Proposal

What Will I Tell My Daughter? Immigrant Women Who Relocate For Their Spouse:

Issues and Challenges

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This research proposal is based on a research project that I did in the course EDUA 7840 Qualitative Research Methods in Education. This research project was approved by the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board.

The inspiration for my thesis was based on my own personal experience as an immigrant woman who relocated for her spouse. Between the years of 1999-2004, I moved from Winnipeg, to St. Andrews, Scotland back to Winnipeg (while I waited for a work visa), to a second college town in New Hampshire, then a hamlet in Vermont, and finally, following the demise of my marriage, I returned to Winnipeg.

During this time, in 2003, the Province of Manitoba established an immigration target of 10,000 newcomers per year. This goal was reached, and as a result, “a new target of doubling annual immigration levels over the next ten years was set” (Manitoba Immigration Facts-20007 Statistical Report from Labour and Immigration).

Attempting to re-establish my career in Winnipeg, I returned to teach English as an Additional Language to adult immigrants. I began to wonder if the women I was working with struggled with the same challenges immigrating to Manitoba that I experienced when I immigrated. I also silently questioned if research regarding family geographic mobility, that previously stated, “male initiated family moves for job-related or other reasons” were out of date or still relevant (Markham, 1986). Was it true that, “Rather than a route to upward social mobility, family geographic mobility often has adverse effect upon women’s employment continuity and earnings” (Duncan et al., 1976) or that “With increasing labor force participation, wives play an increasingly important and recognized role in the family migration decision-making process” (Bird and Bird, 1985).

The purpose of this study is to explore the issues and challenges immigrant women face when they immigrate to Manitoba. The research questions were: 1) What are the main considerations affecting women’s decisions to move for their partner? 2) What types of services might or might not be accessible to immigrant women in Winnipeg?

My role as a researcher is to highlight the struggles and successes that women face when they immigrate to our province. The importance of exploring the challenges that immigrant women face who have relocated for their spouse to Manitoba is to provide insight regarding how adequately their needs are being considered and met by settlement services that are provided by the Province of Manitoba.
Methodology
Through my course work, I had the opportunity to do a preliminary study and conduct a qualitative interview with three women who had recently immigrated to Winnipeg. The recruitment of the subjects was through purposeful sampling and each woman was interviewed once. Two of the women moved to Winnipeg in 2000, the first from the Ukraine and the second from Taiwan, while the third participant was the most recent arrival, having emigrated from Korea in 2008. Both of the women from Taiwan and Korea immigrated to Winnipeg to join their Canadian born partner, while the woman from the Ukraine relocated with her spouse and her children. The interview content was related to: 1) reasons why they initially moved to Canada 2) was the decision to relocate a joint decision 3 )the greatest successes following their move 4) the biggest challenges they faced in reference to family, career, relationships, government services, career recognition etc. 5 ) what kind of supports should be available to women to make the relocation process easier.

Findings
The findings show a consensus among the participants in a variety of areas. All of the women stated that they immigrated for work/employment opportunities for their partner or family and that the decision to immigrate was made as a joint decision with their partner. The research participants all felt that their greatest success was in regards to their English language development. It also appears that the biggest challenge that two of the women faced were in regards to employment, while the third participant stated that “everything” was a challenge. The findings indicate that all of the participants recommended that immigrant women have easier access to bilingual translators upon arrival and receive more accurate delivery of information sooner.

Conclusion
This study may shed light on the experiences and perspectives of immigrant women who relocate for their spouse to Manitoba. It also provides an opportunity for settlement services and policy makers to gauge how effective their programs and the decisions regarding newcomer support are and if they are meeting their target audience.
References

