Welcome to New Zealand: Settlement Pathways and Outcomes for Chinese Employers and Employees in Auckland

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• Research context
• Employers
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Integration of Immigrants Programme 2007-2012

- **Objective One  (Jacques Poot, Waikato University)**
  To quantify and explain differences in labour market outcomes between immigrants and the New Zealand born
  - 1996, 2001 and 2006 census
  - Longitudinal Migration Survey (LisNZ)

- **Objective Two  (Paul Spoonley, Massey University)**
  To better understand the experiences of immigrant families and households in relation to labour market participation and business activity
  - Census and LisNZ data
  - Surveys and Case studies
Survey of Immigrant Employers and Employees

- 100 employers and 100 employees
- British, Chinese, Indian, South African and Korean
- Auckland and Hamilton
- Face-to-face, survey-based interviews
- Translated into Chinese and Korean
- To be repeated in 2011

- 20 Chinese employers and 20 Chinese employees
- Women and men
- Auckland
- Retail or Accommodation and Food
- Permanent residence post-2000
Employers’ Problems and Strategies

Speaking English (68 percent)

- Enlisting the help of English-speaking family members or friends
- Employing staff fluent in Mandarin and English
- Using Chinese language media to obtain information

I have a lot of problems communicating in English. I can’t understand some letters from government offices or other agencies so I often make mistakes. Luckily, most of my customers are Chinese and my daughter has helped me a lot to overcome these difficulties.
Employing staff (58 percent)

- Planning ahead and investing in training
- Recruiting staff through their social networks
- Advertising in Chinese newspapers

Yes, this is the most difficult challenge in running this business. I have a very high rate of staff turnover because they are not satisfied with their wages. I have to maintain a low price for my meals in order to attract customers so I can’t pay staff high wages. They might only stay for two or three months so I have to put a lot of time into finding and training new staff.
Knowing the right person (42 percent)
  • Asking family and friends

_I had difficulties finding right person to get the information I needed. For example, I want to have an alcohol licence but I don’t know how to apply. I asked my friend to look up the information for me._

Obtaining finance (37 percent)
  • Approaching local bank managers and/or accountants
  • Asking friends and family in New Zealand or China.

_I got help from my family, my friends and my relatives in New Zealand and in China._
– Operating within the New Zealand business environment (37 percent)
  • Modifying expectations and plans

Yes, the population in New Zealand is rather small so the marketing is small as well. It is not like in China where you had no concerns about not having enough customers. Running a business in New Zealand you have to rely on regular customers. So you must keep your cooking standards stable and consistent. If the taste of a meal differs each time no one will come back. Particularly for our restaurant which is located in a rural-like area, we don’t have many drop-in customers. We must put a lot of effort to maintain the standard of our meals.
Employees’ Problems

- Lack of ‘Kiwi’ experience (82 percent)
- Difficulty speaking English (82 percent)
- No suitable job opportunities (73 percent)
- Employer attitudes (46 percent)
- Not knowing people in the industry (46 percent).
When I came to New Zealand, I had a lot of barriers to get a job. For example, many employers expected that I should speak English as well as other employees. However, they forgot that I am Chinese and that English is my second language. Therefore, I have lost some employment opportunities. When I speak English with a strong accent many bosses are afraid that their customers may have difficulty understanding my English. It is understandable. So, good oral English is very important in finding a job. Another problem was over-qualification. Sometimes the boss thought my education level was too high, they didn’t think I would work for them for a long time. I haven’t made many friends in my professional field in New Zealand so it is hard for me to get job vacancy information at an early stage or from internal employment advertisements. That is an important way to get a job in New Zealand. Lack of local working experience also caused trouble for me to get a job in my professional field.
And Strategies

• Develop personal networks

A job seeker needs to make more friends in New Zealand to build up their personal network. There are a lot of job vacancies advertised within a company. If you know someone who works there you have a better chance of getting that job.

• Improve English language skills

I think the most important thing for getting a job is you must have sound communication skills in English.
• Be patient, persistent and hard working

You must be prepared to work hard. You need to do well with any type of work even it is a small piece of work because you would like to receive a good reference letter from that job.

• Look for job vacancies in Chinese newspapers

Looking for job advertisements in Chinese newspapers is a very useful way to get a job.

• Do local training in order to obtain easily recognised qualifications

I think you should attend more training in order to gain a local qualification and to improve your capability.
Well, in China, my lifestyle was less stressful than it is in New Zealand. I didn’t do manual work and work was only part of my life. Usually, I got up at 7.00 a.m. Because I was a manager my working hours were flexible. I was involved in many different types of activities within my working hours and in my spare time. My wife worked as an Associate Professor. Her working hours were very flexible so she had more time than me to look after housework and my son. I did very little housework.
My life in New Zealand is much more stressful than in China. I have to do both manual work and management work in my business. I do everything. I have no personal life at all, only work. Normally I get up at 8:00 a.m. I go shopping for the day for my shop. My shop opens from 10:00 a.m. till 9:30 p.m. After the shop closes I go back to my living room to rest. I have no entertainment time. My living room is on the top level of my shop.
INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS PROGRAMME
2007 – 2012