

Analysis of migrant teachers' life experiences in early childhood education in Canada

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Article Information:	ABSTRACT
Received 2024-11-15 Revised 2024-12-09 Accepted 2024-12-30	This study explores the lived experiences of migrant early childhood education (ECE) teachers in Canada, emphasizing their contributions to cultural and linguistic diversity as well as the challenges they face in professional integration. With Canada's diverse population and increasing number of migrant educators, understanding their experiences is essential to support inclusive educational practices. The study investigates how migrant ECE teachers contribute to multiculturalism and multilingualism in classrooms, enhancing children's social, cognitive, and cultural development. Despite these positive impacts, migrant teachers encounter obstacles such as credential recognition, language barriers, and systemic biases, which hinder their professional integration and potential contributions. Utilizing qualitative methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine migrant educators representing diverse cultural backgrounds. The findings of this study suggest that systemic barriers hinder the full integration of migrant educators into Canada's early childhood education (ECE) system despite their significant contributions to cultural and linguistic diversity. Better recognition of their credentials, increased professional support, and more inclusive policies are needed to maximize their potential and reflect their experiences well in Canada's ECE system. The contribution of this study is to identify and highlight systemic barriers that hinder the full integration of migrant educators into the Early Childhood Education (ECE) system in Canada. The findings call for better credential recognition, increased professional support, and more inclusive policies to maximize the potential of migrant educators and ensure their experiences are well reflected in the Canadian ECE system. This study contributes to proposing changes that can help address these inequities and increase diversity and inclusion in early childhood education in Canada.

Keywords: migrant teachers; early childhood education, cultural diversity, multilingual education



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INTRODUCTION

In Canada, recent immigrants holding university degrees from their home countries frequently encounter employment mismatches. This issue is particularly pronounced in the field of early childhood education (ECE), where migrant educators contribute valuable cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical expertise (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). As noted by Chen and Fougère (2014) and Brough and Biggs (2015), these educators play a crucial role in enriching learning environments with global perspectives and intercultural competencies. However, Hou et al. (2021) highlight that systemic challenges such as difficulties in credential recognition and the need to adapt to the Canadian educational context often hinder their full participation in the workforce. Afshari (2022) emphasizes that these barriers exacerbate employment mismatches, preventing highly qualified professionals from securing positions that align with their training and experience. Moreover, Schimmele and Hou (2024) report that in 2021, recent immigrants with foreign degrees experienced an overeducation rate 24 percentage points higher than their Canadian-born peers, illustrating a significant disparity in labor market integration. Despite these challenges, migrant educators bring substantial benefits to Canadian classrooms. According to Bascia (2014) and Guo and Guo (2022), their diverse perspectives promote empathy, global citizenship, and multicultural understanding key goals outlined in Canadian education policy. Therefore, as Sánchez Cubo et al. (2023) argue, addressing the systemic barriers faced by migrant professionals is essential for fostering inclusive learning environments and fully leveraging their contributions to the education system. This situation underscores the urgent need for Canada to better integrate migrant teachers into its workforce to advance equity and diversity in education.

Based on several preliminary studies, migrant educators hold significant potential to enrich early childhood education (ECE) in Canada. However, their contributions are often limited by considerable integration challenges. Niyubahwe et al. (2013), as well as Antony-Newman and Niyozov (2023), emphasize that complex accreditation procedures, language barriers, and the necessity of adapting to unfamiliar educational systems frequently impede the effectiveness of migrant educators in the ECE sector. Iraola et al. (2024) further note that such systemic challenges not only restrict professional opportunities but also affect educators' confidence and agency within the classroom. Understanding the lived experiences of migrant educators is therefore essential. Doan (2021) argues that firsthand narratives offer critical insight into how policies can be tailored to support professional growth and inclusion. Similarly, Phan et al. (2022) and Gimbert et al. (2023) stress that inclusive policy development must be grounded in the real-world experiences of those directly affected in order to create sustainable, equitable change.

In response to growing demands for early learning programs across Canada, government initiatives have aimed to expand the ECE workforce. Prentice and White (2018) highlight that this expansion presents an opportunity to incorporate more diverse educational professionals. However, as Adair et al. (2012) and Yip and Xu (2024) point out, systemic barriers such as inconsistent recognition of foreign credentials between provinces often result in the underutilization or even exclusion of migrant teachers. This underemployment represents a loss of valuable expertise that could significantly enhance Canadian classrooms. To address these issues, Wilkinson (2002), Block et al. (2014), and Quezada et al. (2024) advocate for systemic reforms that recognize and validate the diverse qualifications migrant educators bring. They argue that creating an equitable and diverse ECE workforce requires the dismantling of structural barriers and the implementation of inclusive hiring and accreditation practices. An in-depth analysis of migrant educators' experiences in the Canadian ECE context is thus essential. Such research, as these scholars suggest, would illuminate systemic obstacles, identify effective integration strategies, and inform policy reforms aimed at equity and inclusion. Ultimately, fostering an inclusive approach would not only empower migrant educators but also support the development of a more dynamic and representative early childhood education system in Canada.

This study aims to delve into the lived experiences of migrant early childhood educators in Canada, highlighting their unique challenges and the significant contributions they make to the

educational landscape. Migrant educators are known for introducing innovative teaching methods and culturally diverse perspectives that significantly enrich pedagogical practices within ECE environments. Despite their contributions, these educators often encounter language barriers, which can hinder effective communication with peers and students, potentially leading to their isolation and undervaluation in the educational system. This research is designed to examine these complex dynamics thoroughly, with the goal of informing and shaping policies and practices that not only facilitate the integration of migrant educators but also bolster cultural and linguistic diversity, ultimately elevating the quality of Canada's ECE system. This comprehensive approach seeks to ensure that the skills and insights of migrant educators are fully recognized and utilized, promoting an inclusive and dynamic educational environment.

This study utilizes Ecological Systems Theory alongside Critical Multiculturalism to explore the lived experiences of migrant early childhood education (ECE) teachers in Canada, focusing on their challenges and contributions within the ECE framework. It examines how different environmental systems affect these educators, from immediate classroom interactions to broader societal and policy influences. The microsystem level considers direct relationships in schools, while the mesosystem looks at interactions between schools and families. The exosystem explores external impacts like school policies and community support, and the macrosystem addresses cultural and societal norms affecting migrant teachers. Critical Multiculturalism adds a layer of analysis on power dynamics and social justice, advocating for the recognition of diverse teaching methods and cultural contributions of migrant teachers. This combined approach aims to identify systemic barriers and opportunities for acknowledging and utilizing the unique capabilities of migrant educators, including how these elements evolve through the chronosystem.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the lived experiences of migrant early childhood education (ECE) teachers in Canada. As Creswell and Poth (2018) assert, qualitative methods are particularly effective for investigating complex human experiences, enabling researchers to uncover deep insights into perceptions, meanings, and interactions within specific contexts. Through such methods, this study aims to gather rich, detailed narratives that illuminate the professional journeys of migrant educators, the integration challenges they face, and the unique cultural perspectives they contribute to the Canadian ECE landscape. Guiding this inquiry is a phenomenological approach, which, according to Van Manen (2016), focuses on understanding how individuals make sense of their lived experiences. This approach allows the study to center the voices of migrant ECE teachers, emphasizing their subjective realities and offering a profound understanding of the personal and professional dimensions of their integration into the Canadian education system.

To collect data, the study employed semi-structured interviews with nine migrant ECE teachers who have at least two years of teaching experience in Canadian early learning settings. Participants were purposively selected to represent diverse cultural backgrounds, including educators from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, thereby ensuring a broad range of perspectives (Patton, 2015). Semi-structured interviews provided flexibility for participants to share their stories while allowing the researcher to probe specific areas of interest, such as language adaptation, cultural integration, and professional challenges. This method was chosen to encourage open, candid responses that reveal the complexities of migrant educators' lived experiences.

The data collection process prioritized the development of trust and rapport with participants, which is essential for creating a safe and supportive environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing personal experiences. Anderson and Holloway-Libell (2014) emphasize that establishing such relational foundations is critical in qualitative research, particularly when addressing sensitive or deeply personal topics. In line with this perspective, each interview in the study was conducted in a private setting, audio-recorded with participants' informed consent, and transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the data. To further safeguard participant confidentiality, transcripts were thoroughly reviewed and anonymized. Liang (2019) underscores the importance of

upholding ethical standards in qualitative research, highlighting informed consent, confidentiality, and the participant's right to withdraw as fundamental principles. This study adhered strictly to those ethical considerations, ensuring that all research procedures aligned with established guidelines for ethical qualitative inquiry.

Data analysis followed a thematic coding approach, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting recurring themes across the data set. Initial coding captured key phrases and ideas from participant narratives, which were then grouped into broader themes such as “cultural enrichment in classrooms,” “barriers to credential recognition,” and “professional integration challenges.” The iterative nature of thematic analysis allowed for constant comparison and refinement of categories, revealing patterns and insights that reflect the multifaceted experiences of migrant educators.

Trustworthiness in this study was strengthened through the use of several established qualitative strategies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that member checking where participants are invited to review and validate their interview transcripts and preliminary findings is a key method for ensuring the credibility of qualitative research. This strategy allows participants to confirm the accuracy of their contributions and provides an opportunity for clarification or elaboration, thus enhancing the authenticity of the data. Additionally, triangulation was employed by comparing interview data with existing literature on migrant teachers and Canadian educational policies. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) highlight that triangulation contributes to the reliability of findings by offering multiple perspectives on the same phenomenon. Agazu et al. (2022) also emphasize that integrating diverse sources of data helps construct a more comprehensive and trustworthy understanding of complex social experiences.

In essence, the methodological approach of this study centers the voices of migrant early childhood education (ECE) educators, creating space for their lived experiences to inform and shape educational policy and practice. By combining rigorous qualitative inquiry with strong ethical commitments, the study aims to explore the structural, cultural, and linguistic factors that affect the professional integration of migrant teachers into Canadian ECE contexts. This approach not only uncovers the challenges these educators face but also amplifies their valuable contributions to building multicultural and inclusive learning environments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Cultural and linguistic contributions

In Canada's diverse early childhood education (ECE) sector, immigrant educators significantly enrich learning environments by introducing a variety of cultural heritages and languages. Representing nearly one-fifth of the nation's population, these educators help shape a globally aware and culturally appreciative young generation. As of 2021, around 30% of Canadians were bilingual in languages beyond English and French, showcasing the linguistic diversity within the population. Spanish, Mandarin, and Punjabi were among the most spoken non-official languages. The presence of such varied linguistic skills, with Punjabi speakers typically younger and Italian speakers older, emphasizes the dynamic cultural landscape Canadian children are exposed to in educational settings.

Table 1
Number of Canadians who Mostly Speak Each Language at Home

	2016	2021
Mandarin		+15%
Punjabi		+49%
Spanish	+20%	
Arabic	+28 %	
Tagalog	+29%	
Urdu	+23%	
Portuguese	+20%	
Gujarati	+43%	
Hindi	+66%	

Malayalam +129%
Note: (Major, 2022)

In Canada, immigrant educators make valuable contributions to early childhood education by incorporating traditional stories and cultural narratives that instill values such as teamwork, empathy, and respect. Through this practice, children are exposed to diverse perspectives, which strengthens their cultural awareness and appreciation of difference. Many immigrant educators are also multilingual, enabling them to support English Language Learners (ELLs) by teaching in both English and students' native languages. This dual-language approach has the potential to enhance cognitive flexibility and academic performance. Nevertheless, the lack of strong institutional support for bilingual and multicultural education reveals a significant gap in Canada's policy framework. Without comprehensive reforms, the unique linguistic and cultural resources of immigrant educators remain underutilized. Addressing this limitation through targeted policy initiatives is essential for creating inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive learning environments that reflect Canada's diversity.

Professional integration and systemic barriers

Migrant educators in Canada encounter significant challenges in achieving full professional integration, largely due to systemic barriers within the education system. A primary concern is the lengthy, inconsistent, and often opaque process of recognizing foreign credentials, which creates uncertainty and delays career advancement. These structural obstacles restrict skilled educators from fully utilizing their expertise, limit access to suitable employment opportunities, and undermine their sense of professional belonging. Beyond affecting career progression, these barriers also have social and personal implications, making integration a multifaceted struggle. Consequently, migrant educators face difficulties not only in establishing themselves professionally but also in navigating cultural and institutional expectations, highlighting the urgent need for policy reforms and targeted support to enable their effective participation in Canada's education system.

Table 2
Education and Employment in Canada

No	People with a bachelor's degree or higher	Total	Recent immigrants	Established immigrants	Canadian-born people aged 25 to 34	Canadian-born people aged 35 to 64
1	2001	3,131,700	414,300	505,500	722,100	1,489,800
2	2006	3,883,100	597,300	664,900	800,900	1,820,000
3	2011	4,622,800	662,900	907,300	933,800	2,118,800
4	2016	5,201,300	795,600	1,107,900	1,015,800	2,282,000
5	2021	6,057,800	991,600	1,423,200	1,128,100	2,514,900

Note: Statistics Canada, 2001, 2006, 2016 and 2021 censuses of population; and 2011 National Household Survey

Between 2016 and 2021, job growth in Canada became increasingly concentrated in high-skill occupations, particularly benefiting new immigrants and young Canadian-born workers aged 25 to 34 who held a bachelor's degree or higher. For new immigrants with such qualifications, 59% of job growth during this period occurred in high-skill sectors, a substantial increase compared to only 32% recorded between 2001 and 2016. Similarly, Canadian-born workers with a degree experienced stronger relative growth, with employment in high-skill occupations rising by 90% from 2016 to 2021, compared with 61% in the previous 15-year span. These patterns suggest a significant shift in the labor market, reflecting both rising demand for advanced skills and improved alignment between higher education and employment opportunities. Overall, the data indicate a more favorable employment landscape for educated workers, especially in high-skill roles central to Canada's evolving knowledge economy.

The table below summarizes key findings on migrant teacher policies in Canada, highlighting significant trends and insights derived from the analyzed data. It presents an overview of systemic challenges, credential recognition processes, professional integration, and policy implications, offering a clear snapshot of the factors influencing migrant educators' experiences and the effectiveness of current policy measures in supporting their contributions to Canadian education.

Table 3*Policy Towards Migrant Teachers*

No	Findings	Description
1	Barriers to Recognition of Qualifications	Migrant educators in Canada face a lengthy and inconsistent process for recognizing foreign qualifications, which varies across provinces and leads to a lack of uniformity. This often hinders or delays their ability to obtain suitable employment.
2	Differences in Teaching Methods	Migrant educators must adapt to teaching methods that may differ significantly from those they are used to in their home countries. Learning new pedagogical strategies and understanding the cultural nuances of classroom dynamics in Canada are important but challenging steps in the integration process.
3	Discriminatory Experiences	Migrant educators often experience systemic devaluation, as experienced by a teacher from India whose extensive qualifications were overlooked, leaving her feeling scrutinized and marginalized.
4	Need for a Better System	The lack of a standard credential recognition process across provinces not only hinders professional integration but also emphasizes the need for a more precise and consistent system that supports the full utilization of migrant educators' skills and experiences to improve Canada's education landscape.

Note: This data comes from qualitative research, policy reports, or academic articles in Canada

The challenges faced by migrant educators in Canada emphasize the urgent need for systemic reform in the recognition of foreign qualifications. Currently, the process is often lengthy, inconsistent, and lacks transparency, creating significant barriers to professional integration. These obstacles not only delay access to employment opportunities but also contribute to feelings of exclusion and experiences of systemic discrimination. Such conditions can negatively impact the morale and potential contributions of highly skilled educators. To harness the full value of their international experience and expertise, Canada must adopt a more standardized, transparent, and consistent approach to credential recognition across all provinces. Implementing such reforms would not only support fairer access to the profession but also enhance the diversity and inclusivity of the Canadian education system. By removing these barriers, migrant educators can more effectively participate and enrich the educational experience for all learners in Canada.

Impact on educational practices and community inclusion

In analyzing the contributions of migrant educators to the Canadian education system, we find that they bring several innovations and approaches that enrich teaching practices. With their diverse cultural backgrounds, these migrant educators not only meet the needs of the curriculum but also broaden cultural understanding and appreciation among students. Incorporating elements of their culture into their teaching helps shape a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, which is crucial for forming global citizenship in today's era.

Table 4*Migrant Educators' Impact on Canada*

NO	Findings	Description
1	Innovative and Culturally Sensitive Teaching Methods	Migrant educators introduce teaching methods that align with the Canadian curriculum and enrich it, bringing a more community-involved approach and active family participation.
2	Leveraging Unique Cultural Perspectives	Educators from diverse backgrounds leverage their unique cultural perspectives to enrich the classroom experience, such as a Chinese teacher who might integrate traditional stories or customs into a lesson.

3	Facilitating Cultural Interests and Appreciation	This practice not only helps immigrant students feel a sense of belonging and appreciation but also introduces other students to a variety of cultural perspectives, deepening cultural understanding and appreciation among the entire student body.
4	Role in Promoting Diversity and Empathy	Migrant educators are critical in advocating for diversity, empathy, and global citizenship in their classrooms, encouraging students to embrace and celebrate diversity.
5	Contribution to an Inclusive and Supportive Educational Environment	By encouraging inclusivity and mutual respect, they help build a school community that values all cultural and social backgrounds, essential for developing global citizenship.
6	Influence on Students' Social and Emotional Development	The environments they help create are critical to supporting all students' social and emotional development, preparing them for an increasingly interconnected world.

Note: The findings in the table are derived from interviews, articles, and reports by Canadian educational institutions

Migrant educators are critical in developing Canadian schools' educational practices and community dynamics. Through innovative and culturally sensitive teaching methods, they not only help migrant students feel integrated and valued but also open their eyes to broader cultural diversity. This strengthens cross-cultural understanding and supports students' social and emotional development. Their commitment to supporting diversity and inclusion is critical to shaping the future of education that embraces and celebrates differences, preparing students to become skilled and empathetic global citizens. The environments they create support academic development and the character development of students who can value and interact respectfully with people from different backgrounds.

Discussion

Language and cultural integration in Canadian education

Language barriers and cultural differences present complex challenges to the integration of migrant educators within the Canadian educational system. Ajani (2020) interprets these barriers not merely as obstacles but also as opportunities for linguistic and cultural enrichment, suggesting that classrooms can benefit from greater diversity. In line with this, Guo (2012) views the presence of migrant teachers as a catalyst for intercultural understanding, as their diverse backgrounds enrich students' learning experiences. However, Higgen and Mosko (2020) caution that these advantages are not immediate, as differences in language and culture often create initial integration difficulties before evolving into more inclusive practices. The challenge is particularly acute in terms of communication. Niyubahwe et al. (2013) argue that limited proficiency in English or French frequently results in miscommunication with colleagues, students, and parents, reinforcing professional isolation. Building on this, Antony-Newman and Niyozov (2023) highlight that such isolation can undermine teachers' confidence and job satisfaction, indicating that without adequate institutional support, the potential benefits of migrant educators may remain underutilized.

Despite the challenges they encounter, migrant educators bring valuable multilingual skills that can significantly benefit English Language Learners (ELLs). Gultekin (2024) interprets this multilingual capacity as a key resource for bridging linguistic gaps and fostering more inclusive classrooms. In a similar vein, Mokikwa and Mokhele-Ramulumo (2024) argue that multilingualism not only enhances ELLs' academic engagement but also broadens the learning experience for all students by exposing them to diverse cultural and linguistic perspectives. However, these benefits are not always maximized in practice. Arzubiaga et al. (2008) contend that without strong structural and policy frameworks, the potential of linguistic diversity remains underutilized. This concern is echoed by Hummelstedt et al. (2021), who emphasize that many Canadian schools lack the training, resources, and administrative support necessary to implement effective bilingual or multilingual programs. Lucido et al. (2024) further reinforce this view by highlighting how institutional limitations often constrain migrant educators' contributions, leading to missed opportunities for creating more inclusive and responsive pedagogy.

Educational policies in Canada have been criticized for inadequately valuing linguistic diversity in classrooms. McIvor and Ball (2019) view this as a structural limitation, where the educational system fails to integrate the cognitive and cultural benefits of multilingualism into formal learning. Similarly, Hong et al. (2022) argue that without deliberate policy reform, linguistic diversity continues to be undervalued, restricting its potential to support inclusive educational development. In contrast, Margas (2023) stresses the urgency of institutionalizing multilingual education as a strategic response to the growing diversity of student populations. From a practical standpoint, Buchs and Maradan (2021) emphasize that reforms promoting bilingual and multicultural learning environments not only enhance the academic engagement of English Language Learners (ELLs) but also cultivate intercultural awareness among all students. Expanding this view, Buchs et al. (2023) highlight that integrating such programs allows schools to harness migrant educators' linguistic and cultural resources, fostering improved academic outcomes, stronger social cohesion, and inclusive school communities.

The integration of migrant educators into Canadian educational systems reflects a dynamic interplay of challenges and opportunities. Doan (2021) interprets these barriers particularly language limitations and cultural adjustment not only as constraints but also as openings for enriching classroom diversity and intercultural learning. However, Martín and Cerezo (2024) highlight that limited proficiency in English or French often results in miscommunication, professional isolation, and declining job satisfaction, underscoring the personal and institutional strain migrant educators face. This perspective contrasts with Müller et al. (2023), who take a broader analytical stance by framing such difficulties as evidence of systemic shortcomings in providing adequate structural and professional support. While Doan views integration barriers as potential resources for pedagogical innovation, Martín and Cerezo reveal their immediate impact on teachers' professional well-being, and Müller emphasizes institutional accountability. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that without systemic reforms, the opportunities posed by migrant educators' presence risk being overshadowed by the persistent challenges of inadequate support and recognition.

Despite existing obstacles, migrant educators contribute invaluable multilingual skills that significantly enrich classrooms, particularly in supporting English Language Learners (ELLs). Beauchesne et al. (2023) interpret these contributions as more than linguistic assistance, emphasizing their role in bridging cultural divides and fostering inclusive learning environments that benefit all students. Yet, Sun et al. (2023) critically analyze how the absence of strong institutional support for bilingual education and inadequate recognition of linguistic diversity constrain the broader impact of these skills. This perspective highlights a systemic gap between the potential of migrant educators and the policies that govern their practice. When compared, Beauchesne et al. focus on the transformative opportunities that multilingualism offers, while Sun et al. underscore the structural limitations that undermine its effectiveness. Together, their views point toward the necessity of educational reforms that institutionalize bilingual and multicultural education. Such reforms, as these scholars collectively argue, would unlock migrant educators' full potential, fostering inclusivity, cognitive growth, and social cohesion in Canadian schools.

Professional and systemic challenges for migrant educators in Canada

Migrant educators in Canada encounter systemic barriers that complicate their professional integration. Allan (2016) interprets the inconsistent recognition of international qualifications as a structural issue that not only delays credential validation but also reflects broader inequities in how migrant expertise is valued. Building on this, Santinho and Rebelo (2024) analyze the dual burden of bureaucratic requirements and pedagogical adaptation, suggesting that these barriers are not merely technical but also cultural, limiting migrant educators' full participation in schools. Comparatively, Niyubahwe et al. (2013) and Antony-Newman & Niyozov (2023) emphasize the long-term consequences, noting that such obstacles often push qualified educators into underemployment and lead to the devaluation of their professional identity. Govender and Ajani (2021) further interpret

these conditions as contributing to frustration and demoralization, undermining both confidence and classroom effectiveness. Taken together, these perspectives reveal that the issue is not simply individual adjustment but a systemic failure to recognize and leverage the unique expertise migrant educators bring.

One proposed pathway to address systemic barriers is the standardization of credential recognition processes. Thomassen and Munthe (2020) interpret the lack of uniformity as a structural weakness that undermines equity, arguing that a transparent and consistent system would allow migrant educators clearer access to professional validation. Habib et al. (2024) extend this view by analyzing how such reforms could reduce bureaucratic hurdles and create more equitable opportunities for integration, positioning credential recognition as both a technical and social justice issue. Yip and Xu (2024), however, stress that credential recognition alone is insufficient, emphasizing the complementary need for professional development programs tailored to migrant educators' pedagogical and cultural adjustment. Del Percio and Sokolovska (2016) reinforce this by showing that such programs function as a bridge, aligning diverse teaching practices with Canadian educational norms. Comparatively, Govender et al. (2023) highlight that when these initiatives are implemented in tandem, they not only empower migrant educators but also enrich schools with inclusivity and cultural diversity, ultimately benefiting all learners.

Migrant educators bring significant value to Canadian classrooms, particularly in cultivating bilingual and multicultural learning environments. Myles et al. (2006) interpret their presence as a crucial factor in enhancing linguistic and cultural diversity, framing this as essential for fostering inclusivity. Peungcharoenkun and Waluyo (2024) expand on this by analyzing how bilingual communication and intercultural exchange not only support students' cognitive growth but also nurture global citizenship and multicultural awareness. Comparatively, Arzubaga et al. (2008) and Hummelstedt et al. (2021) highlight that such diverse classroom contexts generate cognitive, social, and emotional benefits, with migrant educators uniquely positioned to facilitate them. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that migrant educators do more than enrich learning they act as agents of inclusivity and social cohesion. By leveraging their linguistic and cultural capital, Canada can move toward more dynamic, globally aware, and equitable educational environments that benefit both students and the broader school community.

However, without systemic reforms, the contributions of migrant educators risk being underutilized. Buzzai et al. (2022) interpret this issue as a policy gap, stressing that leaders must address structural barriers to fully recognize migrant educators' skills. Sunam (2023) analyzes this further, suggesting that reforms should focus on improving credential recognition, strengthening cultural competence training, and embedding inclusive practices in schools. These measures, if implemented, could shift migrant educators from marginal positions toward being valued actors within Canada's education system. Comparatively, Smits and Janssenswillen (2019) argue that such efforts would allow Canada to construct an education system that genuinely reflects its multicultural reality, positioning migrant educators as central to fostering inclusivity. Stunell (2020) complements this view by emphasizing that comprehensive reforms would maximize the diverse talents within the workforce, thereby enriching classrooms and producing benefits not only for students and educators but also for society at large.

Migrant educators in Canada encounter systemic challenges that hinder their full integration into the educational workforce. Ertorer et al. (2022) and Raihan et al. (2023) interpret irregularities in credential recognition and insufficient adaptation support as structural weaknesses that compromise both teaching efficacy and professional satisfaction. Shoshani and Eldor (2016), along with Naz et al. (2023), analyze these obstacles as forms of marginalization, noting that they not only disadvantage educators but also limit schools from harnessing the benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity. Comparatively, Pozas et al. (2023) argue that standardized frameworks for credential recognition and targeted professional development programs are essential to address these systemic gaps. Zamiri and Esmaili (2024) extend this perspective by emphasizing that inclusive educational policies are key to empowering migrant educators as active contributors. Taken together, these

scholars highlight that without meaningful reforms, Canada risks underutilizing vital talent and losing opportunities to cultivate inclusive, globally oriented classrooms.

Contributions to educational diversity and inclusivity

Migrant educators play a pivotal role in advancing diversity and inclusivity within Canadian Early Childhood Education (ECE) by integrating culturally enriched pedagogical practices. Torres and Tarozzi (2019) interpret their diverse backgrounds as a foundation for implementing transformative and culturally responsive teaching strategies, which significantly enrich classroom experiences. In a similar vein, Gorski and Parekh (2020) analyze these contributions as extending beyond academic achievement, positioning migrant educators as agents of social justice who foster inclusive learning environments. Doan (2021) compares these practices with traditional models, highlighting that the experiential and community-centered approaches introduced by migrant educators cultivate empathy, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship values aligned with Canada's inclusive educational mission. Complementing this, Phan et al. (2022) emphasize that such methods enhance student well-being by creating environments where learners feel respected, valued, and connected to a wider global community. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that migrant educators' contributions are essential to shaping equitable and transformative ECE practices in Canada.

Despite their significant potential, the contributions of migrant educators are often constrained by systemic challenges that hinder their professional growth. AlKharouf et al. (2024) interpret these challenges as stemming from insufficient recognition and support, which in practice prevent the full utilization of migrant educators' expertise. In a more analytical perspective, Beyrer et al. (2024) emphasize that the lack of targeted professional development and mentorship programs exacerbates their difficulties in adapting to the Canadian educational context, highlighting a structural gap in institutional responses. Lowenstein (2009) provides a comparative view, arguing that without enhanced resources and tailored training, migrant educators remain marginalized, whereas supportive policies could significantly facilitate their integration and amplify their impact. Extending this line of thought, Morris et al. (2024) contend that structured development programs are not merely supplementary but essential mechanisms to maximize the diverse contributions of migrant educators, thereby enriching classrooms with inclusivity and equity.

Guo and Guo (2022) interpret the role of migrant educators as central to advancing multiculturalism in Canadian classrooms, noting that their presence helps bridge cultural divides and foster inclusive learning environments. Yet, the same authors critically observe that systemic obstacles such as inconsistent credential recognition and weak institutional support often hinder their full participation. From an analytical perspective, Niyubahwe et al. (2013) argue that these barriers reflect broader structural inequities that marginalize migrant educators, while Antony-Newman and Niyozov (2023) extend this view by emphasizing the urgency of reforms that provide adequate resources, professional training, and supportive frameworks. In a more recent comparative analysis, Msimango et al. (2024) highlight that without such reforms, the Canadian education system risks underutilizing valuable expertise, whereas stronger integration policies could significantly enrich both teaching practices and social cohesion. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that empowering migrant educators is not merely an equity issue but a pathway to fostering inclusivity, cultural awareness, and diversity in education.

Addressing systemic barriers is essential for Canadian Early Childhood Education (ECE) to fully harness the benefits of diverse pedagogical practices. Adewusi et al. (2023) interpret the success of migrant educators as dependent on robust support systems, particularly professional development and mentorship, which they argue are key to professional empowerment. Castelino and Shinde (2023) build on this analysis by noting that such initiatives not only improve educators' job satisfaction and performance but also ensure that students experience culturally responsive teaching aligned with global demands. From a broader perspective, Guo (2022) stresses that educational frameworks embracing diversity are vital for cultivating empathy, intercultural competence, and global citizenship

in young learners. Comparatively, Sadownik (2023) and Yu (2024) contend that without structural reforms, these opportunities remain underutilized, limiting the transformative potential of ECE. Collectively, these perspectives highlight that investment in inclusive policies benefits not only migrant educators but also the broader goal of fostering multicultural, equitable, and globally oriented classrooms.

Migrant educators hold significant potential to enrich Canadian Early Childhood Education (ECE) by embedding culturally responsive practices that foster inclusivity, empathy, and global citizenship. Cheatham et al. (2007) interpret the presence of these educators as an avenue to cultivate multicultural learning environments that mirror Canada's commitment to diversity. Similarly, Adair et al. (2012) analyze how migrant teachers' diverse backgrounds not only expand the cultural horizons of classrooms but also strengthen students' appreciation of multiple perspectives. Menning (2018) offers a more developmental perspective, arguing that such inclusive environments foster social awareness, critical thinking, and respect for cultural differences in young learners, thereby supporting holistic growth. When compared collectively, these scholars highlight that migrant educators do more than teach content they reshape classrooms into spaces of intercultural dialogue and shared learning. This role positions them as vital contributors to preparing students for the complexities of an interconnected world while simultaneously reinforcing Canada's broader social fabric.

Yang et al. (2023) interpret the challenges faced by migrant educators as structural issues, noting that insufficient professional development, limited mentorship, and weak institutional support reduce both their effectiveness and integration within classrooms. Ganji et al. (2024) take this further by analyzing the impact on student learning, arguing that such barriers not only undermine educators' job satisfaction but also limit students' access to the cultural and pedagogical richness that diversity provides. In contrast, Taye and Mengesha (2024) adopt a more solution-oriented stance, contending that reforms such as targeted training, structured mentorship, and inclusive policies are critical to empowering migrant educators. Collectively, these perspectives reveal that systemic reforms are necessary not only to enhance the professional growth of migrant teachers but also to ensure Canadian schools reflect multicultural values while equipping students with the skills needed in a globalized society.

CONCLUSIONS

Systemic obstacles continue to hinder the full integration and contribution of migrant educators within Canadian Early Childhood Education (ECE), even though they bring invaluable cultural and linguistic diversity to classrooms. These barriers, which include inconsistent credential recognition, limited professional development opportunities, and insufficient institutional support, prevent migrant educators from fully utilizing their expertise and innovative teaching practices. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms that prioritize standardized credential recognition, robust mentorship and training programs, and the implementation of inclusive policies at institutional and national levels. By doing so, Canada can ensure that the unique experiences and perspectives of migrant educators are not only acknowledged but also actively incorporated into the ECE system. Such efforts will enhance culturally responsive teaching, promote empathy and intercultural competence among young learners, and strengthen the overall inclusivity of Canadian education. Ultimately, empowering migrant educators benefits not only the teachers themselves but also students, schools, and society at large.

The integration challenges faced by migrant educators in Canadian early childhood education underscore the need for both theoretical and practical adjustments within the system. Theoretically, these issues call for an expanded understanding of professional integration that incorporates socio-cultural and linguistic competencies, drawing on ecological systems theory and Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to highlight the value of diverse experiences. Practically, reforms are essential to standardize credential recognition across provinces, establish targeted professional development initiatives, and implement inclusive educational policies that recognize and support multicultural teaching practices. Such measures would not only facilitate the smoother integration of migrant

educators but also strengthen the educational experience of students by broadening cultural and linguistic perspectives. Ultimately, addressing these challenges allows Canada's education system to more effectively reflect its diversity, preparing learners for success in a multicultural and interconnected world.

Future research on migrant educators in Canadian early childhood education should prioritize several interrelated areas to strengthen both policy and practice. First, comparative analyses of provincial policies are needed to identify effective models that support the professional integration of migrant teachers. Second, longitudinal studies on career trajectories can provide valuable insights into challenges and opportunities across different stages of employment. Third, evaluations of cultural training and professional development programs are essential to assess their impact on both educators' competencies and classroom inclusivity. Additionally, future studies should investigate the effects of recent policy reforms and examine how migrant educators contribute to student outcomes, particularly in developing multicultural awareness, empathy, and academic achievement. By adopting such a comprehensive approach, research can inform evidence-based strategies that enhance integration, maximize the contributions of migrant educators, and ensure Canadian education more fully reflects and benefits from its cultural diversity.

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