

EXPLORING MOTIVATIONS OF RURAL SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE EMPLOYERS IN HIRING NEWCOMERS

Manitoba Saskatchewan Alberta



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Acknowledgement

This research is an examination of the motivating factors that drive rural employers to hire newcomers in the Prairie provinces. It is the first step in building on the knowledge that already exists about employers' perspectives. Initiated by Immigration Research West (IRW) and funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), this research offered a knowledge-building opportunity for Brandon University's Rural Development Institute (RDI). RDI is grateful for the vision of IRW and IRCC and their efforts to find new ways to improve settlement for newcomers to Canada.

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Abstract

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employ more than 90% of Canadians and account for 98% of businesses, while also creating the most jobs in Canada. One of the highest priorities of immigrants is working, and employed newcomers mean a successful immigration policy and prosperity, locally and nationally. With persistent labour shortages in rural areas, immigrants are vital to businesses and communities. At the centre of this success are motivations of SME owners in hiring newcomers. Based on survey responses from 112 SME owners in rural and small towns across the prairies, results of the present study suggest that business owners are equally motivated by finance (reducing operating costs, increasing sales), bringing in needed skills (employment readiness, talent), productive newcomer behaviours (hard work, new perspectives), and generating community impact (socio-economic development, population growth). The hiring of newcomers draws heavily on internal motivations of owners, including their own notion of rewards and self-worth, as well as their identification with newcomers. Although SME owners have significant experience hiring and working with newcomers across many different industry sectors, challenges persist for these business owners in terms of communication, recruiting, and immigration processes. Given the difficulty encountered in this research in surveying SME owners, further study is needed to examine approaches and practices of others who conducted successful surveys with this hard-to-reach population of SMEs. Future research could also more fully examine motivational factors in hiring newcomers, along with compiling data to characterize newcomers (e.g., skills, age, place of origin).

KEY WORDS

Motivation in hiring, Small and medium-sized enterprises – SMEs, Newcomer/immigrant, Canadian prairies, Survey of business owners, Quantitative analyses, Thematic analysis, Open-ended questions

Introduction

Positive forecasts about the labour markets of the Prairie provinces¹ show an expansion of the three provincial labour markets, with an estimated 168,700 job openings in Manitoba by 2024 (Labour Market Information, 2018), 98,700 job openings in Saskatchewan by 2022 (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018), and a predicted cumulative labour shortage of around 49,000 workers in Alberta by 2025 (Government of Alberta, 2016). Small and Medium Enterprises² (SMEs) continue to be critical to Canada’s economic prosperity and the employment of newcomers³, who are instrumental in offsetting Canada’s demographic shift whereby Canada’s natural population growth⁴ is trending towards zero (Statistics Canada, 2014). Simply put, this trend means an increasing number of retirees and less participation in the workforce, hence a negative impact on the growth of the labour force (Beach, 2008; Edmonston, 2016). By 2036, there may be twice as many retirees as workers (Coutinho, 2018). As unfavourable as this prospect is, from demographic and socio-economic points of view, rural areas tend to have more apparent labour shortages than their urban counterparts do. In rural areas, where population aging and youth out-migration worsen labour shortages, immigration can be a major component of population increase (Aure, Forde, & Magnussen, 2018; IRCC, 2019) and labour-force growth (IRCC, 2018). Immigration policy is central to bringing in newcomers who reduce labour shortages, which in turn enriches the economy and the communities they live in.

In light of Canada’s demographic changes, including declining natural population growth, immigrants are critical to the country’s present and future. One in every five Canadians is

foreign-born (Grenier, 2017; Kaushik & Drolet, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2017a, 2018a). Because of a high net migration, Canada has the third strongest population growth among G7 countries, behind only Australia and New Zealand (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2017b). In 2017, 39% of economic immigrants settled outside urban centres (IRCC, 2018) through economic programs such as the Express Entry to fill labour gaps (Statistics Canada, 2017c). Before immigrants can revitalize rural communities by bringing in new ideas and fresh perspectives, they need to access the job market, find jobs, and engage in entrepreneurial pursuits (Kubíčková, Morávková, Tuzová, & Nečas, 2017; IRCC, 2017, 2018, 2018a). Haan (2008) reported that immigrants settling outside major urban areas experience some improvements in economic well-being in terms of employment status, earnings, and job suitability. The willingness of employers to hire newcomers is of utmost importance.

In 2015, SMEs represented 98% of Canadian businesses, and they employed 91% of the labour force in the Prairie provinces, as noted in Table 1 (Statistics Canada, 2016a). In this context, SMEs are engines for job creation and hiring of newcomers, especially in the Prairie provinces, where the influx of immigrants has been continuous (Statistics Canada, 2017b). The Prairie immigrant population doubled between 2001 and 2016; in 2016, the provinces’ percentage of new immigrants reached 5% in Manitoba, 4% in Saskatchewan, and 17% in Alberta (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Consequently, successful immigration policies are contingent on the willingness of rural SME employers to hire immigrants.

Table 1: Employment in the Prairie provinces (1000 employees)

Province	Establishment Size				Total Employment	% of SME Employment
	Small (1–99)	Medium (100–499)	SME Employment	Large (500+)		
Manitoba	275.6	75.1	350.7	36.2	386.9	90.6
Saskatchewan	251.2	55.0	306.2	22.8	329.0	93.1
Alberta	1127.0	263.0	1,390.0	133.3	1523.4	91.2
Total	1653.8	393.1	2046.9	192.3	2239.3	91.4

Source: Statistics Canada (2016a)

- 1 The Prairie provinces are composed of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.
- 2 SMEs are businesses that employ 1–499 employees.
- 3 Newcomers are permanent residents (formerly referred to as landed immigrants) in Canada, according to the rules and regulations governing immigration to Canada.
- 4 Natural population growth is the net result of births minus deaths.

Thirty six percent of SMEs are concentrated in three industry sectors: Construction; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Retail Trade. The remainder of SMEs occupy a range of sectors (Table 2). Given this diversity, SMEs assist local economies in withstanding economic shocks, much like a diversified investment portfolio is designed to minimize catastrophic losses and maintain modest growth (Steiner & Atterton, 2014). SMEs also create socioeconomic harmony or bonding (Steiner & Atterton, 2014; Kubičková et al., 2017) through an exchange between the business and customers, resulting in business relevance, adaptability, and longevity (Steiner & Atterton, 2014). Notwithstanding the importance of newcomers for businesses and communities, Drolet et al. (2014) found, after reviewing a body of work consisting of

more than 130 Canadian research projects, that there remains a lack of evidence of SME employers' engagement in settlement services. They call for further research to understand employers' experiences in fostering employment for newcomers. In a small way, this project responds to this call for research and explores the motivations of SMEs when hiring newcomers.

This paper next reviews extant literature to better comprehend what 'motivation' means and to propose an analytic frame for this research. This is followed by a description of the research design in terms of a central question (hypothesis), targeted sample, data collection, and analyses. Results are presented in relation to the secondary assumptions, followed by a discussion and conclusion.

Table 2: Top 10 industry sectors of SMEs across the Prairie provinces

	Construction	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	Retail Trade	Other Services (except public administration)	Health Care & Social Assistance	Accommodation & Food Services	Transportation & Warehousing	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	Wholesale Trade	Administrative & Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	Other*
Small Enterprises (1–99)	31,598	30,070	26,569	23,205	21,138	14,581	14,444	14,376	11,007	10,314	43,432
Medium Enterprises (100–499)	778	305	1105	191	851	555	342	46	271	334	2635
SME Total (1–499)	32,376	30,375	27,674	23,396	21,989	15,136	14,786	14,422	11,278	10,648	46,067
SME Total	13%	12%	11%	9%	9%	6%	6%	6%	5%	4%	19%

* Other: Includes Real Estate & Rental & Leasing (4%); Finance & Insurance (4%); Manufacturing (3%); Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction (3%); Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation (1%); Information & Cultural Industries (1%); Educational Services (1%); Public Administration (1%); Management of Companies & Enterprises (1%), and Utilities (1%).

Source: Statistics Canada (2018b), Table 33-10-0105-01 Canadian Business Counts, with employees, December 2018

Review of Motivation Literature

A working definition of motivation is, “a set of energetic forces that originates both within as well as beyond an individual’s being, to initiate ... behaviour” (Pinder, 1998, p. 11). In examining the history of motivation, Kanfer and Chen (2016) suggest that currently there is no single unified definition of motivation; and they characterize it as a combination of forces within and outside an individual that results in a behaviour. Commonly, such internal forces range from an inspiration to a drive or an impulse. One or a combination of these can be the source of behaviour, as can an attitude or a value held by an individual. Equally important are exterior or extrinsic motivators (Locke & Schattke, 2018), including stimuli from one’s environment, other people, and organizations, for example. Of interest to this research are the external and internal factors necessary for an employer to hire a newcomer.

External and internal factors play a role in hiring, as some scholars outline in human resource studies and management papers. Often reported are behaviours linked to employers’ values and attitudes regarding hiring decisions. Bryson and Chevalier (2015) report behaviours of racial discrimination among employers, while less explicit behaviours are evident in wage differentials among similar positions (Borowczyk-Martins, Bradley, & Tarasonis, 2018) and across genders (Kübler, Schmid, & Stüber, 2018). In addition, Blommaert, van Tubergen, and Coenders (2012) found that employers have condescending attitudes toward ethnic groups (i.e., intrinsic), while Di Stasio and Gërxhani (2015) noted that hiring practises are influenced by one’s social contacts (i.e., extrinsic). These authors do not specifically address the motivations of employers in hiring newcomers, but rather point to behaviours a newcomer may experience once employed.

Self-determination theory (SDT) founders Deci and Ryan (2002) claimed “the field of psychology is quite widely divided ...” (p. 4) when investigating motivations.⁵ These authors further described one’s motivation as an array of influences on behaviours of an individual, resulting from social conditions and/or interactions with another and/or with the environment. Such a notion of motivation combines intrinsic and external factors (Locke & Latham, 2004; Schultheiss, Kordik, Kullmann, Rawolle, & Rosch, 2009). Further, SMEs’ hiring motivations can include factors such as finances, employees’ skills and behaviours, and the impact on the community (Schwartz, 2005; MacKenzie & Forde, 2009; Atanackovic & Bourgeault, 2013; Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2013).

In this effort to achieve a practical framework within the context of the SDT, the above discussion suggests that motivations can form an array of considerations, including but not limited to the following:

- Financial factors for hiring as considered by an employer, e.g., operating costs, business sales;
- Newcomers’ skills that they bring to the employer, e.g., employment-ready skills, job-specific skills, or talents;
- Newcomers’ behaviours that they bring to the workplace, e.g., hard work, different perspective attributed to their cultural background differing from other employees;
- Community impact from hiring a newcomer, e.g., socio-economic diversification and population growth in the community.

Researchers using the self-determination theory go further and state that the ability to control one’s behaviour is moderated or regulated from outside oneself to within. Tremblay, Blanchard, Taylor, Pelletier, & Villeneuve’s (2009, p. 214) study identified four regulations modifying one’s motivation:

- External regulation consists of “doing an activity only to obtain a reward” (e.g., I work when the boss is watching).
- Introjected regulation is “a regulation of behavior through self-worth contingencies,” such as self-esteem and guilt (e.g., I work because it makes me feel like a worthy person).
- Identified regulation “refers to doing an activity because one identifies with its value or meaning, and accepts it as one’s own” (e.g., I work even though it is unpleasant at times).
- Integrated regulation “refers to identifying with the value of an activity to the point that it becomes part of the individual’s sense of self” (e.g., I work even when the boss is not watching).

In summary, the working definition of motivation begins with a “set of energetic forces that originates both within as well as beyond an individual’s being, to initiate ... behaviour” (Pinder, 1998, p. 11). In addition, motivation relates to hiring an employee (newcomer), which is influenced by four critical factors of finances, skills, behaviours, and community impact along with four regulating considerations. These variables are not exhaustive, but they are sufficiently different to help gain a better understanding of motivations of SME owners in hiring newcomers.

⁵ Also see Gagne and Deci (2005).

Research Design

This research explores motivations of SME employers in hiring newcomers. The study area encompasses the Prairie provinces' rural areas and small towns. Based on previous projects,⁶ the definition of rural is communities with 100,000 population or less.

Using a quantitative approach, the overall research question is stated as a (null) hypothesis:

- Rural SME employers are not motivated to hire newcomers.

Based on a review of the literature, the four key motivational factors influencing the hiring of employees are determined to be finances, newcomers' skills and behaviours, and community impacts. Each factor is tested with an assumption (listed in no particular order and assuming each is of equal importance):

1. The recruitment of newcomers by rural SME employers is not driven by financial factors.
2. The recruitment of newcomers by rural SME employers is not driven by newcomers' skills.
3. The recruitment of newcomers by rural SME employers is not driven by newcomers' behaviours.
4. The recruitment of newcomers by rural SME employers is not driven by its impacts on community.

Survey Instrument

An online survey was convenient, cost effective, and flexible, providing ease of follow-up and the ability to create an exportable database (Evans & Mathur, 2005; Wright, 2005). The survey design introduced questions to directly test the four factors stated in the above assumptions by associating each with two related proxies⁷ and the four regulators. Such a configuration results in 32 statements (Table 3 and Appendix B). These statements assess understanding for respondents, consistency of measurement, and comparability of responses. To create variation, the survey statements that measure external and identified regulators were negatively phrased. The 32 statements, all based on a seven-point Likert scale, were randomized for each survey.

⁶ Previous research used this same definition, and this research is intended to add to that body of work. Specifically, the research involved 32 communities in western Canada; see <https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publication/immigration-settlement-services-and-gaps-in-citizenship-and-immigration-canadas-western-region/>

⁷ Proxies are used to measure unobservable variables.

Table 3: Key motivating factors for hiring newcomers and related proxies and regulators, totaling 32 statements based on a seven-point Likert scale

Key Motivation Variables/ Factors	Proxies of Survey Statements	Regulators of Motivation
Finances	Operating costs	External, Introjected, Identified, Integrated
	Business sales	External, Introjected, Identified, Integrated
Newcomers' Skills	Employment-ready skills	External, Introjected, Identified, Integrated
	Job-specific skills	External, Introjected, Identified, Integrated
Newcomers' Behaviour	Hard work	External, Introjected, Identified, Integrated
	Different perspective (cultural)	External, Introjected, Identified, Integrated
Community Impact	Socio-economic development	External, Introjected, Identified, Integrated
	Population growth	External, Introjected, Identified, Integrated

In addition, this method included qualitative analysis with two sets of open-ended questions. One set explores the employers' experiences with hiring and retaining newcomers, including benefits and challenges. This helps to give insight into the intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivations (Q8–Q12). The second set of questions (Q14–Q16) helps us compare responses from SMEs, identify what industry sectors they represent, and determine if they have hired newcomers. This last set of data helps create a profile of respondents.

A draft survey reviewed by Umbrella Settlement Organizations (USOs), a psychologist, research experts in survey methods and immigration, and three rural SME owners resulted in revisions to clarify wording and the sequence of questions.

Sample

There are 263,121 SMEs across the prairies, and 40% are rural, outside centres with a population of 100,000 or more (Statistics Canada, 2016b, 2016c). Because this survey is exploratory, meaning it seeks preliminary results, a power analysis with a 95% confidence level and a confidence interval of +/-5% required a sample of 420 completed surveys⁸. On a proportional basis, this meant that an ideal sample could be composed of 70 responses from Manitoba, 70 from Saskatchewan, and 280 from Alberta.

The sample selection criteria for SMEs included:

- The owner, manager, or representative of a SME
- A business located in a rural community of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or Alberta with 100,000 or less inhabitants, and
- Hired a newcomer within the last five years (2013/+).

From discussions with provincial settlement organizations and Chamber of Commerce representatives across the prairies, it was determined that no direct access was available to targeted SMEs in terms of recruiting our sample and collecting data. As a result, it was decided that local Settlement Provider Organizations (SPOs), with their regular contact with immigrants and SMEs, would introduce the research and invite SMEs to complete an online survey. The recruiting protocol for data collection involved three steps:

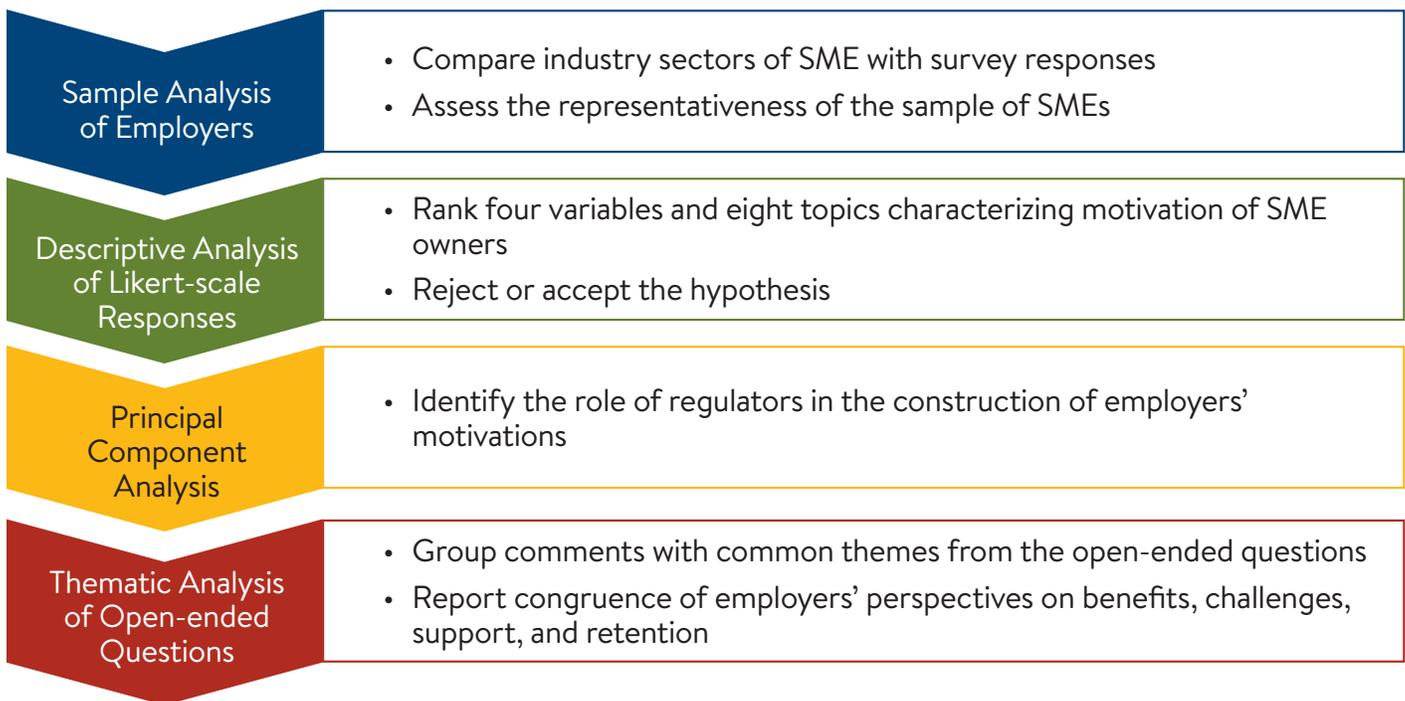
- **Step 1:** Discussions took place with USOs in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta to introduce the project, identify the important role of SPOs, and customize the recruitment steps. These meetings facilitated buy-in; some ownership of the project was expected to positively affect the level of participation.
- **Step 2:** USOs introduced the research team to local SPOs. Information sessions with SPOs created a shared understanding of the project and emphasized the importance of their role.
- **Step 3:** SPOs introduced the project to targeted SMEs, usually by email (and cc'ed the researcher). If there were no privacy concerns, the research team then invited each SME to complete the survey. If there were privacy concerns, SPOs directly invited the SMEs. Follow-up occurred through weekly reminders.

Data Analysis

Four complementary approaches were used to analyze data (Figure 1). First, a sample analysis characterized SMEs in relation to all SME industry sectors.



⁸ Power analysis aims to determine an appropriate sample size to optimize the detection of the effect of a given test at a given level of significance (Cohen, 1992). The goal is to determine the smallest sample to save resources during the data-collection step.

Figure 1: Four complementary analyses to explore SME owners' motivation to hire newcomers

Second, a descriptive analysis involved calculating the average for each of the four motivation variables of finances, skills, behaviours, and community impact. If the average was 5 (Somewhat Agree), 6 (Agree), or 7 (Strongly Agree), then the null hypothesis was rejected. The opposite would be true if the average was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), or 3 (Somewhat Disagree). This analysis also aimed to rank the four variables in terms of their importance for rural SME employers based on the percentage of (dis)agreement. This sheds light on the role played by each of the four regulators in the construction of rural employers' motivations to hire newcomers.

Third, a principal component analysis (PCA) aimed to answer the overall research question of what motivates SME owners to hire newcomers. While the previous analysis examined the four factors and eight topics, the PCA sought to explain motivations based on the four regulators. First, a scree plot⁹ identified preliminary relations among the 32 components, and a Bartlett test¹⁰ of sphericity identified significant correlations among components. A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin¹¹ measure confirmed which, if any, were strong correlations.

Fourth, thematic analysis coded open-ended questions to highlight extrinsic and intrinsic factors contributing to motivations when hiring newcomers in the words of employers (i.e., benefits, challenges, need for support, and actions to retain newcomers).

⁹ Scree plot is a graphical representation that shows the distribution of variance and can be used to determine the number of components to be retained for a principal component analysis (Nelson, 2005). The assumption is that "the elbow" (when the amount of explained variance plateaus) indicates the number of components to use.

¹⁰ Bartlett test is used to assess whether different independent samples are stemming from populations with similar variances (Bartlett, 1937).

¹¹ Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures the amount of variance that might be common variance among variables (Williams, Onsman, & Brown, 2010).

Research Results

Results reported are based on the four analyses, including a profile of SMEs responding to the survey, descriptive and principal component analyses looking at motivations and the specific roles of regulators in the construction of motivations, and a thematic analysis of open-ended questions.

Sample Analysis: Profiling Responses of SMEs

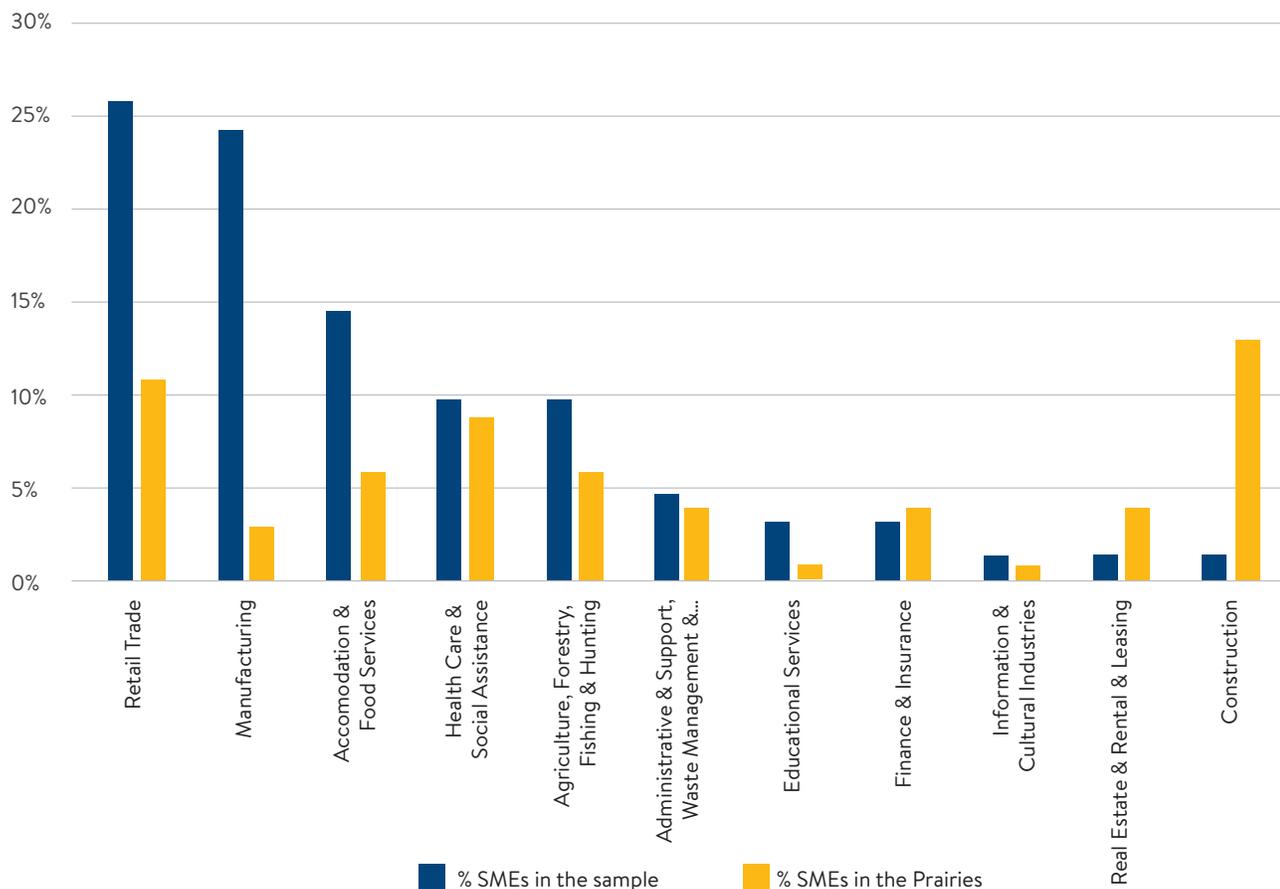
This profile begins with reporting total responses compared to the targeted sample. Second, representation of industry sectors is examined. Third, eight motivation proxies describe the SME in relation to hiring newcomers.

The targeted sample size was 420 surveys, though 112 (27%) were completed. Those returns were predominantly from Manitoba (76 surveys, 68% of the sample), followed by Saskatchewan (21 surveys, 19% of the sample), and Alberta

(15 surveys, 13% of the sample). This low response rate meant expanding the confidence interval from +/-5% to +/-10%, representing a significant decrease of the confidence interval. This means the following results can only be understood as preliminary and suggestive. This leaves open the possibility of further research that results in the target sample size of 420 completed surveys. Notwithstanding the small sample, we obtained more than 100 responses to inform this research.

The respondents represent ten of the industry sectors created by Statistics Canada (2018b). While this overall representation ensures a diversified sample, Figure 2 indicates an apparent overrepresentation of the manufacturing sector (24% vs. 3%), and nearly double the percentage of retail-trade SMEs (26% vs. 11%) and accommodation and food services sectors represented (15% vs. 6%) in the sample. On the other hand, there is an underrepresentation of the construction sector (2% vs. 13%). Given the low number of responses, no additional analysis by sector would be meaningful and as such is left for future study.

Figure 2: Industry sectors compared with surveyed SME businesses



The results in Table 4 demonstrate that SMEs are hiring newcomers and have been for years. In the last five years, SMEs hired as many as 200 with 7 as the median and 23 as the average; and more than 80% of newcomers are full-time, while others are part-time and seasonal. Most SMEs have been hiring newcomers since 2010/2011, and some as early as 1995. Upwards of 95% of SMEs who hired newcomers in the last five years still had at least one newcomer on staff at the time of this survey. These three results suggest there is a culture of hiring newcomers rather than leaving vacant positions. In addition,

SME owners are largely Canadian (83%), while 17% or about one in five SME owners are immigrants themselves. More generally, the responding SMEs were well established for three and four decades, with one dating back to 1852. The results suggest that SME owners have well-established businesses, and hiring and retaining newcomers is part of their business culture. Such activities point to authentic business practices grounded in experiences. Nevertheless, SMEs have for this project been a hard-to-reach population.

Table 4: Profile of responses from SME owners showing they have authentic experience in hiring newcomers

Descriptor	Survey responses from SME owners				
	Responses (n=)	Average	Median	Min	Max
Number of employed newcomers	57	23	7	0	200
Full-time	48	20	5	0	200
Part-time	40	7	3	0	45
Seasonal	23	2	0	0	17
First year a newcomer was employed	50	2010	2011	1995	2017
Share of Canadian-born respondents	63	83%			
Number of employees Full-time	62	68	20	0	492
Part-time	55	20	9	0	220
Year firm established	56	1983	1995	1852	2017
Share of male respondents	63	30/63 (49%)			

Results for the Descriptive Analysis

With 112 completed surveys, a descriptive analysis provides preliminary results on the importance of the motivation variables and related proxies. In Table 5, all four variables are important to SME owners in hiring newcomers: Skills (86%), Community Impact (85%), Finances (78%), and Behaviour (75%). With a confidence level of +/-10% there is no difference in these rankings (e.g. results range from 86% to 75%, which are within +/-10%).

With an examination of individual topics, a more nuanced sense of the SME owner's motivations encompasses an emphasis on Hard Work (91%), Socio-economic Development (88%), Talent (87%), Employment Readiness (86%), Sales Increase (85%), Population Growth (83%), and Operating Costs (73%). These responses are similar since they are within +/-10% of the midpoint value of 83%. The topic of New Perspectives at 59% has a lower ranking than the other seven topics. This suggests that employers may emphasize some combination of the first seven topics as motivating them to hire a newcomer before considering the new perspective that the newcomer brings to the workplace.

On average, there is a similar high ranking of the 32 motivation statements. Yet external motivators are among the lowest responses for five proxies: operating cost, external 31%; sales increase, external 70%; employment readiness, external 69%; talent, external 66%; and population growth, external 52%. These numbers suggest that other motivators (introjected, identified, and integrated) are likely more important than external regulators for these four topics. In the remaining three topics, external statements are among the highest responses: Hard work (90%), New perspectives (59%), and Socio-economic development (95%). These results suggest that these three topics are important external motivators, as are other high-ranked motivators.

In conclusion, the null hypotheses are rejected, meaning Finances, Newcomers' Skills, Behaviours, and Community Impact all contribute to rural SME employers' motivations to hire newcomers.

Table 5: Important motivators for SME owners in hiring newcomers

Motivation Variables	Agreement*	Motivation Topics	Agreement*
Finances	78%	Operating Costs	73%
		Sales Increase	85%
Newcomers' Skills	86%	Employment Readiness	86%
		Talent	87%
Newcomers' Behaviour	75%	Hard Work	91%
		New Perspective, Culture	59%
Community Impact	85%	Socio-Economic Development	88%
		Population Growth	83%

* Agreement totals SWA (somewhat agree), A (agree), and SA (strongly agree) divided by the total number of responses.

Principal Component Analysis

A principal component analysis (PCA) confirmed significant correlations between three of the four regulators:

- Introjected regulation, where the source of motivation is internal rewards or punishments (i.e., Q8_2, Q2_2, Q1_2, Q7_2, and Q5_2); and
- Integrated regulation, where the source of the motivation is synthesis of self (i.e., Q5_4, Q4_4, Q2_4, Q7_4, Q8_4, and Q3_4).

The PCA also defined a linear combination of statements used to capture the Identified regulation (i.e., Q1_3, Q3_3, Q4_3, Q5_3, and Q2_3). This suggests that SME owners in this survey identify with newcomers or accept them as one's own as a motivation to hire.

These three regulators – Introjected, Integrated, and Identified – are important in motivating the SME owners when hiring

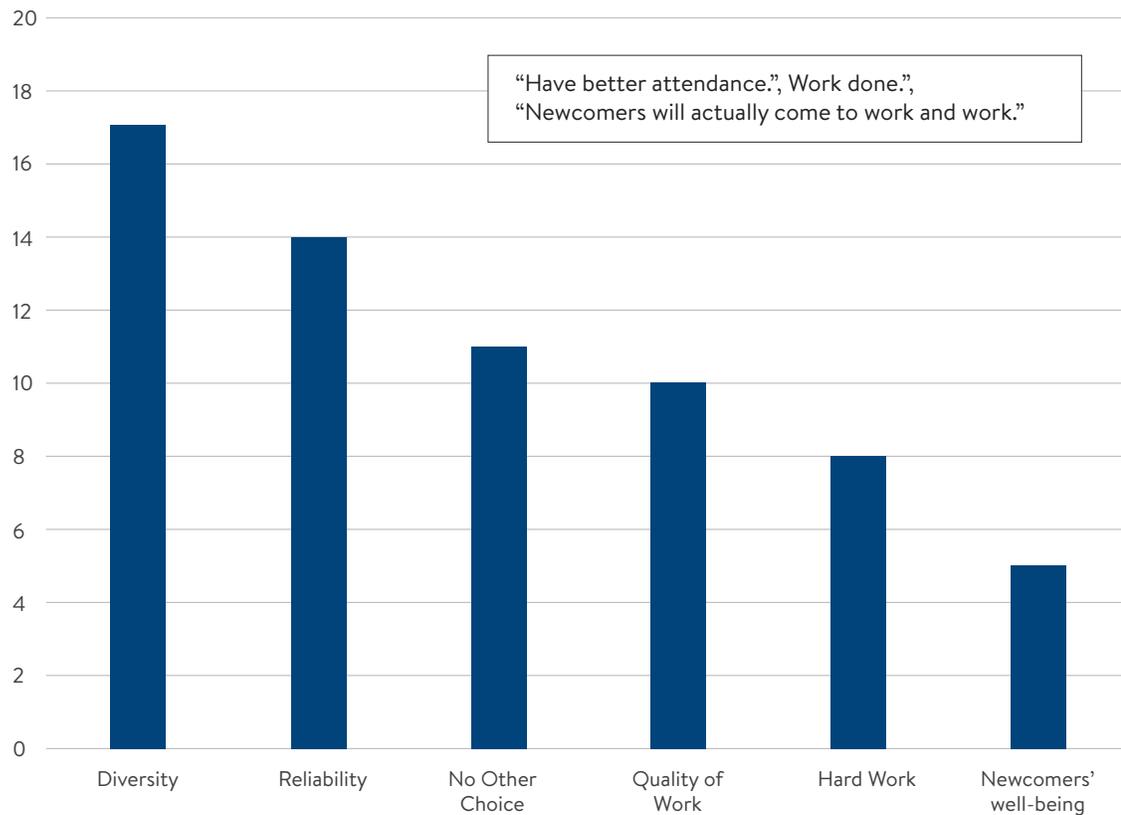
newcomers. External regulation did not appear to be a significant factor in this analysis.

Open-ended Questions

The open-ended questions addressed i) employers' benefits, ii) challenges of working with newcomers, iii) the support employers perceive they need to foster the hiring of newcomers, and iv) employers' perspectives on retaining newcomers. Each can influence one's motivation to hire a newcomer.

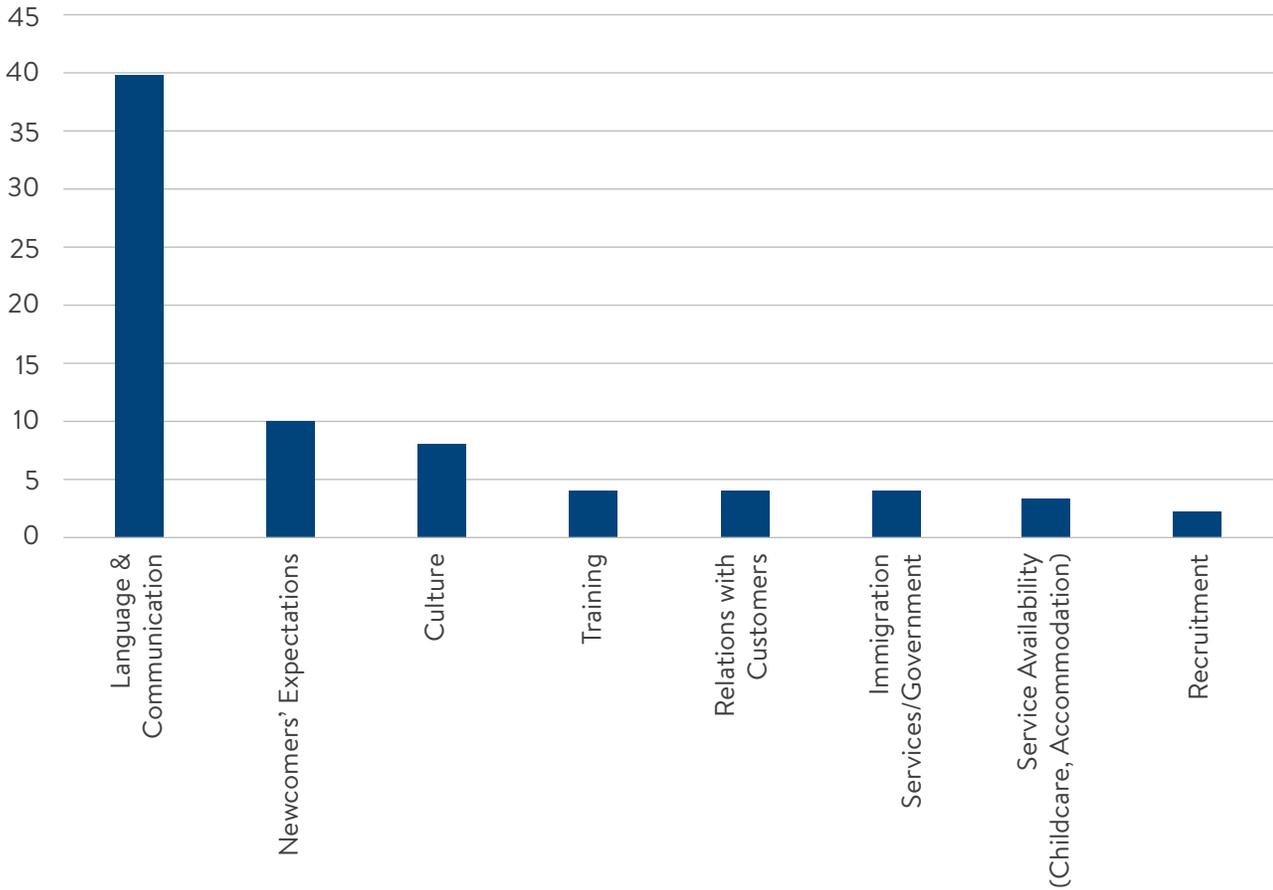
Three main benefits of hiring a newcomer experienced by SME employers included (Figure 3): increased diversity (17 responses), employee reliability (14), and employers had little other choice than to hire newcomers (11). Other benefits included quality of work (10), hard-working behaviour (8), and newcomers' well-being (5).

Figure 3: SME owners see benefits with hiring newcomers (N = 55)



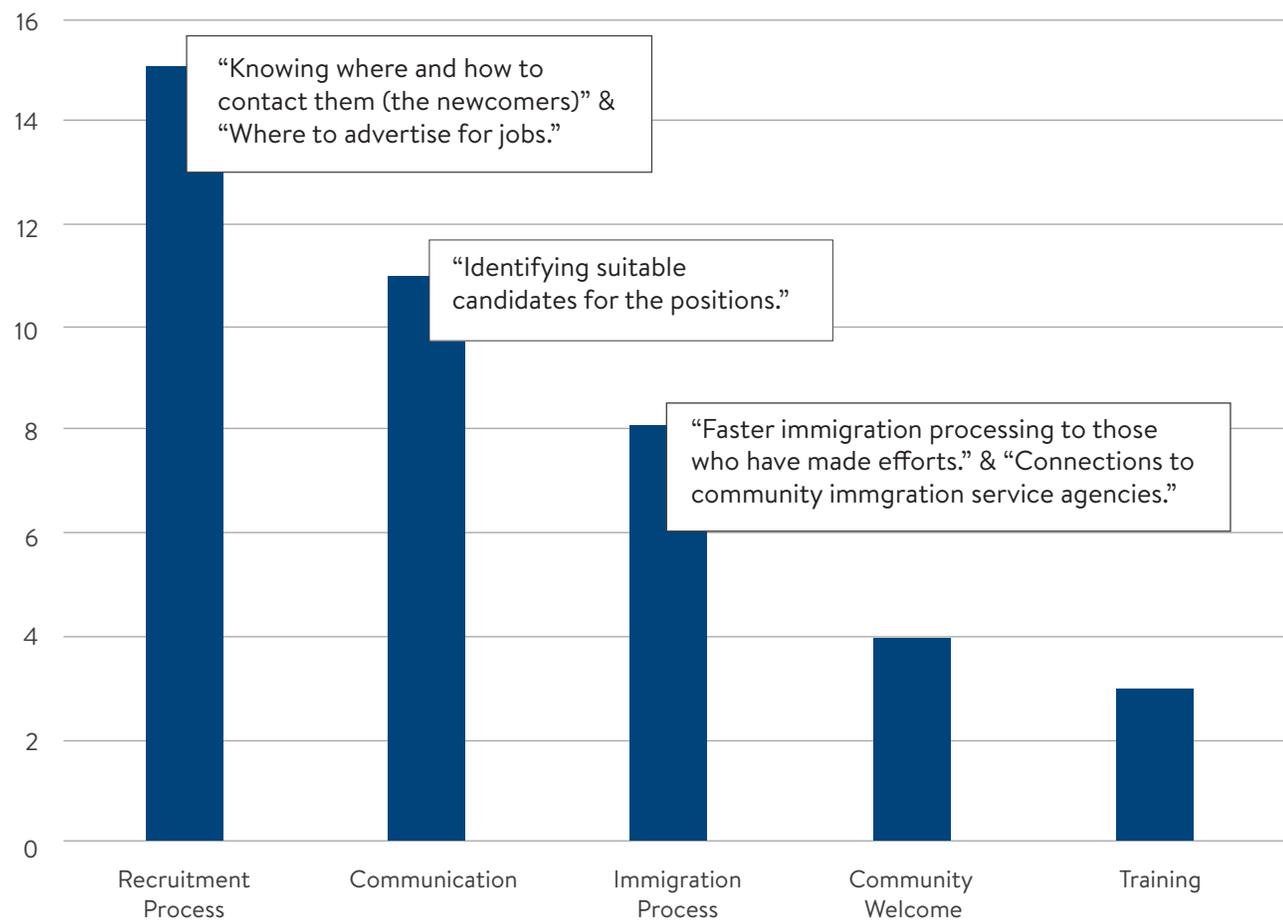
Among the eight challenges listed by SME owners, language and communication is most salient (40 responses) (Figure 4). The other seven challenges include understanding newcomers' expectations and culture, along with training, for example.

Figure 4: Challenges associated with hiring newcomers (N = 59)



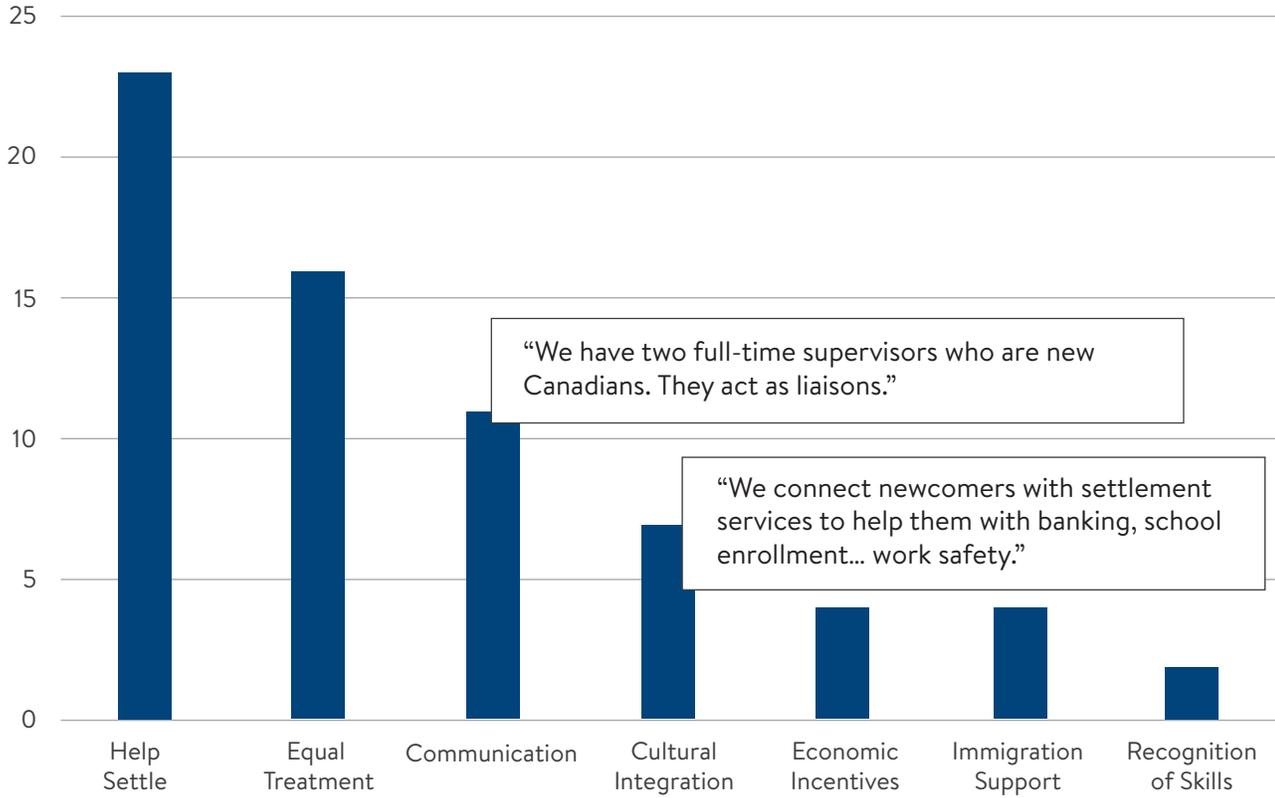
Even though SME owners hired newcomers, they report a need for support (Figure 5) in understanding recruiting processes (15), communications (11), and the immigration process (8).

Figure 5: SME owners call for better support for recruiting newcomers (N = 40)



SME owners actively retain newcomers (Figure 6). Among the top actions are helping newcomers to settle (24 responses), treating them equally in the workplace (16), improving communication (11), and seeing cultural integration as important. Less important retention actions are offering immigration support (4), economic incentives (4), and recognition of skills of the newcomers (2).

Figure 6: Businesses' actions for newcomer retention (N = 55)



Discussion

The four analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data raise three important points for discussion about SME employers hiring newcomers:

There can be a qualified confidence in the results because the sample of 112 responses means the results are preliminary, and suggestive rather than conclusive. Yet, those SME owners who did respond have legitimacy when speaking about hiring newcomers, because they have hired them and worked with many newcomers (1–200) over many years (as early as 1995). Therefore, their voice in this survey has trustworthiness, experience, and authenticity. A second issue concerns the lack of response from SMEs. While both the settlement agencies and business organizations, like the provincial Chamber of Commerce, voiced their interest and expressed the importance of knowing more about SMEs, accessing owners was problematic. We modified our sample recruiting protocol for each province and actively pursued opportunities to get ‘in front of owners’, including attending business luncheons and placing notices in newsletters, yet these activities resulted in a 27% response rate. This implies that further research could review other data-gathering efforts to identify some that are successful and to discuss with SME owners what might work best for them.

Another important discussion point brings focus to a fundamental challenge of investigating motivation, since there is little agreement on its definition. While a working definition was offered, the results soon pointed to the complexity of the term as echoed by many, including Kanfer and Chen (2016). In the descriptive analysis, SME owners confirmed four variables as important (Finances, Newcomers’ Skills and Behaviours, and Community Impact), yet within the details of the eight proxies and four regulators a more nuanced picture of motivations seemed to emerge. Here external regulators with five of the eight proxies had the lowest scores. This suggests that when SME owners make hiring decisions about newcomers, it is likely based less on obtaining a reward, and more on intrinsic motivators. Introjected, integrated, and identified regulators undoubtedly interact in many ways when one is explaining motivation of SME owners in hiring newcomers, yet together they suggest that the motivation is mainly internal or intrinsic and more likely connected to what they value as important and their own sense of self or who they are. Furthermore, the PCA findings indicate no significant correlation with external regulators, and this suggests that SME owners make the hiring decisions about newcomers neither lightly nor simply as a transactional labour decision, even though some businesses in rural areas have little or no choice but to hire newcomers. In short, the motivation seems

to be more intrinsic than extrinsic when hiring newcomers in rural businesses on the prairies, an understanding that is aided by the function of regulators (extrinsic and intrinsic) in the self-determination theory. Further research, following Locke and Latham’s (2004) suggestions, which differentiates extrinsic from intrinsic motivators, would help differentiate the importance of such factors.

A third point of discussion about motivations in hiring a newcomer arose in response to the open-ended questions. Consistent with MacKenzie and Forde (2009), employers reported benefits that one might expect, such as increasing diversity of their workforce and their respect for newcomer reliability. While these ‘transactional’ considerations imply that SME owners see and value newcomers as part of a labour component to their businesses, these same owners also reported the realities of their marketplace (i.e., an external motivator) that resulted in some of them having no choice but to hire newcomers due to the lack of available labour.

To be successful in meeting challenges, owners need support. In retaining newcomers, a repeated refrain by owners is difficulty with language or communication when interacting with newcomers. While this research focused largely on the motivations at the point of hiring newcomers, the findings suggest that further study could examine the persistence of communication issues with newcomers, and it could compare with other employees over time. Such additional research could also test for behaviours of owners that indicate a level of discrimination (e.g., ethnic groups, gender), as others have suggested (Bryson & Chevalier, 2015; Borowczyk-Martins et al., 2018; Kübler et al., 2018; Blommaert et al., 2012).

This research did not ask owners to characterize newcomers they hired. As a result, there is no differentiation among what is likely a diverse set of newcomers (Lauer, Wilkinson, Yan, Sin, & Tsang, 2012; Elrick, 2016). It is understood that a new hire is based on needs in the SME, and the newcomer. Consequently, newcomers employed by rural SMEs are selected based on characteristics such as education, skills, and experience. However, their age, gender, and cultural background add other layers for further analysis. These characteristics of newcomers may require further explanation with quantitative analyses. Future research on characterization of newcomers could shed light on both the over- and under-representation of those hired in various sectors and various labour markets.

Conclusion

With declining natural population growth, immigration is seen as one important way to offset the deficit in the labour market, which is highly evident in most of rural Canada. At the centre of a successful immigration policy is employment for newcomers. Since SMEs account for 90% of employment in Canada, these business owners hire newcomers and as a result play critical roles in Canada's prosperity, now and well into the future. This report offers preliminary results from surveying SME owners about their motivations when hiring newcomers. One hundred and twelve owners across the prairies responded, and their answers reflected significant experience in hiring and working with newcomers. Such experience included working with up to 200 newcomers, typically for eight or more years. In addition, 17% of the owners were immigrants to Canada themselves. With such involvement with newcomers, their responses can be understood as legitimate in terms of their experiences with newcomer employees. However, the results are considered preliminary and suggestive, since the response needed across the prairies to have a high level of confidence was 420 completed surveys.

With a quantitative analysis, we posed four hypotheses to explain motivations of owners. The results suggest that the owners are equally motivated by finances (reducing operating costs, increasing sales), bringing in needed skills (employment readiness, talent), benefitting from productive newcomer behaviours (hard work, new perspectives), and having community impact (socio-economic development, population growth). These various considerations illustrate the complexity of what motivates a SME owner. These variables also speak to motivation as a complex term with many definitions, though extrinsic and intrinsic factors seem fundamental to many explanations of motivation.

Acknowledging that motivation is a term with multiple factors, the principal component analysis examined various combinations of factors to answer the overarching question of this research: what motivates SME owners to hire newcomers. The answer comes largely from intrinsic variables more than extrinsic ones, yet they are intertwined. Motivations for hiring newcomers are largely internal to the owner, including the owner's own notion of rewards and self-worth. While the owners report on external rewards or recognition for hiring newcomers, such motivations are minor in comparison to the other motivating factors.

Even though SME owners have experience hiring newcomers, they identified persistent concerns. Communication and language remain an ongoing challenge as owners interact with newcomers. Second, SME owners asked for more support in terms of recruiting and immigration processes. Many SME owners are often involved in all aspects of management, including hiring. Although they have hired newcomers, part of the explanation for seeking more support might speak to the ever-evolving immigration processes and policies in Canada and at the provincial level.

Further research is warranted in several areas to better understand the motivations of SME owners when hiring newcomers. Gathering data is fundamental to any future research, and specific investigation regarding successful recruiting of SME owners is needed with the aim of improving response rates, leading to higher levels of confidence in the results. Yet it seems paradoxical that SMEs, which are all around us and make up such a large portion of our businesses and economy, are such a hard-to-reach population. We suspect that multiple methods for recruiting the sample of SME owners hold keys to such a research project and an 'incentive' or benefit that answers for SME owners: "What is in it for me?". Additional research is called for that more closely examines motivation factors in hiring newcomers, along with questions to characterize newcomers to shed light on both the over- and under-representation of those hired in various sectors.



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Appendix A: List of Participating Organizations

Manitoba

Manitoba Settlement Organization (MANSO)
Regional Connections Inc.
Neepawa and Area Immigrant Settlement Services, Inc.
Community Futures-Westman
Community Futures Parkland-Dauphin and Region
Immigrant Services
Community Futures-Winnipeg River
Community Futures-East Interlake: Interlake Immigrant
Settlement Services
City of Morden
Portage Learning & Literacy Centre Inc.
WestMan Immigrant Services
Assessippi Parkland Settlement Services
Steinbach Chamber of Commerce: Eastman Immigrant
Services
Brandon Chamber of Commerce
Swan Valley Settlement & Immigrant Services
Keystone Agricultural Producers
Manitoba Hotel Association
Manitoba Camping Association
Manitoba Trucking Association
Food and Beverage Manitoba
Manitoba Restaurant and Food Services Association
Manitoba Motor Dealers Association
Manitoba Home Builders Association
Manitoba Bar Association
Law Society of Manitoba
Professional Photographers of Canada

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and
Integration Agencies (SAISIA)
Humboldt Region Newcomer Centre
Moosejaw Multicultural Council
Moosejaw Newcomer Welcome Centre
Lloydminster Learning Council
Battlefords Immigration Resource Center Inc.
Prince Albert and District Chamber of Commerce
Moose Jaw and District Chamber of Commerce
Lloydminster Chamber of Commerce
Estevan Chamber of Commerce
Yorkton Chamber of Commerce
Humboldt Chamber of Commerce

Alberta

Alberta Association of Immigrant and Service Agencies (AAISA)
Community Futures-Yellowhead West
Flexibility Learning Systems
Action Dignity
LIPs (Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan)
Camrose Chamber of Commerce
Lacombe and District Chamber of Commerce
Medicine Hat Chamber of Commerce
Alberta Farmers Market Association
Alberta Pork
Alberta Association of Architects
Environmental Services Association of Alberta
Alberta Land Surveyors' Association
Recycling Council of Alberta
Sandra Moore Consulting

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Motivation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Hiring Newcomers

Q1 Motivation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Hiring Newcomers:

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of the Motivation of SMEs in Hiring Newcomers Project! We appreciate your involvement in this project by completing the survey below. The project aims to understand employer perspectives and motivations in the practice of hiring newcomers (landed immigrants who came to Canada within the last five years) and seeks to inform public policies from employer perspectives, in order to encourage the employment of newcomers across the Prairies.

The survey will take approximately 10-12 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. Your responses will be grouped with others to ensure confidentiality and your anonymity. You can withdraw your response up to February 1, 2019. Should you have any questions or queries, feel free to contact us at salmons@brandonu.ca or akimowicz@brandonu.ca. Thank you for your participation!

For the purpose of this research, the term 'community' refers to the community where the business is located, and the term 'rural' refers to small centres and areas with a population below 100,000.

Q2 In a request to withdraw your data, please indicate in the email subject line the day, month, and time you completed the survey and your postal code. This will enable the research team to identify and delete your survey. Kindly provide the date, time, and postal code.

- o Date (1) _____
- o Time (survey start time) (2) _____
- o Postal Code (3) _____

.....

Q3 Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent each of the following statements corresponds to the motives you recognize for hiring newcomers.

Q4 – 7 As a Small or Medium-sized enterprise owner, what are your motives for hiring newcomers? Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Newcomers do not contribute to lowering the operating costs of my business							
I have the experience to recognize newcomers' employment-ready skills for specific jobs in my business							
It is important to me that newcomers are given an opportunity to earn a living							
If I were a newcomer myself, living in a growing community would not be my priority							
I feel good when I hire hard-working newcomers who boost the productivity of my business							
Newcomers who settle in my local community do not contribute to mitigating population decline							
Newcomers do not enhance my business' capacity to increase sales							
I feel good when I am able to attract newcomers who are skilled to work in my business							
If I were a newcomer myself, I would not want to contribute with my hard work							
I feel good when I hire newcomers who help the socio-economic growth of my local community							
Newcomers do not bring new employment-ready skills for specific jobs in my business							
It is important to me that newcomers value their own language as a part of the business' cultural diversity							
Newcomers do not have skills that are a deficit in Canada							
It is important to me that newcomers settle in a community and build a new life							
If I were a newcomer myself, I would not want the opportunity to earn a living							
I feel good when I hire newcomers who use their own language for cultural connections with new customers							
It is important to me that my local community experiences socio-economic growth							
Newcomers are not hard workers who can boost the productivity of my business							
If I were a newcomer myself, I would not want to utilize my job-specific skills							

Q4 – 7 As a Small or Medium-sized enterprise owner, what are your motives for hiring newcomers? Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is important to me that newcomers are able to utilize their job-specific skills							
If I were a newcomer myself, I would not want my employment-ready skills to be valued							
I feel good when I hire newcomers who settle in my community and build a new life							
It is important to me that newcomers contribute to increasing business sales							
I feel good when I provide newcomers with an opportunity to earn a living							
Newcomers do not help the socio-economic growth of my local community							
Newcomers' language diversity does not establish cultural connections with new customers							
If I were a newcomer myself, I would not want to contribute to the business' sales							
It is important to me that newcomers value their own employment-ready skills							
It is important to me that newcomers value themselves as hard workers							
If I were a newcomer myself, I would not want to use my own language to add to the business' cultural diversity							
If I were a newcomer myself, settling in a community to build a new life would not be my priority							
I feel good when I hire newcomers who can enhance my business' capacity to increase sales							

Q8 What does your business do uniquely or differently to retain newcomer workers than other staff? Provide the most successful example.

.....

Q9 What does your community do uniquely or differently to retain newcomers? Provide the most successful example.

.....

Q10 Indicate the most useful support you could use in:

- Hiring newcomers (4) _____
- Retaining newcomers (5) _____

.....

Q11 State the main benefit that has come out of hiring newcomers.

.....

Q12 State the main challenge that has come out of hiring newcomers.

.....

Q13 In order to improve the quality of the results of this survey, we would like to extend the survey to five or more of your partners or suppliers (outside urban centres Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer) who would have most likely hired newcomers to fulfill their labour needs.

- o SME name (1) _____
- o SME email address (2) _____
- o SME name (3) _____
- o SME email address (4) _____
- o SME name (5) _____
- o SME email address (6) _____
- o SME name (7) _____
- o SME email address (8) _____
- o SME name (9) _____
- o SME email address (10) _____

.....

Q13a Kindly provide additional SME names and email addresses of your partners or suppliers (outside urban centres Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer) who would have most likely hired newcomers to fulfill their labour needs.

.....

Q14 Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Profile

The SME

Q14a What goods and/or services does your SME produce or provide?

.....

Q14b Identify the Industry/Sector for the primary activity of your SME:

Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting

Wholesale trade

Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction

Retail trade

Utilities

Transportation and warehousing

Construction

Professional, scientific, technical services

Manufacturing

Administrative, support, waste management, remediation services

Food and beverage processing

Health care and social assistance

Accommodation and food services

Other:

.....

Q14c Please identify the Industry/Sector if it is not listed:

.....

Q14d Indicate the year when the SME was established:

.....

Q15 Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Profile

The Employees

.....

Q15a Total number of current employees:

o Full-time (1) _____ Part-time (including seasonal) (2) _____

.....

Q15b Newcomers are Permanent Residents or Temporary Foreign Workers or Refugees defined as individuals who have immigrated to and lived in Canada for less than 5 years.

o Total number of employed newcomers (1) _____

o Full-time (2) _____ Part-time (3) _____ Seasonal (4) _____

.....

Q15c What is the year when the first newcomer was hired?

.....

Q15d What is the status of the employed newcomers?

o Number with work visa/permit (1) _____

o Number with permanent resident card (2) _____

o Number with study permit (3) _____

.....

Q15e There are many programs that newcomers can use to enter Canada for employment. Tick all that apply:

o Express Entry (Federal Skilled Worker, Federal Skilled Trades, Canadian Experience Class) (1)

o Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (2)

o Provincial Nominee Program (3)

o Family Sponsorship Program (4)

o Refugee Program (5)

o Federal Internship for Newcomers (FIN) Program (6)

- o Open Work Permit (7)
- o Study Permit (8)

.....

Q15f If the program is not listed above, kindly indicate the program in the space provided.

.....

Q16 Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Profile

The Employer

.....

Q16a Select one of the following:

- o SME Owner (1) SME Manager (2) Other (3)
-

Q16b Gender

- o Male (1) Female (2) Other (3) Rather not say (4)
-

Q16c Were you born in Canada?

- o Yes (1) No (2)



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