

COVID-19 Impacts on the Unemployment of the High-Skilled Female Immigrants in Ontario

Abstract

By March 2020, about 3.1 million Canadians were affected by either job loss or reduced work hours due to COVID-19 induced lockdown measures and social-distancing guidelines. However, immigrants across Canada, particularly female immigrants, had a disproportionately higher share of unemployment than Canadian-born workers. While some studies claim that recent female immigrants' incongruent unemployment is due to shorter job tenure and their over-representation in lower-wage jobs, this study finds empirical evidence against such claims. Descriptive analysis using monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS) data reported by Statistics Canada shows that the high-skilled female immigrants had also been hit with both a sharp rise in the unemployment rate and a sharp decline in employment rate compared to the Canadian-born workers. To quantify the contribution of socio-demographic factors and job characteristics on these differences and to identify whether there exists any bias based on immigration status, the study develops a binary logit model. The model results show a statistically positive correlation with the probability of being unemployed for an immigrant high-skilled worker. With two workers having the same work experience of 6 months and being employed in a part-time job, a female recent-immigrant worker is 5.5% more likely to lose her job than a male Canadian-born. Given the recent increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Ontario and the prospect of economic recovery being still uncertain, the study urges that the unemployment disparity for female immigrant workers be taken seriously for avoiding any long-term implication on the equity and diversification standard of Canada.

Biography of Author

Zeerat Marzana is a full-time MA student in the Department of Economics at Ryerson University. She earned her B.Sc. in Economics degree from Bangladesh, and then permanently migrated to Canada in 2018. She also has a certificate in Big Data Analytics from York University. Zeerat is currently exploring the differential unemployment faced by high-skilled migrant workers due to COVID-19 induced lockdown measures in Toronto, Ontario. For future works, she is interested in researching the impact of international trade policies on the economic welfare of the migrant workers. Zeerat loves cooking, travelling and cherishes every second of her time spent with her only daughter.