

The Inclusion of Immigrants in Canada: An Examination of Social Markers of Acceptance

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Although Canada is an immigrant-receiving nation, limited research has examined the key attributes that Canadian citizens consider important for immigrants to be accepted and included in the nation. According to the social markers of acceptance (SMA) framework, host citizens may require immigrants to demonstrate certain traits in order to consider and accept them as naturalized citizens. Correspondingly, requiring a low number of SMA from immigrants is an indication of inclusivity, whereas imposing more markers is a signal of exclusivity (Leong, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 2014, 38, 120). The current article examines views of White, multigeneration Canadian university students toward immigrants. In Study 1, four focus groups ($n = 20$) were conducted, which led to eight culture-specific SMA. In Study 2, an online questionnaire ($n = 264$) was administered, and the results demonstrated that only 9 of 47 total SMA were deemed important to becoming Canadian. Exploratory factor analyses indicated a three-factor model of SMA importance: Ethnic Markers, Civic Markers, and Socioeconomic Achievement. Perceived symbolic threat, perceived realistic threat, preference for immigrants to preserve their heritage culture, and preference for immigrants to adopt Canadian culture impacted endorsement of SMA.

Keywords: social markers of acceptance, inclusivity, Canada, immigration, acculturation

Canada has a large immigrant population. This study found that White Canadian adults would like immigrants to have qualities that fit Canada's multicultural society. However, adults who felt threatened by immigrants were stricter, and they would like immigrants to have more qualities.

Although Canada has one of the largest foreign-born populations of all nations, not all immigrant groups are accepted by the majority host (Nangia, 2013). Some immigrants face higher levels of exclusion because they have certain attributes that are considered less desirable among host citizens. For example, host citizens are more likely to show hostility toward immigrants who are different from majority ethnic and religious groups in North America and Western Europe (Major et al., 2018; Tilford, 2016). Muslim immigrants experience higher explicit hostility from host citizens, than other religious immigrant groups, in many Western nations including Canada, Australia, and the U.S. (Barkdull et al., 2011; Environics, 2018). This article aims to find out which traits White multigeneration¹ Canadian citizens consider important for immigrants to have in order for them to be accepted and included in Canada.

Canadian Immigration and Acculturation Orientations

In general, Canada is a high immigrant-receiving country, and the population is diversifying at a rapid rate. Statistics indicate that 20.6% of the Canadian population were born in a different country and 17.4% have at least one parent who was born outside of Canada (Immigration, Refugees, & Citizenship Canada, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2016). Over the last 50 years, there has been a shift in immigrants' countries of origin. Specifically, almost 90% of immigrants in Canada were of European origin before 1961; however, from 2006 to 2011, the proportion of European immigrants arriving to Canada has reduced to less than 15%. In recent years, more Canadian immigrants came from Asian and Middle Eastern nations. Consequently, there has been a shift in religious affiliation of new Canadians, with Islam as the fastest-growing religion in the country (Environics, 2013).

Canada is known to be the first country to establish a Multiculturalism Act in 1971 (Government of Canada, 2018). This act instated specific policies and programs that support foreign-born Canadian citizens in maintaining their heritage culture, language, practices, and religions (Government of Canada, 2018). The Multiculturalism Act aims to promote the integration of all immigrants, rather than to seek assimilation or separation of immigrants. Integration refers to a strong link to both (a) one's ethnic or heritage culture and (b) the host or new society (Berry, 2001). Integration is argued to be the most successful acculturation orientation, as it has been found to have a positive relation with the psychosocial adjustment of newcomers (Berry & Hou, 2016, 2017; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Safdar et al., 2012).

The interactive acculturation model (IAM) suggests that relations between the host and immigrant groups are influenced by both of their

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¹ Multigeneration citizens refer to those who were born in Canada and their parents were born in Canada (i.e., third generation immigrants). It also includes those whose grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on were born in Canada (i.e., fourth generation, fifth generation, etc.).

acculturation orientations, and immigration policies (Bourhis et al., 1997). According to the IAM, Canada follows a pluralism ideology, where public policy supports the integration of immigrants. Therefore, a desire for integration by both host members and immigrants should lead to the peaceful coexistence of hosts and immigrants. Indeed, at a societal level, Canadians have been found to take pride in their multicultural society, and they tend to endorse cultural diversity and freedom (Cameron & Berry, 2008; Grant, 2016).

However, despite support for multiculturalism and integration among Canadians, evidence indicates that particular immigrants may be “valued” more highly by host citizens than others. Consequently, host acculturation orientations toward these more “valued” immigrants are more favorable. For example, Montreuil and Bourhis (2001) found that Quebecois Francophones endorsed integrationism and individualism (i.e., evaluating each immigrant on an individual basis) more strongly for “valued” than “devalued” immigrants. Assimilationism, segregationism, and exclusionism were endorsed more strongly for “devalued” than “valued” immigrants. Assimilationism refers to the preference for immigrants to abandon their heritage culture and instead adopt the new majority culture. Those who endorse segregationism prefer for immigrants to maintain their heritage culture while renouncing their host society’s culture. The majority of members who endorse exclusionism reject immigrants who maintain both heritage and host cultures. It is unclear which traits, in particular, are considered valuable or necessary for immigrants to have in order to be accepted in Canada.

Taken together, Canada’s Multiculturalism Act aims to promote integration and acceptance for immigrants of all backgrounds. However, “valued” immigrants are more likely to receive more positive acculturation expectations from host citizens than “devalued” immigrants, which can have considerable consequences for relations between host citizens and these immigrants. Understanding the traits that are considered important to be accepted in Canada is an important undertaking to begin fostering the integration of all immigrants.

Social Markers of Acculturation and Impacting Factors

Leong’s (2014) social markers of acceptance (SMA) framework examines the traits that citizens deem necessary in deciding whether a migrant will be accepted in their host society. SMA utilizes a social construction approach to understand which traits and how much of each are required from newcomers in order to gain acceptance as naturalized citizens by members of the host society. As the number of required social markers increase, the more exclusive members of a society are; similarly fewer requirements demonstrate greater inclusion. A distinctive feature of SMA is its inductive approach to understanding traits considered important for adaptation. Members of the host society may not necessarily agree on all attributes of SMA, and there are variations in terms of citizens’ region, ethnicity, and generation.

Evidence indicates that host discrimination and exclusion of immigrant groups, such as visible minorities and non-European immigrants, is driven by a perception of threats (Croucher, 2013; Esses et al., 2006; Green, 2009; Riek et al., 2006; Stephan et al., 2005; Velasco González et al., 2008). Studies have found that as perceptions of threat increase, the number of social markers considered important by host citizens also increases (Komisarof et al., 2019; Leong, 2014).

These findings correspond with integrated threat theory (ITT), which proposes that perceptions of threat are positively associated

with prejudice toward out-group members (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). According to ITT, there are two types of threat: Symbolic and realistic. Symbolic threat refers to perceptions that out-group members may destabilize the culture, norms, and identity of the in-group. Realistic threat occurs when out-group members are perceived as competing for the same economic opportunities as the in-group, or as advocating for opposing goals as the in-group.

In an opposite manner, perceptions that immigrants are contributing positively to a nation may decrease the endorsement of SMA. Immigrant contributions involve contributing toward the in-group’s values, norms, or economic opportunities (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Evidence indicates that immigrants’ perceived contributions are associated with less restrictive social markers for immigrants (Komisarof et al., 2019; Leong, 2014; Leong et al., 2020).

Another underlying factor that leads to discrimination and exclusion of immigrants is the perception that they are disinterested in integrating into the host society. Studies have found that host societies have more positive attitudes toward immigrants when they perceive immigrants as endorsing integration and assimilation (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014; Matera et al., 2011). For example, Matera et al. (2011, 2012) found that when Italian citizens believed African immigrants wished to interact with host citizens, and reduce connections with their heritage culture, they had more positive attitudes toward them.

The current article aimed to investigate the inclusivity of a sample of White, multigeneration Canadian university students by examining the SMA that they consider important for newcomers to be accepted in Canada through two studies. A sequential exploratory mixed-methods study was designed, consistent with the study of SMA in Singapore and Japan (Creswell et al., 2003; Komisarof et al., 2019; Leong, 2014). An initial qualitative study consisted of four focus groups to discern SMA considered important among White, multigeneration Canadians. These SMA were then included in a second quantitative study, where the role of perceived threat, preference for host society adoption, and preference for heritage culture preservation on SMA were examined.

Study 1

A focus group study was conducted to identify the SMA considered important by White, multigeneration Canadians.

Methods

Four focus groups were conducted with four to six participants in each group. Each focus group was 30–50-min long. Focus groups were selected over other methods (e.g., interviews) because they provide an avenue for participants to voice individual opinions, but they also allow for others to agree or disagree with these opinions. Therefore, focus groups provided an opportunity to analyze how groups of White, multigeneration Canadians collectively understood Canadian SMA (Hollander, 2004).

Participants

Focus group participants ($n = 20$) were undergraduate students at a mid-sized university in the province of Ontario in Canada. Participants were White, born in Canada, and had parents who were born in Canada (i.e., multigeneration Canadian). This was designed to capture the majority Canadian (i.e., White) perspective

on immigrants; therefore, the sample did not encompass a representative sample of the Canadian population. This participant demographic was selected because understanding white Canadians' perspectives on SMA is an important first step in advancing positive relations between majority Canadians (i.e., White) and immigrants of all backgrounds. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 21, with a mean age of 18.6 ($SD = .83$). The sample included 16 women and 4 men. The majority of participants (65%) studied social sciences, including 40% who were pursuing a degree in psychology, and the rest were enrolled in other programs including 25% who were pursuing a degree in business. Participants were purposively recruited through the university's undergraduate student research pool and they received one-course credit for their participation.

Procedure

Focus groups followed a structured interview guide derived from Leong (2014). The questions included: What are uniquely Canadian cultural factors, what are immigrants expected to adopt in order to integrate into Canadian society, and if general SMA as outlined by Leong (2014) are deemed important in Canada. The general SMA were based on Leong's (2014) list of social markers, which were generated in Singapore. The focus groups were recorded and later transcribed. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The subthemes that emerged as important markers to be Canadian were converted to culture-specific SMA items, in order to be included in the quantitative survey.

Results and Discussion

Four main themes were identified from the focus group data: (a) diversity of Canadians, (b) irrelevant markers to be Canadian, (c) not required markers, but helpful markers for integration, and (d) important markers to be Canadian (Table 1).

Diversity of Canadians

First, participants described how Canada was home to a diverse population, and how they felt a sense of pride in this diversity. Participants expressed how multiculturalism is what makes Canada unique. Due to this diversity, there was difficulty for participants to identify particular Canadian traits, values, and norms:

P13: I feel ... there's so many cultures in Canada that it's ... hard to pinpoint our own culture, we are kind of just ... so multicultural that ...

P12: Yeah, especially ... recently multicultural wise, it's been ... vast amount of people that have come here. Yeah, so I don't think we can pinpoint just one culture to Canada.

Irrelevant Markers to be Canadian

Participants indicated that many of the markers generated in Singapore by Leong (2014) did not resonate with them. These included demographic characteristics, behavioral change, playing local sports, speaking in a local accent, wearing Canadian clothes. This theme corresponds with evidence that Canadians tend to be supportive of diversity (Enviroics, 2018; Grant, 2016):

Table 1
Identified Themes

Main theme	Subtheme
Diversity of Canadians	—
Irrelevant markers to be Canadian	—
Not required markers, but helpful to integrate	—
Important markers to be Canadian	Be respectful of Canadian laws and policies Respect Canadian citizen's freedom of choice Be accepting and respectful of other's cultures and behaviors Take pride in Canadian diversity Take pride in being Canadian Appreciate beauty of Canadian nature Build resilience to Canadian winters and snow Be politically neutral toward global politics

P3: I kind of feel like as soon you move here, you are sort of Canadian ... You're not just coming here for a visit and moving back, but if you come here and live here and plan to spend your life here, I feel ... a lot of people are ... "Okay, you're Canadian now." It doesn't really matter if you're a Canadian citizen yet, you are just going to be a part of everything.

P9: I just think that some things [on the SMA list generated by Leong (2014)] are so far-fetched and ... especially the fact that they are coming here new, they are setting up from absolutely nothing and I think that's so hard to build ... first of all, you want to focus on your family and getting established, but then they- according to this list, they are expecting so much more above you, that Canadians don't even do.

Not Required Markers, But Helpful Markers for Integration

Participants stated that some SMA might not be essential for immigrants to have in order to be considered Canadian; however, they may be of use to immigrants to ease the adaptation process, build connections, and diminish biases that Canadians may have:

P7: The only thing that that would come into ... problems with is if you're halfway through grade school in the country you're coming from and you're coming here ... you might need to be able to read and write, but ...

P8: Yeah, as like, an adult.

P7: Yeah. Right.

P8: I wouldn't expect it.

P6: Following the local media could help.

P10: It could. It's not expected.

P6: Yeah. It's not expected but ... doing it could help them.

P5: Yeah, I'm thinking ... sports and like the volunteering stuff, and just ... stuff that allows you to I guess, socialize with people within the community to ... reduce stigma?

Important Markers to be Canadian

Participants discussed the SMA that were considered important to them. Eight culture-specific SMA in the Canadian context were described. First, participants reported that respecting Canadian laws and policies, as well as observing local laws and customs, is an expectation for all Canadian citizens equally:

- P6: Yeah, they have to follow our laws 'cause, even if we don't follow the laws, we'll be in trouble. They have to at least do what we as Canadian citizens do. I think that's the lowest expectation that we should have of them but also close to the highest.

Second, participants described how respecting fellow Canadian citizen's freedom of choice helps to maintain an inclusive society. They hoped that new immigrants would be respectful of diversity and choices being made in Canadian society, which corresponds with evidence that Canadians value freedom of choice (Grant, 2016):

- P13: Respect is really important too.
P12: Yeah.
P11: Our country. We're big on accepting of others and not judging them for anything, that kind of thing.

Third, participants explained that respect and acceptance of other cultures is an important feature of being Canadian and Canadian multiculturalism, which complemented evidence of Canadians support of multiculturalism (Envirionics, 2018):

- P13: I, well, I don't want to see a superior culture, you know? Canada being multicultural is because you see the different aspects of that, other cultures. So, to expect them to just come here and adopt all of our cultural norms is kind of not expected.

The fourth was a sense of appreciation and pride in the diverse nature of the Canadian population. This SMA aligned with previous evidence that Canadians feel a sense of pride regarding multiculturalism (Cameron & Berry, 2008). It is important to note that participants stressed the importance of appreciating Canadian multiculturalism; however, they did not express if it would be acceptable for immigrants (e.g., those who are "devalued" and less readily accepted) to criticize Canadian multiculturalism or policies. In addition, participants' descriptions indicated in-group favoritism whereby Canada was perceived as superior to other geographic regions (Turner et al., 1987):

- P7: It's definitely diverse. I think everything about Canada period, I think what represents Canada, a good word is just diverse. Everything about it is ... broad side of the spectrum ... we're pretty neutral about everything so I would say it's easy, well I'm being ignorant and generalizing it (laughter) but it seems like pretty easy compared to some other places that you could go to kind of embed yourself into our culture, 'cause I find that our culture is kind of a mix of everybody else's cultures put into one.
P5: Yeah, and Canada is such a big- compared to Europe even, or Southern Asia countries so even, you have so many different types of culture, all across the country.

- P8: I think we take pride in that too. We love that we are so diverse.

Fifth, participants described their personal pride in being Canadian. This sense of pride was not only related to Canada's multiculturalism (Cameron & Berry, 2008), but also to being Canadian, in general. They discussed how they view this national pride as a means to distinguish Canada from other nations. As such, participants engaged in downward social comparison by positing Canada as superior to other nations who were perceived as less proud (Wills, 1981):

- P3: I feel like the majority of Canadians, they're proud of their culture and where they come from whereas some people from other countries might not take pride in that as much.

Sixth, participants expressed an appreciation and respect for Canadian nature as important. They described how the vast and diverse landscape of the nation is a unique feature of Canada. Similarly, Kaufmann and Zimmer (1998) argue that Canada's natural landscape is an important feature of its national identity:

- P7: I think regarding the landscape too, it's just we have, I find that we still, it's slowly going away, but we still have a lot of agriculture and we still- it's such a beautiful country. That's what everybody always told me. Anywhere I've gone to in the world, they're like, "Wow, Canada is so beautiful. I need to visit Canada." It's one of those things where you get big forests, you get the flat grounds, you see- you have ... a surfing community in Tofino. Do you know what I mean? It's- we literally have kind of all ... of it, you know what I mean?

The seventh important marker was building resilience to Canadian winters. Participants expressed how Canadian nature should not only be appreciated, but adapted to. In particular, they discussed that adapting to a snowy climate would be useful:

- P1: Yeah, but we are known for like our winters and stuff so I feel ... that's kind of a part of it, the Olympics and competing and stuff.
P3: Being used to winters, I guess.
P1: Yeah.
P3: Being aware of how much snow we get.
P1: Having a winter coat.

The eighth and final culture-specific social marker that was identified was having a sense of neutrality toward political affairs. Participants reported that, in general, Canada does not typically state extreme political standpoints:

- P7: I think we're neutral about everything. Ever. There's always broader sides of extremes on either side of the spectrum but for most part, most of Canada is sitting right dead in the middle.

Overall, participants valued eight markers that supported a civic form of national identity. A civic nation is open to newcomers of all

backgrounds, provided that they uphold shared national values and institutions (Wright et al., 2012). In contrast, nations that endorse an ethnic form of national identity are likely to value ethnic background and practice of heritage such as customs and traditions. The eight markers that participants considered important were not exclusionary in that they were traits related to upholding Canadian values, rather a particular set of customs or traditions (Breton, 2015). At the same time, immigrant rights to criticize Canadian multiculturalism or other policies were not discussed.

Study 2

A quantitative study was undertaken to investigate: (a) which SMA are considered important by White, multigeneration Canadians, and (b) how perceived threat, host culture adoption, and heritage culture preservation impact the endorsement of SMA.

Theoretical Framework

Consistent with ITT, perceptions of threat are positively associated with prejudice toward out-group members (Stephan & Stephan, 1985) and SMA endorsement (Komisarof et al., 2019; Leong, 2014). In line with this finding, we hypothesized that perceptions of perceived symbolic and realistic threat are positively associated with the endorsement of SMA² (H1). Correspondingly, we hypothesized that positive perceptions of immigrants' social and economic contributions are negatively associated with the endorsement of SMA (H2). In addition, we hypothesized that higher preferences for Canadian culture adoption are positively associated with endorsement of SMA (H3a), whereas higher preferences of heritage culture preservation are negatively associated with endorsement of SMA (H3b).

Methods

To examine the full SMA statistically, we added qualitative data on culture-specific markers from Study 1 to the list of SMA items in Study 2 (Sandelowski et al., 2009). The quantitative survey aimed to examine how contextual factors (i.e., perceptions of threat, attitudes toward heritage culture maintenance, and attitudes toward Canadian culture adoption) impact the endorsement of SMA.

Participants

The survey was hosted on the Qualtrics online platform. Participants ($n = 264$) were purposively selected to be White, Canadian citizens who were born in Canada and had parents who were both born in Canada. The students received one-course credit for their participation. The majority of the sample identified themselves as women (87.9%). The average age of participants was 19.32 years ($SD = 3.48$). Most participants (46.2%) had part-time employment, while 43.2% were not employed and 10.6% had full-time employment or were self-employed. The following scales were employed for each SMA item. Participants were asked to indicate the importance of each item on a Likert scale ranging from *not at all important* or *strongly disagree* (1) to *very important/almost impossible to acquire* or *strongly agree* (can be acquired very easily) (7).

Materials

Social Markers of Acceptance

Forty-seven items described the social markers that immigrants could adopt (see Table 2). Thirty-nine of these items were general SMA, and eight were the Canadian-specific social markers derived from Study 1. Of the 39 general SMA, 27 were derived from Leong (2014). Another 12 general SMA were derived from Komisarof et al. (2019). Participants were asked to rate the importance of the SMA and how easy it would be for immigrants to acquire each marker.

Perceived Symbolic Threat

Six items derived from Leong (2014) assessed perceptions of the symbolic threat posed by immigrants (e.g., "Increasing immigration to Canada will dilute our national identity"). The items had a Cronbach's alpha of .80.

Perceived Realistic Threat

Eight items measured perceived realistic threat from immigrants (Leong, 2014). These items included: "Having more immigrants in Canada will weaken social cohesion in this country." The Cronbach's alpha of the eight items was .91.

Immigrant Contributions

Five items asked participants about their perceptions of immigrants' social and economic contributions to Canada (Leong, 2014). These items included: "The skills that immigrants have are the types that Canada needs most" and "Immigrants shoulder the same amount of social responsibilities as native-born Canadians." The Cronbach's alpha of the five items was .71.

Preservation of Heritage Culture

One item assessed attitudes toward immigrants maintaining their heritage culture. This item asked, "immigrants should do more to preserve their heritage culture and customs." Leong and Teng (2016) developed the item as one of three items that were originally grouped together as a host acculturation orientation measure. The other two items that were a part of this newly developed scale examine (a) attitudes toward adopting Canadian culture and (b) whether immigrants have the right to engage in whichever culture they choose. However, the three-item measure had a low reliability for this sample (Cronbach's alpha = .58). Therefore, it was decided to utilize a single item to assess perceptions of preserving heritage culture.

Adoption of Canadian Culture

One item assessed perceptions toward immigrant adoption of Canadian culture. The item asked, "immigrants should do more to embrace Canadian culture and customs." The item was developed by Leong and Teng (2016). This item was one of the three items that were originally grouped together as a host acculturation orientation measure. The other two items that were a part of this newly

² It is important to note that in all hypotheses, endorsement of SMA refers to endorsement of any of the three factors of SMA.

Table 2*Means of Importance of Social Marker Items*

Social marker	Type	Importance <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Ease of acquiring <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
1. Be respectful of Canadian laws and policies	Culture-specific	6.43 (1.21)	5.17 (1.83)
2. Respect Canadian citizen's freedom of choice	Culture-specific	6.29 (1.31)	4.88 (1.83)
3. Be accepting and respectful of other's cultures and behaviors	Culture-specific	6.23 (1.29)	5.03 (1.83)
4. Take pride in Canadian diversity	Culture-specific	6.14 (1.40)	5.19 (1.91)
5. Take pride in being Canadian	Culture-specific	5.95 (1.47)	5.10 (1.87)
6. Observes local laws and customs	General	5.69 (1.53)	4.61 (1.75)
7. Embraces a positive attitude to host society	General	5.63 (1.64)	4.60 (1.99)
8. Able to speak conversational English and/or French	General	5.17 (1.69)	3.67 (1.47)
9. Appreciate beauty of Canadian nature	Culture-specific	5.14 (1.88)	5.28 (2.02)
10. Is gainfully employed	General	4.66 (1.56)	3.71 (1.31)
11. Able to read English and/or French at a similar level to a native Canadian	General	4.49 (1.78)	3.44 (1.54)
12. Able to write English and/or French at a similar level to a Canadian	General	4.43 (1.79)	3.46 (1.53)
13. Gets on well with neighbors	General	4.37 (1.95)	4.43 (1.86)
14. Gets on well with workplace colleagues	General	4.37 (1.93)	4.40 (1.82)
15. Participates in local politics (e.g., votes in communal elections, join a political party)	General	4.22 (1.82)	4.44 (1.77)
16. Has lived in Canada for a period of time	General	3.99 (1.98)	3.83 (1.76)
17. Has a monthly income of at least [participants could insert]	General	3.79 (1.83)	3.65 (1.38)
18. Build resilience to Canadian winters and snow	Culture-specific	3.76 (1.93)	3.78 (1.56)
19. Their children attend(ed) local schools	General	3.74 (1.96)	4.09 (1.88)
20. Owns residential property	General	3.60 (1.82)	3.51 (1.50)
21. Has at least a college degree	General	3.31 (1.80)	3.66 (1.45)
22. Being politically neutral toward global politics	Culture-specific	3.29 (1.71)	3.76 (1.53)
23. Has children who are Canadian citizens	General	3.11 (1.91)	3.95 (1.80)
24. Has retired or plans to retire in Canada	General	3.02 (1.71)	3.83 (1.79)
25. Follows local media	General	2.98 (1.70)	4.47 (1.88)
26. Attended local schools themselves	General	2.92 (1.77)	3.68 (1.74)
27. Belongs to one of Canada's main ethnic groups	General	2.89 (1.75)	3.72 (1.77)
28. Able to eat local food	General	2.84 (1.73)	4.26 (1.80)
29. Thinks like a Canadian	General	2.83 (1.78)	3.49 (1.70)
30. Considered a talent in their industry	General	2.83 (1.70)	3.47 (1.43)
31. Supports Canadian products and brands	General	2.81 (1.75)	4.43 (2.04)
32. Works in a field where there is a shortfall of labor	General	2.79 (1.58)	3.89 (1.69)
33. Works for a Canadian-based company	General	2.67 (1.64)	3.69 (1.54)
34. Enjoy or take part in local sports	General	2.63 (1.66)	4.41 (1.99)
35. Participates in the work of local charity organizations/NGOs	General	2.61 (1.57)	4.31 (1.79)
36. Invests or sets up a Canadian-based company	General	2.43 (1.57)	3.33 (1.60)
37. A member of the local labor union	General	2.39 (1.54)	3.60 (1.51)
38. Behaves like a Canadian	General	2.34 (1.67)	4.20 (1.95)
39. Able to speak with local accent	General	2.30 (1.49)	2.91 (1.74)
40. Dress like the way local people do	General	2.26 (1.64)	3.99 (1.96)
41. Has a social circle comprising of mostly native-born Canadians	General	2.25 (1.55)	3.56 (1.71)
42. Enjoys typical Canadian past times	General	2.16 (1.57)	4.24 (1.98)
43. Marries a native-born or living with native-born partner	General	2.12 (1.45)	3.56 (1.73)
44. Works for the Canadian government	General	2.08 (1.54)	3.39 (1.75)
45. Gives up foreign cultural norms or behavior	General	1.85 (1.40)	3.12 (1.91)
46. Physically resembles a Canadian	General	1.84 (1.47)	3.35 (2.11)
47. Embrace convert to a specific religion	General	1.58 (1.17)	3.03 (1.98)

developed scale examine (a) attitudes toward maintaining heritage culture (i.e., preservation of heritage culture) and (b) whether immigrants have the right to engage in whichever culture they choose. The three-item measure had a low reliability for this sample (Cronbach's $\alpha = .58$). Therefore, it was decided to utilize a single item to assess perceptions of adopting Canadian culture.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Analyses were conducted on SPSS 24. Descriptive statistics were conducted on the full 47 SMA, both general and culture-specific

together. Mean averages of each SMA were assessed. If the SMA mean was 5 or above, it was deemed as important. This is because 5 and above on the 7-point Likert scale reflected agree, moderately agree, and strongly agree for each item. Only 9 of these 47 social markers scored an average of 5 and above. Therefore, the sample endorsed a relatively low number of social markers as important. The nine social markers deemed important were being respectful of Canadian laws and policies, respecting Canadian citizen's freedom of choice, being accepting and respectful of other cultures and behaviors, taking pride in Canadian diversity, taking pride in being Canadian, observing local laws and customs, embracing a positive attitude to host society, having the ability to speak conversational English and/or French, and appreciating the beauty of Canadian

nature. Six of these nine social markers were culture-specific markers, which were derived from the focus groups.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

As recommended by Komisarof and Leong (2020), an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) utilizing the principal axis factoring method was conducted on both general and culture-specific SMA to understand the underlying latent factor structure of national identity. Conducting an EFA using all SMA, rather than only “important” markers, allowed us to further investigate how groupings of SMA may give insights (i.e., when threat is perceived or when desires for immigrants to integrate differ), through regression analyses. In addition, an EFA was selected over a confirmatory factor analysis because the current study was exploratory in nature, and aimed to understand the SMA dimensions valued by the sample of White, multigeneration Canadian students. Overall, this analytical approach corresponds with EFA and regression analyses of SMA in other nations, including Japan (Komisarof et al., 2019) and Singapore (Leong, 2014), as well as in a five-country comparison of Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan, and Singapore (Leong et al., 2020).

The initial, nonrotated factor structure of the 47 social marker items yielded a Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .92. This was much greater than the value of .6, as recommended by Kaiser (1974). The Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(1,081) = 7,689.39, p < .001$). This indicated that the correlations between items were large enough to conduct an exploratory factor analysis (Field, 2009). The initial eigenvalue indicated that the first factor accounted for 31.38% of the variance, whereas the second factor accounted for 11.23% of the variance, and the third factor accounted for 5.20% of the variance. The first three factors explained 47.81% of the cumulative variance together. Upon visual assessment of the scree plot, it was determined that three factors provide the strongest factor structure. As recommended by Osborne et al. (2008), we examined where the eigenvalue curve began to bend, which was past the third factor.

The second round of principal axis factoring included a promax rotation, as it provided the cleanest factor structure for the items (Osborne et al., 2008). To clearly distinguish between factors, items that did not load above .40 were removed, as well as items that cross-loaded on to multiple factors at a level of .25 or greater. In this second step, 12 items had either not loaded onto a single factor at .40 or greater, or had loadings greater than .25 on multiple factors. These 12 items were removed and another principal axis factor analysis was conducted with promax rotation. The 12 deleted items were: “has lived in Canada for a certain length of time,” “thinks like a Canadian,” “builds resilience to snow,” “physically resembles a Canadian,” “enjoys local sports,” “plans to retire in Canada,” “has a social circle comprising of mostly native-born Canadians,” “able to write English and/or French at a similar level to a Canadian,” “able to read English and/or French at a similar level to a Canadian,” “able to speak English and/or French at a similar level to a Canadian,” “gets on well with workplace colleagues,” and “participates in local politics.”

In the third round, three items did not load at .40 or greater on a single factor. These items were being politically neutral toward global politics, owning residential property in Canada, and

having children who are Canadian citizens. After removing these three items, a fourth principal axis factor analysis was conducted.

In the fourth round, two items were cross-loading at greater than .25 on to multiple factors. These two items were works for the Canadian government and get on well with neighbors. We removed these two items. In addition, upon assessing the items within each factor, four items had poor face validity in terms of the latent factor to which they belonged. These four items were given up foreign cultural norms or behavior, embraces or converts to a specific religion, belongs to one of the country’s main ethnic groups, and observes local laws and customs. We removed these four items. The fifth round of principal axis factor analysis was conducted on the remaining 26 items. This provided a clean, three-factor structure (see Table 3). In total, 21 items were removed.

Factor 1 was labeled Ethnic Markers ($n = 9$, Cronbach’s alpha = .90). These items reflected behavioral adaptation to the majority of Canadian norms. This factor included items such as behaves like a Canadian, dress like the way local people do, and able to eat local

Table 3
Factor Structure of Importance of Social Markers

Factor and social markers	Factor loading	Percent of variance explained
<i>Ethnic markers</i>		29.72%
1. Behaves like a Canadian	.871	
2. Enjoys typical Canadian past times	.829	
3. Follows local media	.800	
4. Supports Canadian products and brands	.730	
5. Able to eat local food	.682	
6. Dress like the way local people do	.669	
7. Participates in the work of local charity organizations/NGOs	.594	
8. A member of the local labor union	.545	
9. Able to speak with local accent	.536	
<i>Civic markers</i>		14.67%
10. Take pride in Canadian diversity	.853	
11. Be respectful of Canadian laws and policies	.829	
12. Be accepting and respectful of other’s cultures and behaviors	.776	
13. Respect Canadian citizen’s freedom of choice	.775	
14. Take pride in being Canadian	.760	
15. Embraces a positive attitude to the host society	.573	
16. Appreciate beauty of Canadian nature	.553	
<i>Socioeconomic achievement</i>		4.78%
17. Considered a talent in their industry	.784	
18. Invests or sets up a Canadian-based company	.694	
19. Works in a field where there is a shortfall of labor	.629	
20. Has at least a college degree	.617	
21. Has a monthly income of at least ____	.592	
22. Is gainfully employed	.565	
23. Attended local schools themselves	.538	
24. Marries a native-born or living with native-born partner	.509	
25. Their children attend(ed) local schools	.502	
26. Works for a Canadian-based company	.493	

food. Factor 2 was labeled Civic Markers ($n = 7$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$). This factor included traits where immigrants could experience and display a sense of gratitude toward being a member of Canadian society. The factor items included taking pride in Canadian diversity, respecting freedom of choice, and appreciating the beauty of Canadian nature. Factor 3 was labeled Socioeconomic Achievement ($n = 10$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$). This factor encompassed traits that would allow immigrants to successfully adapt to the Canadian workforce and the majority of society. Items included investing in or setting up a Canadian-based company, being considered a talent in one's industry, and having at least a college degree (Tables 3 and 4).

Hierarchical Moderated Regression

A hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted to examine how symbolic and realistic threat, immigrant contributions, preferences for heritage culture preservation, and preferences for Canadian culture adoption were associated with the three social marker factors (Ethnic Markers, Civic Markers, and Socioeconomic Achievement; see Table 5). All variables were mean-centered before the regression analyses were conducted. The main effects of threat, immigrant contributions, preferences for heritage culture preservation, and preferences for Canadian culture adoption were assessed.

Our first hypothesis was that threat was positively related to SMA. In the regression model on Ethnic Markers, a significant and positive main effect for the symbolic threat was found, supporting Hypothesis 1. Similarly, in the regression model on Socioeconomic Achievement, a positive effect for the symbolic threat was found. However, a symbolic threat was negatively related to the Civic Markers factor. The realistic threat was positively and significantly related to preference for Civic Markers and Socioeconomic Achievement. Thus, the findings partially support Hypothesis 1.

Our second hypothesis was that perceptions of immigrants' positive social and economic contributions were negatively related to SMA. Perceptions of immigrant contributions did not have any effect on Ethnic Markers, Civic Markers, and Socioeconomic Achievement. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Our third hypothesis was that preferences for (a) higher Canadian culture adoption were positively related to endorsement of SMA, whereas preferences for (b) higher heritage culture preservation were negatively related to endorsement of SMA. Preference for adopting Canadian culture was significantly and

positively related to Ethnic Markers and Civic Markers. However, no relation was found between preference for adopting Canadian culture and Socioeconomic Achievement. Meanwhile, preference for preserving heritage culture was significantly and negatively related to Ethnic Markers but had no relation to Civic Markers and Socioeconomic Achievement. Overall, we found partial support for Hypothesis 3.

Discussion

We examined the nature and importance of SMA for immigrants amongst a sample of Canadian university students. The qualitative study identified eight culture-specific SMA. Quantitative findings indicated that only nine SMA were deemed important for immigrants to adopt by the sample. When examining the nature of these nine "important" SMA, common themes of respecting laws, diversity, and freedom were found to be important features of being Canadian. Moreover, support toward multiculturalism is indirectly reflected in the three social markers that were endorsed the least by participants. These three social markers, in descending order of importance, were: Giving up foreign cultural norms or behavior, physically resembles a Canadian, and embracing a specific religion. The results support previous literature, which has found that Canadians tend to endorse diversity and freedom (Grant, 2016) and take pride in the multiculturalism of the nation (Cameron & Berry, 2008). Taken together, qualitative and quantitative findings suggest this sample endorsed a civic form of Canadian national identity, where participants endorsed few restrictions on immigrants in order for them to be considered "one of us" (Leong et al., 2020). Correspondingly, the latent factor with the highest mean importance was Civic Markers. The markers in this factor (e.g., being respectful of citizens and taking pride in one's national identity) were also deemed relatively easy for newcomers to acquire. The high importance of the Civic Markers factor may further signify the overall valuing of a civic, rather than ethnic, national identity among participants. Previous literature supports the notion that a civic national identity tends to be widely adopted in Canada. For example, Gilkinson and Sauvé (2010) found that recent immigrants, earlier immigrants, and Canadian-born citizens all highly endorsed an identity as "Canadian." In addition, priming a Canadian citizen with their Canadian identity has been found to be associated with lower antiimmigration attitudes (Breton, 2015).

Interestingly, an appreciation and respect for Canadian nature were valued as a Civic Marker. Relations with a nation's natural landscape within psychological conceptualizations of national

Table 4
Scale Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Ethnic markers	2.52	1.22	.90							
2. Civic markers	5.97	1.11	.88	.183**						
3. Socioeconomic achievement markers	3.13	1.13	.86	.647**	.186**					
4. Perceived symbolic threat	2.98	1.03	.80	.481**	-.008	.441**				
5. Perceived realistic threat	3.43	1.21	.91	.473**	.098	.439**	.750**			
6. Immigrant contributions	4.47	.98	.71	-.324**	.064	-.212**	-.554**	-.548**		
7. Preserve heritage culture	4.32	1.06	—	-.300**	-.109	-.225**	-.284**	-.303**	.283**	
8. Adopt Canadian culture	4.52	1.08	—	.416**	.296**	.330**	.473**	.446**	-.271**	-.298**

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 5
Hierarchical Moderated Regression on Social Marker Importance Factors

Variables	Ethnic markers			Civic markers			Socioeconomic achievement		
	R^2	β	p	R^2	β	p	R^2	β	p
	.315			.148			.247		
Symbolic threat		.181	.034		-.235	.013		.255	.005
Realistic threat		.157	.061		.224	.017		.250	.005
Immigrant contributions		-.017	.794		.131	.071		.107	.115
Preserve heritage culture		-.123	.028		-.057	.364		-.080	.174
Adopt Canadian culture		.205	.001		.342	.001		.109	.089

Note. β coefficients are standardized; significant predictors are bolded.

identity are uncommon. However, authors in other disciplines have argued that the Canadian landscape has been a unifying element for the formation of Canada's civic national identity (Kaufmann & Zimmer, 1998; Osborne, 2006). Future psychological research should delve further into the role of the environment in civic identity formation.

Factors Related to Ethnic Markers

Although findings indicated general support for multiculturalism and a civic national identity, it is important to highlight that perceived symbolic threat was positively related to Ethnic Markers. In other words, the participants in this sample of White, multigeneration Canadians that felt symbolically threatened by immigrants were more likely to hold stricter expectations for immigrants to adapt to majority behavioral norms. This demonstrates how the threat to national identity and values, rather than threats to economic opportunities, played a particular role in endorsing adaptation to majority norms for this sample. Perceptions of a threat to national norms and values may partially explain why religious and ethnic minorities in Canada are less readily accepted, and are less valued, by White Canadians than those of European background (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001). Similarly, Velasco González et al. (2008) found that perceived symbolic threat was related to higher prejudice and lower political tolerance of Muslims in the Netherlands. Correspondingly, Gieling et al. (2014) found that lower levels of political tolerance toward Muslims in the Netherlands related to higher endorsement of assimilation to majority norms and values.

Participants who had a higher preference for immigrants to preserve their heritage culture endorsed Ethnic Markers less. Complementarily, participants who had a higher preference for immigrants to adopt Canadian culture more strongly endorsed Ethnic Markers. Therefore, participants who preferred for immigrants to reduce their associations with their heritage culture and to adopt Canadian culture were more likely to prefer for immigrants to interact *as* a White Canadian and interact *with* White Canadians.

Factors Related to Civic Markers

Despite the general support for Civic Markers by the sample, perceptions of symbolic threat were negatively related to Civic Markers. This indicates that as perceived threats to national identity, values, and norms increased, participants placed less importance on

immigrants adopting civic markers. It may be possible that White Canadians have a lower desire to endorse an inclusive and adaptable civic national identity for immigrants when they are perceived as posing a threat to the national values and identity of Canada (Wright et al., 2012). This aligns with findings that "devalued" immigrants are met with assimilationism, segregationism, and exclusionism attitudes from Canadian host citizens (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Safdar et al., 2008). Perceptions of realistic threat had the opposite effect. Those who felt that immigrants threatened the national economy or workforce held higher expectations for immigrants to adopt Civic Markers. This suggests that when immigrants are considered strong contenders for job opportunities, there is a greater desire for these immigrants to justify that they are worthy of the opportunity to work and reside in Canada.

Preference for adopting Canadian culture was also positively related to the endorsement of Civic Markers SMA. Participants who preferred for immigrants to adopt Canadian culture placed higher importance on immigrants being respectful and grateful for their position in Canada. Previous literature suggests that Canadian national identity is related to pride in diversity and human rights values (Cameron & Berry, 2008). Therefore, this finding may further support the notion that participants valued the formation of a civic identity, where all immigrants are both included and inclusive of others. However, another plausible interpretation is that participants expected all immigrants to be appreciative of the opportunity to reside in Canada, despite the potential "devaluing" and exclusion that may occur for particular groups (D'Cruz, 2014; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001).

Factors Related to Socioeconomic Achievement

Similar to Ethnic Markers, perceptions of symbolic threat were positively related to the endorsement of Socioeconomic Achievement Markers. Perceptions of realistic threat were also positively related to Socioeconomic Achievement. In other words, participants who perceived that immigrants have a negative impact on national values, as well as the Canadian economy, were more likely to hold stricter expectations for immigrants to integrate into the social and economic spheres of Canada. This finding corresponds with the general premises of ITT (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Furthermore, the positive effect of threat on stricter immigration requirements and SMA is supported in previous studies (Croucher, 2013; Green, 2009; Komisarof et al., 2019; Leong, 2014; Leong et al., 2020; Stephan et al., 2005).

Limitations

The methodological limitations of the study include the use of single items to measure preference for immigrants to adopt Canadian culture and to retain their heritage culture. Single-item measures may not adequately capture complex psychological constructs (McIver & Carmines, 1981). In addition, the reliabilities of the single items used in the present study are unknown (Wanous & Hudy, 2001). Future studies should utilize multiple-item scales to determine the effects of perceived social status, attitudes toward heritage culture maintenance, and attitudes toward host society adoption on SMA. Using such multiple-item scales would further our understanding on how these psychological constructs shape the endorsement of SMA. Another limitation that arose was that a few culture-specific SMA seemed to overlap with general SMA. This elucidates the need for further clarification on the criteria for generating culture-specific SMA.

There are also limitations in terms of participant responses. Participants were White, multigeneration Canadians, and were university students; therefore, the findings are not generalizable. There was a potential impact of social desirability, which could influence people's responses when sociopolitically sensitive topics are examined (Van de Mortel, 2008). The effect could lead to a lower disclosure of honest perceptions on immigrant traits among participants (Wellings et al., 2000). Another limitation was the lack of gender balance among participants in our study. A low number of participants who identified as men, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, or other gender diverse identities may have led to a lower breadth of data (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014).

Nonetheless, the findings from this study mirror the findings that indicate Canadians, particularly university students, endorse inclusive attitudes toward immigrants and a civic form of national identity, in general (Breton, 2015; Environics, 2018). In future studies, it is important to capture the attitudes of the general population on SMA. Research examining new immigrants' perspectives on required social markers would further explain which social markers are truly considered important within the Canadian context. Overall, we argue that the findings provide novel insights on intergroup relations in Canada. Our results add to the limited literature on SMA, which highlight that the values and norms of the host society are an important consideration when examining the adaptation of immigrants (Komisarof et al., 2019; Leong et al., 2020).

Résumé

Bien que le Canada soit un pays qui accueille les immigrants, peu de recherches ont examiné les caractéristiques clés que les citoyens du Canada jugent importantes pour que les immigrants soient acceptés et inclus dans la nation. Selon le cadre des marqueurs de l'acceptabilité sociale (MAS), les citoyens du pays d'accueil peuvent avoir des exigences quant à certaines caractéristiques que les immigrants devraient posséder en vue d'envisager leur entrée et de les accepter en tant que citoyens naturalisés. En conséquence, la demande d'un faible nombre de MAS chez les immigrants est une indication d'inclusivité, tandis qu'un grand nombre de MAS dénote l'exclusivité (Leong, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 2014, 38, p. 120). Le présent article examine les points de vue, à l'égard des immigrants, d'étudiants blancs de multiples générations inscrits à une université canadienne. Dans l'Étude 1, on a réalisé

quatre groupes de discussion ($N = 20$), qui ont permis de cerner huit MAS propres à la culture. Dans l'Étude 2, on a fait remplir un questionnaire en ligne ($N = 264$), et les résultats ont révélé que seuls 9 des 47 MAS présentés étaient jugés importants pour obtenir la citoyenneté canadienne. Des analyses factorielles exploratoires ont mené à l'établissement d'un modèle à trois facteurs quant à l'importance des MAS : les marqueurs ethniques, les marqueurs civiques et la réussite socioéconomique. La menace symbolique perçue, la menace réaliste perçue, la préférence que les immigrants préservent leur patrimoine culturelle et la préférence que les immigrants adoptent la culture du Canada influent sur l'approbation des MAS.

Mots-clés : marqueurs de l'acceptabilité sociale, inclusivité, Canada, immigration, acculturation

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