall children's wellbeing | No. of Responses | Codes |
| Flexible Job/work | 7 | 51096, 51097, 50960, 60140, 52159, 47624, 41643 |
| More affordable childcare | 6 | 25762, 73721, 37133, 37040, 38535, 42100 |
| No Racism & Discrimination | 5 | 71512, 37087, 52157, 37304, 08967 |
| Recognition of skills or prior work experience from other countries | 2 | 73721, 61658 |
| Community Support | 7 | 47305, 53790, 52089, 47305, 40816, 80473, 74703 |
| Better Immigration Policies/documentation | 4 | 40742, 48040, 47735, 17266 |
| African Nanny System/After school care | 4 | 17239, 38742, 73721, 37087 |
| Good Salary | 4 | 60023, 51096, 82226, 04771 |
| Other – 7 | | |
| - Immigrant Child Support Grant | 1 | 42605 |
| - More Daycares | 1 | 37040 |
| - Affordable childcare should be reviewed because of inflation. | 1 | 65004 |
| - Skill Training | 1 | 47715 |
| - Nothing | 3 | 03389, 79168, 62272 |

In response to a question regarding available support to parents, out of the 45 responses, 64.45% (n=29) of the parents said they rely on extended family (eg. grandparents), friends, and community/church members to balance work and childcare. A parent stated that, *“Better immigration policies to enable other family members aside grandparents to come and support child care. Some immigrant's parents are dead, and they can't bring others willing to help.”-P.40742*

Discussion

The findings revealed that most immigrant parents' incomes are below the BC annual income range of \$71,307.6 (British Columbia, 2024), which is consistent with Beiser et al. 's 2002 findings that most immigrant families are typically poorer than their host country counterparts. In 2022, full-time workers in British Columbia earned an average weekly wage of \$1,371.30, with an average hourly wage of \$34.60 (British Columbia, 2024). Despite the parents'

low income, the study revealed strong academic performance of children, which could be attributed to the high educational attainment of the parents themselves, as many hold at least a bachelor's degree. The findings also show that as the length of time in Canada went up, income level went up, but education level went down. This is definitely interesting and possibly suggests that African immigrant parents are coming in with pretty high levels of education, which is consistent with the literature (Statistics Canada, 2024). A subset of the children may still require additional academic support to reach their full potential.

The study participants rated their children's mental well-being positively, with 40% describing it as very good and 30% as excellent. This suggests that many children have adapted well to their new environment, maintaining a strong sense of mental well-being despite the psychological effects of migration, such as identity conflicts and cultural adjustment. The findings indicate that some African parents think their work hours affect their children's behavior and physical well-being. This could be because demanding work schedules and weekend jobs reduce parental involvement, impacting children's discipline, social interactions, and overall behavior (Strazdins et al., 2004). Interestingly, the nature of the work hours does not appear to influence how parents perceive their children's behavior, but the level of education of the parents does.

From the findings, while the ratings are pretty high for both parents with standard and non-standard work schedules, the parents with non-standard work schedules rated the mood and emotional wellbeing of their child(ren) lower. Regarding social well-being, 50% of the respondents indicated that their children are somewhat connected to their friends and local community, while 28.26% reported occasional engagement in social activities. This is consistent with literature that describes the social integration challenges faced by immigrant children,

including language barriers and cultural differences (Strazdins et al., 2006). However, the use of transnational support networks and the introduction of culturally relevant childcare options, such as the African Nanny system, could enhance social connections by providing children with familiar cultural experiences and a sense of belonging. Such a system would help preserve language, traditional songs, dance, and crafts, offer after-school care, and nurture children within the framework of their cultural heritage. While the literature focuses on transnational support (Support from Grandparents) and flexible work schedules (Salami et al., 2020), no previous study has identified the African Nanny system as a solution to the lack of social support. The integration into the local community is crucial for the overall development of children, as the findings suggest a need for enhanced community engagement opportunities to improve children's social well-being.

With respect to their employment situation, participants suggested the need for an employee wellness program for parents, which has not been reflected in the literature to date. Work-from-home opportunities (22/46) and More Care days (10/46) were commonly identified supports that could enhance children's well-being (Wall & José, 2004; Heinrich, 2014).

African immigrant parents who participated reported they encounter challenges in the job market due to race-based discrimination. This is also in line with the assertion made by Khawaja and Hebbani (2018) that immigrants with qualifications often struggle to have their credentials or experience recognized. Hence making African immigrant parents disproportionately more likely to be working in low-wage jobs. This confirms the COPCOC 2019 assertion that 41% of chronically poor immigrants (those living below the Low-Income Measure for 5 consecutive years) hold degrees.

Conclusion and Limitations

The study was conducted with a relatively small sample size of 51 participants, with one partially completed survey, and the majority were from two African Nations (Ghana and Nigeria). While the findings provide valuable insights, they may not fully represent the larger population of African immigrant parents in British Columbia, Canada. The sample was also limited to participants from 10 African countries, which might not fully capture the experiences of immigrant parents from other regions or cultures. The data collected in this study relied on self-reported responses from parents, which introduces the potential for bias, as respondents may provide socially desirable answers. The subjectivity in evaluating their children's academic, emotional, and social well-being could impact the reliability of the results. A qualitative approach could be utilized to gain deeper insight into the experiences of immigrant parents and their children's perspectives on well-being through in-depth interviews or focused group discussions.

In conclusion, the study's findings suggest that implementing an employee wellness program could be beneficial. This program would include monthly mental and wellness checks for all employees, particularly parents. Additionally, providing work-from-home opportunities for parents and introducing the African Nanny system for after-school care could help enhance social connections for children, provide them with familiar cultural experiences, and promote their overall well-being within the community. Policies could also be established to facilitate the recognition of credentials and experience for skilled immigrants, as highlighted by Premier David Eby (Carey & Yuzda, 2023), and to address the income disparity among African immigrants compared to their white Canadian peers. Many African immigrant parents, as highlighted in the study, despite their degrees and qualifications, work full-time in low-paying

jobs. A change in policy could enhance the socio-economic status of African immigrant parents, positively influencing family dynamics and wellbeing of children. Future researchers could employ longitudinal designs to track the wellbeing of African immigrant children over time, considering the dynamic nature of family experiences and potential changes in employment status.

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Dedication:

I dedicate this research to my beautiful wife, Sandra, and my two girls, Eliana and Michaela. Their unwavering support and understanding allowed me to pursue my BSW and carry out this research. We made it!!!

Acknowledgement:

This work was completed on the traditional lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (Kamloops campus) within Secwepemcúl'ecw, the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwépemc people.

APPENDIX A

Potential Partners Letter

Title: The Employment Status of African Immigrant parents and its impact on Children's wellbeing in BC, Canada.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to inquire about possibly having your members participate in my research project by completing questionnaires/surveys. The research is being conducted through the Faculty of Social Work at Thompson Rivers University. My name is Benjamin Baah Nketiah, and I am the lead investigator of a project titled; The Employment Status of African Immigrant Parents and its impact on Children's Wellbeing in BC, Canada. The purpose of the study is to investigate the experiences of African immigrant parents regarding parental employment and its impact on various aspects of their children's well-being, including mental, emotional, physical/behavioural, social, and academic wellbeing. There is currently a gap in research in this area. This research recognizes the unique challenges faced by African immigrant families, including potential racial discrimination, limited support networks, and cultural and language barriers. It is the intention that the results of this study will contribute valuable insights that can inform social work practices, policies, and interventions tailored to the needs of African Immigrant families.

For more information, please see the attached recruitment letter or contact me to discuss the research further.

If this research sounds interesting to you and it is not too much effort, I ask that you send out the attached recruitment letter to all the African Immigrant families in your organization and put up the recruitment letter in a common space such as a lunchroom or other social media platforms like WhatsApp group. If you have any questions or concerns about the study and the steps moving forward, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Baah Nketiah

Undergraduate student at Thompson Rivers University

Faculty of Education and Social Work

baahnketiahb22@mytru.ca (778)-512-1075

APPENDIX B
RECRUITMENT LETTER

Title: The Employment Status of African Immigrant parents and its impact on Children's wellbeing in BC, Canada.

Invitation to Participate in Research on African Immigrant Families in BC.

I am Benjamin Baah Nketiah, a 4th year Social Work Student at Thompson Rivers University.

I am inviting you to participate in an important research study focused on African immigrant families in British Columbia.

Purpose of the Study:

This research aims to investigate the experiences of African immigrant parents' employment and its impact on various aspects of their children's well-being, including mental, emotional, physical/behavioral, social, and academic well-being.

Why Your Participation Matters:

Your insights and experiences are invaluable in shaping a better understanding of the challenges faced by African immigrant families in BC. By participating, you contribute to the development of targeted interventions and policies that can enhance the well-being of your community.

What Participation Involves:

Participation involves signing a consent form and answering questionnaires, which should last about 45 minutes. The process is confidential, and your privacy is of utmost importance.

Benefits of Participation:

- Gain a deeper understanding of parents' employment status and its impact on their children's well-being.
- Contribute to positive changes in social work practices and policies.
- Contribute to developing targeted interventions and support services specifically designed to address the needs of African immigrant families, enhancing the effectiveness of available resources.

How to Participate:

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please contact me at baahnketiahb22@mytru.ca or 778-512-1075. I will gladly provide more information and guide you through the process.

Your Voice Matters:

Your perspective is crucial for creating positive changes. By participating, you play a vital role in shaping the future well-being of African immigrant families in BC.

Thank you for considering this invitation. I look forward to the possibility of working together to improve the lives of your community.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Baah Nketiah, Student
School of Social Work & Human Service Thompson Rivers University

Consent Form: The Employment Status of African Immigrant parents and its impact on Children's wellbeing in BC, Canada.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This research is funded by the Undergraduate Research Experience Award Program (UREAP).

Research question and aims/purpose of the research

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the impact of the employment status of African immigrant parents on the well-being of their children in British Columbia, Canada. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how various dimensions of parental employment, including income levels, work hours, and nonstandard work schedules, influence children's well-being, encompassing mental, emotional, behavioural/physical, social, and academic well-being. It employs a quantitative research approach. This research recognizes the unique challenges faced by African immigrant families, including potential racial discrimination, limited support networks, and cultural adjustments.

It is the intention that the results of this study will contribute valuable insights that can inform social work practices, policies, and interventions tailored to the needs of African Immigrant families.

Research team members and roles

I am doing this research project under the supervision of Dr. Wendy Hulko, Professor, and Dr. Rebecca Sanford, Associate Professor at TRU.

Benjamin Baah Nketiah, BSW Student at Thompson Rivers University (TRU)

Email: baahnketiahb22@mytru.ca

Phone: 778-512-1075

Inclusion Criteria:

African immigrant parents who currently reside in British Columbia and have children living with them or have previously lived with their children in BC.

Exclusion Criteria:

African immigrant parents who do not live in British Columbia or their children live in their home country.

Risks of participating

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. As a study participant, there is a risk that recalling previous experiences could cause repressed memories to resurface or trigger uncomfortable or distressing emotions. You may feel uncomfortable, anxious, or stressed when recounting your experiences with your children while answering the questions. There is also a minimal risk that your personal information or information you share is breached.

If any question triggers uncomfortable or distressing emotions, you can skip it. You are reminded of the right to withdraw from the study if completing the questionnaire becomes uncomfortable. The "Save & Continue" feature in the Survey Monkey setting has been enabled to allow you to save your progress, take a break, and resume when you are capable if you are experiencing any mental or emotional distress.

Participants are to contact the researcher if they are experiencing emotional distress for appropriate mental health and support services. Below is a list of online mental health support services; participants are encouraged to access these services.

Mental Health check-in: <https://cmhabc.my.site.com/MentalHealthCheckIn/s/>

Anxiety Canada: <https://www.anxietycanada.com/>

If you are in immediate danger or need help right away, call 9-1-1

Benefits of participating (including any incentives and direct benefits to participants)

For your participation, you will be compensated \$10. The payment will be made via email transfer to the email address you used to communicate with the researcher. Please provide me with your name and email address to receive the payment. I assure you that I will not ask for any other personal information.

By participating, Parents may gain a deeper understanding of parents' employment status and its impact on their children's well-being and also contribute to positive changes in social work practices and policies.

You also contribute to the body of knowledge that can influence advocacy efforts and policy changes, potentially leading to improved support structures and more inclusive policies for African immigrants in BC.

Costs associated with participating

There are no costs associated with taking part in the study.

Role of potential participants and what they are being asked to do

Your participation would involve answering a 10-minute questionnaire on the impact of African Immigrant parents' employment status on their children's well-being.

Length of participation

The file review does not require any time on your part beyond your signature on the Consent for Release of Information. The questionnaire should last approximately 10 minutes.

Voluntary nature of participation

Participating in the study should be done on a voluntary basis. You will not lose any of your usual benefits or rights if you choose not to participate. Additionally, you have the freedom to stop participating at any time during the study and still retain your benefits and rights.

Who has access to information shared:

Only Benjamin Baah Nketiah will be able to access it.

Assurances to safeguard confidentiality

The data collected will be stored on a Canadian server within the Survey Monkey Thompson Rivers University account. This account is fully compliant with privacy and data security regulations. More information about SurveyMonkey's privacy policy is available - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/legal/privacy/>

Your privacy is important to us. We will keep your information confidential by storing hard copies and electronic files on a secured server in files protected with passwords. No identifiable information will be included in any research documents or publications. We will combine your information with information provided by other participants to ensure your privacy is protected. If you are concerned about this, we would be happy to make alternative arrangements for you to participate, perhaps via telephone or in person. Please talk to the researcher if you have any concerns.

Any information provided by participants will be kept confidential. Hard copies of the data will be stored in locked files, and electronic files will be encrypted and kept on TRU servers and MacDrive. Only the research team will have access to the data. Hard copies will be shredded and disposed of by the end of 2025.

Opportunities for additional participation

In the future, you may be contacted to answer additional questions about your experiences or to review and validate our findings. Please know that your participation is always voluntary, and you may decline to participate at any time.

Opportunities to receive information about the study and results in the future

If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

Contact information to discuss questions and concerns

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at:

baahnketiahb22@mytru.ca

This study has been reviewed by the Thompson Rivers University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

Yasmine Dean,
Dean - Faculty of Education and Social Work
Thompson Rivers University
Phone: 250-828-5249 Email: ydean@tru.ca

Agreement:

- I understand the information regarding this research project, including all procedures and the personal risks involved.
- I understand that my identity and any identifying information obtained will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. I understand that the information provided will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study and that I will not be personally identified in written materials, publications, or presentations.
- I understand that I can withdraw my participation at any time without consequence. My involvement or non-involvement in this project is in no way related to my status or involvement in the Research.
- I understand that if I have questions or need more information about the study, I can contact the researcher at: baahnketiahb22@mytru.ca Phone: +1 778-5121075
- I have received a copy of this consent form.

1. By selecting "Yes, I agree to participate" you agree to all the above.

- ☐ Yes, I agree to participate
- ☐ No, I do not agree to participate

2. Full name:

3. Please provide your email address below for survey invitation:



**THOMPSON
RIVERS
UNIVERSITY**

The Employment Status of African Immigrant parents
and its impact on Children's wellbeing in BC, Canada

Welcome!

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. Your insights are valuable to us.



**THOMPSON
RIVERS
UNIVERSITY**

The Employment Status of African Immigrant parents
and its impact on Children's wellbeing in BC, Canada

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Demographics

1. What is your gender?

☐

Woman

☐

Trans, two-spirit or non-binary

☐

Man

2. Which category below includes your age?

☐

21-29

☐

50-59

☐

30-39

☐

60 or older

☐

40-49

3. Country of birth?

4. Where do you currently live (city) in BC?

5. How long have you lived in Canada?

☐

Less than 1 year

☐

5-10 years

☐

1-2 years

☐

10 years and beyond

☐

3-4 years

6. How many children do you have?

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> None | <input type="radio"/> 3 |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 4 |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> More than 4 |

7. Which category below includes the ages of your child(ren)? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ 0-5
- ☐ 6-11
- ☐ 12-18
- ☐ 18 above

8. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Less than high school degree | <input type="radio"/> Associate degree |
| <input type="radio"/> High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED) | <input type="radio"/> Bachelor degree |
| <input type="radio"/> Some college but no degree | <input type="radio"/> Graduate degree |



The Employment Status of African Immigrant parents
and its impact on Children's wellbeing in BC, Canada

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Employment Status

9. Which of the following best describes your current employment status at your primary place of employment?

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Full-time | <input type="radio"/> Underemployed |
| <input type="radio"/> Part-time | <input type="radio"/> Unemployed |
| <input type="radio"/> Casual | |
| <input type="radio"/> Other or if both (please specify) | |

10. Do you have multiple jobs?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ If yes, please specify the type of your other job(s): casual, part-time or full-time

11. What is your approximate annual household income?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> \$0 to \$9,999 | <input type="radio"/> \$75,000 to \$99,999 |
| <input type="radio"/> \$10,000 to \$24,999 | <input type="radio"/> \$100,000 to \$124,999 |
| <input type="radio"/> \$25,000 to \$49,999 | <input type="radio"/> \$125,000 and up |
| <input type="radio"/> \$50,000 to \$74,999 | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to answer |

12. How satisfied are you with your current income?

Very dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied



13. How does your income level impact your ability to provide for your family's needs?

- ☐ I can comfortably provide for all their needs
- ☐ It sometimes poses challenges but is manageable
- ☐ It significantly impacts our ability to meet needs
- ☐ I struggle to meet basic family needs
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Non-Standard Work Schedule

14. Are you required to work night shifts?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

15. Are you required to work on weekends?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

16. Does your work require you to work irregular hours? (i.e.alternating between day, evening, night, or split shifts)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

17. Which of the following statements best describes your usual work schedule in your main job?

- ☐ I have a regular schedule or shift (daytime, evening, or night)
- ☐ I have a schedule or shift which regularly changes (for example, from days to evenings or to nights)
- ☐ I have a schedule where daily working times are decided at short notice by my employer
- ☐ Other option (please specify)

18. How far in advance do you usually know what days and hours you will need to work?

- ☐ One day or less in advance
- ☐ 2 to 3 days in advance
- ☐ 4 to 7 days in advance
- ☐ between 1 and 2 weeks in advance
- ☐ between 3 and 4 weeks in advance
- ☐ My schedule never changes

19. On average, how many hours per week do you work?

- ☐ Less than 20 hours
- ☐ 20-30 hours
- ☐ 31-40 hours
- ☐ More than 40 hours

20. To what extent would you say a nonstandard work schedule impacts your ability to physically, emotionally, and financially support your child or children?

Not at all

Mild

Moderate

Severe

Profound

☐☐☐☐☐

The Employment Status of African Immigrant parents
and its impact on Children's wellbeing in BC, Canada

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Child/ren's Academic wellbeing

21. How satisfied are you with the educational resources and support available to your child/ren?

- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied

22. How would you describe your child/ren's overall academic performance?

- ☐ Far above average
- ☐ Above average
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Below average
- ☐ Far below average

23. Please identify the extent to which you agree with this statement: I have enough time to support my child/ren in their academic work (For example, Helping with schoolwork and other activities)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Child/ren's Mental wellbeing

24. Does your child often express feelings of stress or anxiety?

- ☐ Rarely or never
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Always
- ☐ Not Sure

25. Have you noticed any changes in your child(ren)'s behavior that may indicate mental health concerns (e.g., withdrawal, changes in sleep patterns, aggression)?

- ☐ A significant
- ☐ A lot
- ☐ A moderate amount
- ☐ A little
- ☐ None at all

26. How confident are you that your child can access adequate mental health support when needed?

- ☐ Extremely confident
- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not so confident
- ☐ Not at all confident

27. How would you rate your child's overall mental health?

| Poor | Fair | Good | Very good | Excellent |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |



The Employment Status of African Immigrant parents
and its impact on Children's wellbeing in BC, Canada

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Child/ren's Emotional wellbeing

28. In your opinion, how well does your child(ren) manage and express their emotions?

- ☐ Very poorly
- ☐ Somewhat poorly
- ☐ Moderately well
- ☐ Quite well
- ☐ Extremely well

29. How satisfied are you with the emotional support your child receives from family and friends?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

30. How would you describe your child's overall mood and emotional well-being?

- ☐ Very Positive
- ☐ Generally positive
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Occasionally negative
- ☐ Very negative

Child/ren's Behavioural/Physical Wellbeing

31. Do you think your work hours influence your child/ren's behavioral/physical well-being?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure

32. How frequently does your child/ren engage in regular physical or outdoor activities?

- ☐ Every day
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ About once a week
- ☐ A few times a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Rarely/Never
- ☐ Not applicable

33. How concerned are you with your child/(ren)'s behavior or conduct at school and at home?

- ☐ Not at all concerned
- ☐ Slightly concerned
- ☐ Somewhat concerned
- ☐ Moderately concerned
- ☐ Extremely concerned



Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Child/ren's Social Wellbeing

34. How frequently does your child/(ren) engage in social activities outside of school (e.g., clubs, sports, community events)?

- ☐ Very Frequently
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

35. How well-connected do you believe your child is to his/her friends and the local community?

- ☐ Extremely connected
- ☐ Very connected
- ☐ Somewhat connected
- ☐ Not so connected
- ☐ Not at all connected

36. Please identify the extent to which you agree with this statement.

When not working, I have enough time outside work to spend with my child/ren. "For example (More time to play, talk with them, family outings)"

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

37. How do you perceive the impact of your work on your children's overall well-being?

- ☐ I believe my work positively influences their well-being
- ☐ It has a neutral impact on their well-being.
- ☐ I am concerned that it may negatively affect them
- ☐ I am uncertain about the impact of my work on them
- ☐ Other (please specify)

38. How do you cope with the challenges of balancing work and family life? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Hiring childcare services
- ☐ Relying on extended family members (eg. grandparents)
- ☐ Flexible work arrangements
- ☐ Utilizing friends and community support
- ☐ Other (please specify)

39. Based on your answer to question 38, how stable are these arrangements?

- ☐ Extremely stable
- ☐ Very stable
- ☐ Somewhat stable
- ☐ Not so stable
- ☐ Not at all stable

If not so stable, please specify why...

40. What employment-related support or resources could enhance your child/(ren)'s overall well-being? "Eg. more care days, work from home, etc."

41. Is there any specific aspect of your employment situation that you would like us to know about, which may be affecting your ability to care for your child/ren?

42. What more could be done to support African immigrant parents in caring for their children?

