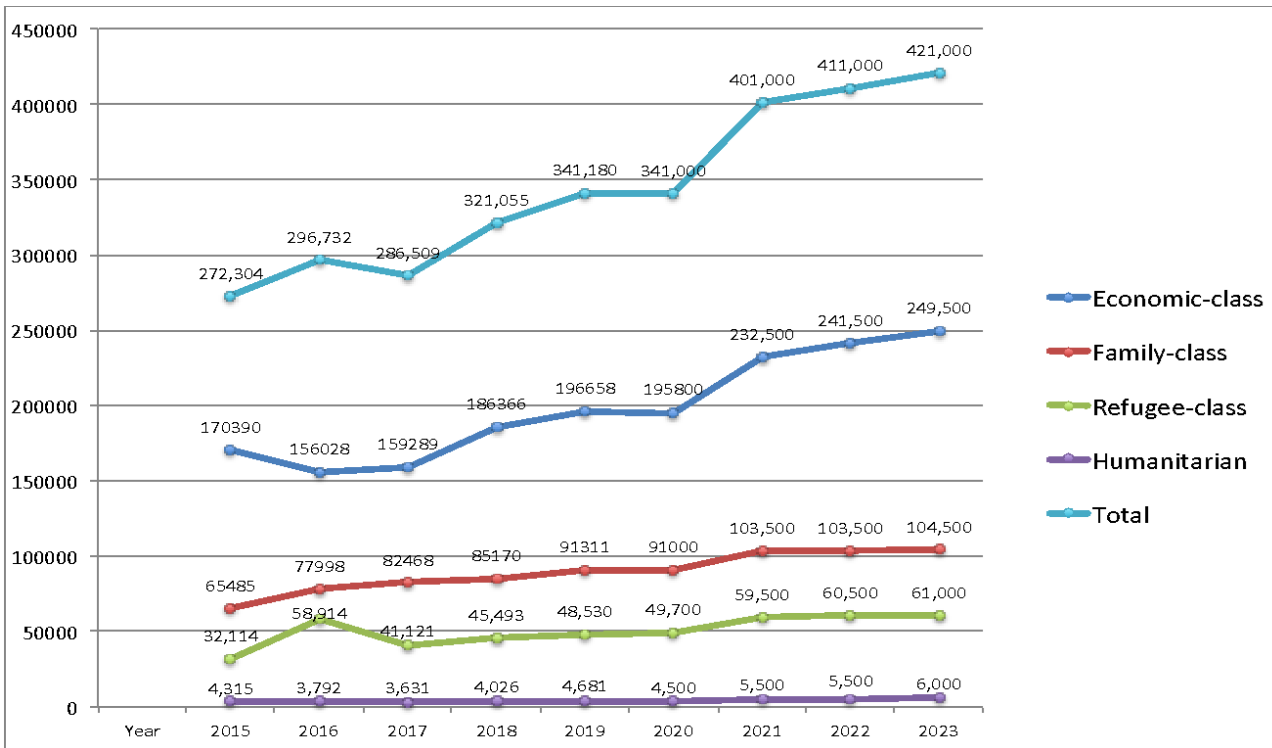


The Capabilities of Families and Friends
How Nepali Immigrants to Canada
Experience & Overcome Digital
Inequalities

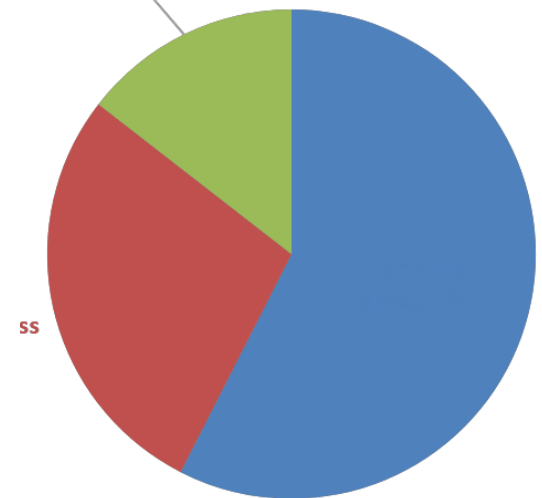


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Immigrants in Canada



Categories of immigrants among 8.3 million (23% of the total Population)



- Current projections suggest that by 2041, immigrants will comprise roughly one third of the country's population (Statistics Canada, 2022).



General Understanding

- Recent immigrants to CA are affected by various **digital divides**, and lag behind host-country counterparts in terms of job opportunity & integration into job market due to.
 - limited familiarity with host-country e-govt platforms
 - limited proficiency with host-country's official language(s)
 - having limited ICT skills impeding their ability to use e-govt
- Govt of Canada endeavors to **facilitate rapid and successful immigrant integration** into Canadian society.
- To assist in facilitating the immigrant integration to Canada, Canadian govt (at federal, provincial & municipal) **considers e-govt initiatives as viable tools**.





Assumption



- Most recent immigrants to Canada are from **Asian (48.1%)** and African (13.4%) countries , wherein limited availability of e-govt services. Nepal is among these countries.
- As such recent immigrants from these countries are less likely to be familiar with accessing e-government services.
- When I began this study assuming that **very recent Nepali immigrants** to Canada might be experiencing difficulties in using e-govt services than **recent & established immigrant** counterparts.
- The impact of digital divide mitigate the chances of immigrants to grasp opportunities offered through e-govt platforms since these platforms require **highest level of digital engagement**

Defining Immigrants

- **Very recent immigrants (-5 years):**
 - those who have lived in Canada as landed immigrants for a period of less than five years;Group 1
- **Recent immigrants (5+ to -10 years):**
 - those who have lived in Canada as landed immigrants for a period of 5 years but less than 10 years;Group 2
- **Established immigrants (10+ years)**
 - those who have lived in Canada as landed immigrants for more than 10 years;

Source: *The Labour Force Survey (Yssaad & Fields, 2018)*

Research Direction

- There are several studies about immigrants and non-immigrants but very limited researches comparing very recent & other immigrant groups using e-govt.
- This study focuses on the challenges encountered by these two groups of Nepali immigrants to Canada in using federal-, provincial-, & municipal e-govt platforms.
- Here, I deliberately chose e-govt users (avoided non-users) to explore the challenges they experienced relating to their:
 - ability to access e-govt service platforms;
 - ability to navigate e-govt service platforms;
 - ability to conduct financial transaction activities;
 - ability to engage in client service activities on e-govt platforms;



Research Question(s)

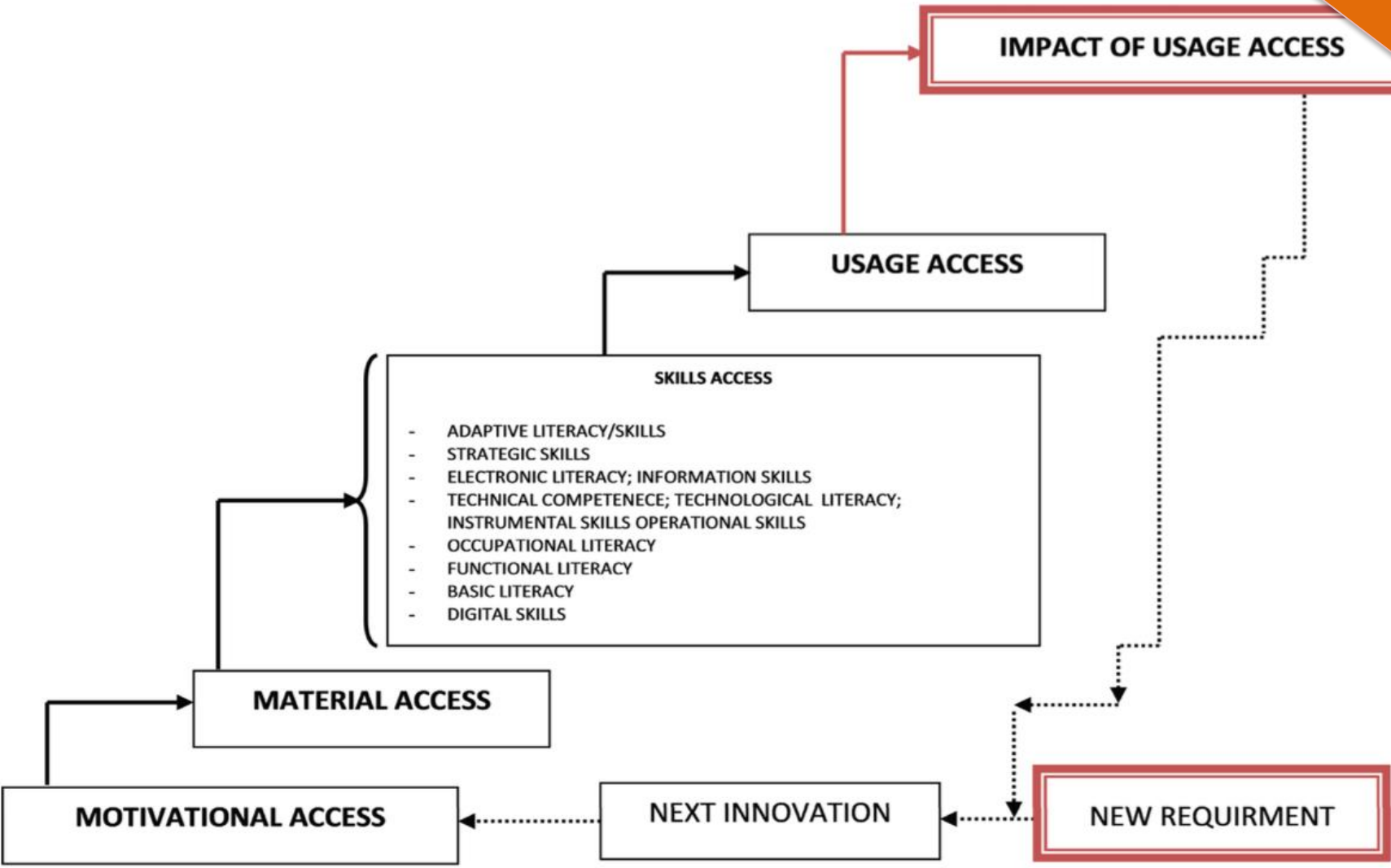
- In what ways, are Nepali immigrants to Canada experiencing difficulties in accessing and using online services provided by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments?
 - What **factors motivate Nepali immigrants** to use or non-use government online services?
 - What are the **main differences** between **very recent**, and **recent and established immigrants** with regard to their respective use of e-govt services provided by federal, provincial, and municipal govts?
 - What are the **key factors** perpetuating these differences?



Conceptual Understanding of Digital Divide Concept

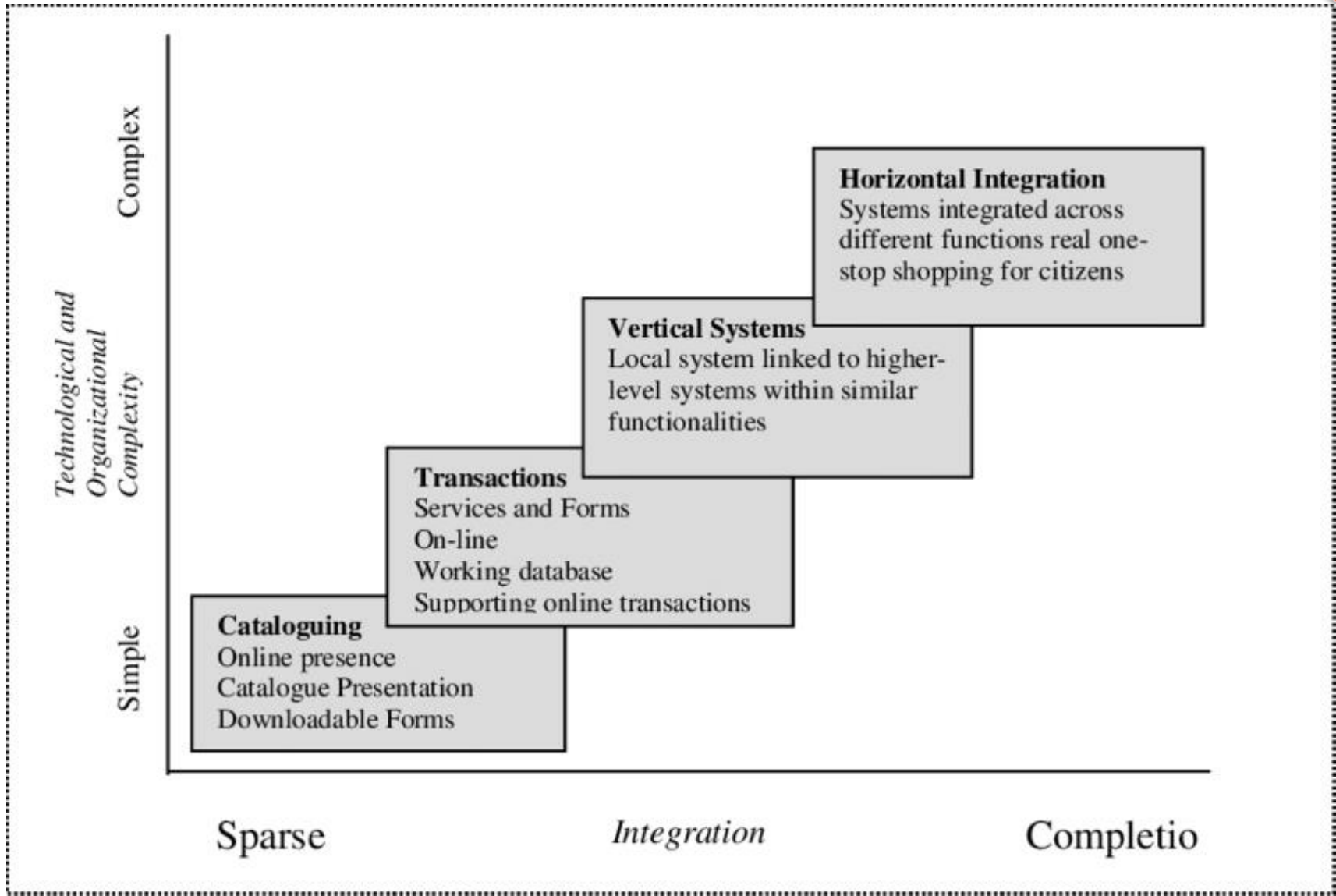
Period	Interpretations of the Digital Divide	Focus	Example Studies
1990s	Refers to a gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' with regard to computer and Internet access.	Access gap	Norris (2001), NTIA (2000, 1999, 1998, 1995), Walton (1999), Katz & Aspden (1997)
2000s	Also encapsulates: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. disparities between haves and have-nots in terms of people's knowledge of and ability to use computers and the Internet to achieve desired outcomes; and 2. differences in the diversity and frequency of use, and content creation. 	ICT skills and usage gaps	Hargittai & Hinnant (2008), Hohlfeld et al. (2008), Paré (2005), Selwyn et al. (2005), Hargittai (2003, 2002), Akhter (2003), Mossberger et al. (2003), Warschauer (2003)
2010s	Also encompasses long-rooted socio-economic and socio-cultural gaps among people due to disparities in income, education, cultures, and attitudes that influence decisions about the adoption and use of ICTs.	Socio-economic and socio-cultural gaps	Vartanova & Gladkova (2019), Bach, Wolfson & Crowell (2018), Ragnedda (2017), Alam & Imran (2015), Harambam et al. (2013), Sparks (2013), Nguyen (2012), van Dijk (2012)

Various Digital Inequalities



(SOURCE: Hanafizadeh, Hanafizadeh, & Bohlin, 2013)

Evolution of E-Govt Concept



Theoretical Framework

Capability Approach

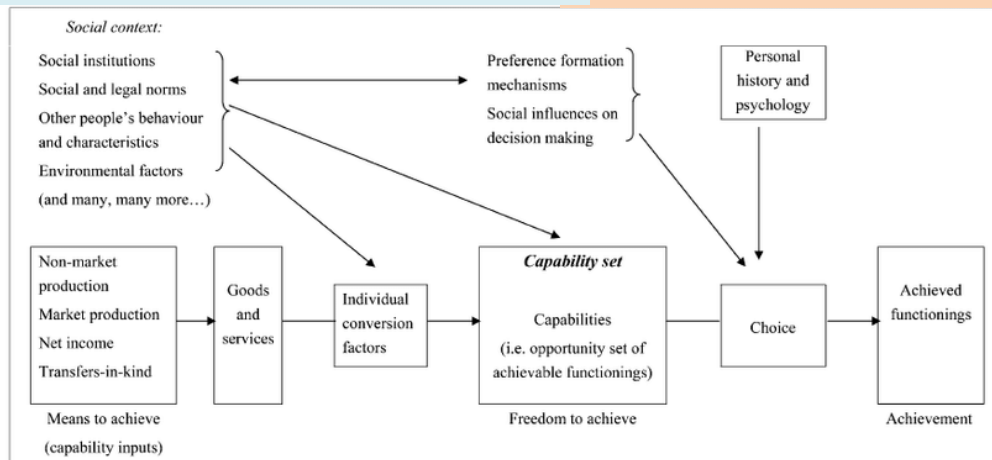


Major Concerns

- If Nepali immigrants are actually able to do something they value doing;
- If they have adequate choice for what they would like to do & be;
- If real opportunities are available to them;
- If they suffer from social injustices and inequalities;

Features

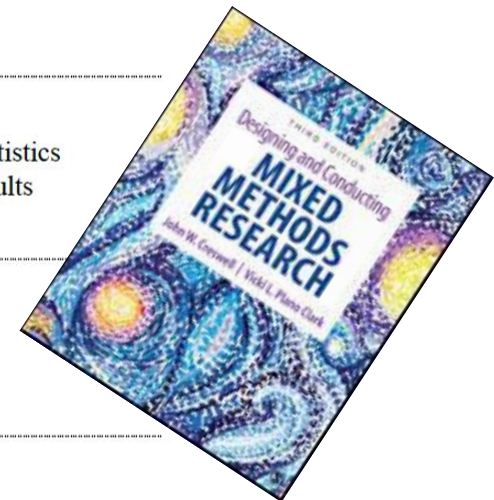
- Individuals should be treated differently coz they possess dissimilar capabilities
- Focus should be on freedoms & choices, not achievements,
- People-centered approach, not technology



Research Methodology

Figure 4.1: A Visual Model for the Mixed-methods Explanatory Sequential Design Procedures (Adapted from Ivankova et al., 2006)

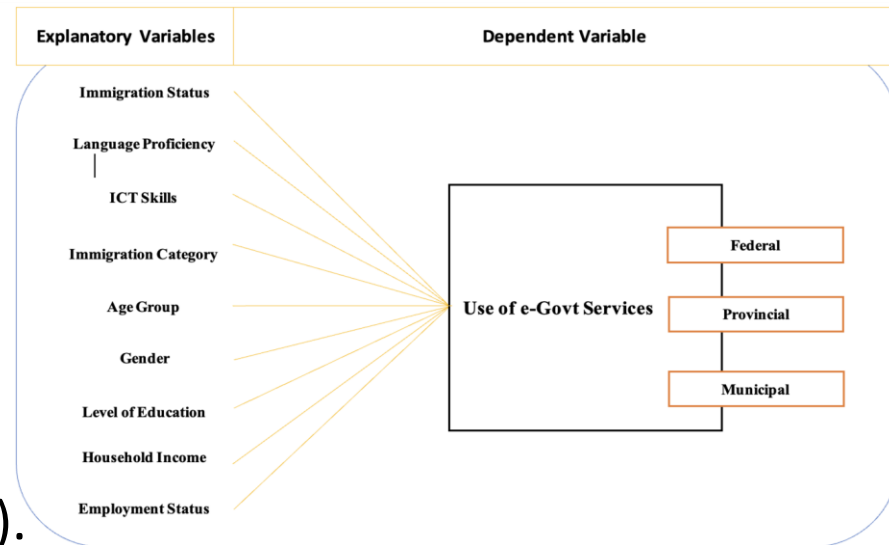
Stages	Procedures	Product
Quantitative data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaire survey with Nepali immigrants to Canada living in Ontario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numeric data
Quantitative data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performing data cleaning Analyzing data using the SPSS/Stata software Preparing descriptive and inferential analyses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Descriptive statistics Regression results
Connecting quantitative & qualitative stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying key ideas/issues of the quantitative analysis that need further explanation 	
Qualitative data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Focus Group Discussion (FGD) questions Conducting two pilot tests of the FGD questions and finalizing the questions Conducting focus group discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group discussion transcripts
Qualitative data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing a thematic analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codes Themes Quotes
Integration of quantitative and qualitative results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreting quantitative and qualitative results 	



Survey: Key Findings



- Very recent Nepali immigrants were more likely to use fed-level e-govt service platforms than recent and established counterparts.
- Besides, both groups of Nepali immigrants found to be similarly equipped in terms of English language proficiency and ICT skills.
 - Respondents with higher Eng. Lg. Proficiency were more likely to use e-govt services.
 - Respondents with strong ICT skills were more likely to use e-govt services
- Both groups of Nepali immigrants in my sample did not use the e-govt platforms in the same way and for the same purposes.
- Immigration category, newly used variable, is also a predictor (p.129).



FGD: Key Observations

1. Participants relied on **their social support network of family and friends** as their most-used problem resolution strategy when they encountered problems while using e-govt service platforms
2. Participants used e-govt service platforms based on **their individual choices and needs**, and tended to avoid non-mandatory activities on these platforms.
3. Participants were motivated to use e-govt service platforms because of their **perceived conveniences** these platforms offer.



Key Contributions

- Theoretical level
 - Identifying the role of **social support networks** in mitigating the effects of digital inequalities,
 - They are instrumental in converting resources in functionings
 - Identifying ‘**perceived convenience**’ as a conversion factor that influence users’ decision-making in transforming services & opportunities into valuable functionings
 - Advancing the CA by **identifying two conversion factors**.
- Practical level
 - Identifying no difference between **very recent** and **recent and established Nepali** immigrants is surprising to me.
 - Very recent immigrants are more likely to use fed e-govt platforms.
 - This finding challenges the common narrative about these two groups of immigrants



Limitations

- Focusing Ontario-based Nepali immigrants to Canada with limited responses (261)
 - Not incorporating participants from across different immigrant communities that might identify points of commonalities/differences across communities.
- Focusing on users of e-govt, and excluding non-users.
- Survey questionnaire with close-ended questions does not allow respondents to write open-ended responses.
- Some technical disruptions on Zoom meeting; respondents experienced some hesitance when speaking from home surrounded with family and friends.





so much for your time and for providing me this opportunity to share my thoughts and observations about my dissertation research.

I will be glad to respond to your questions.