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Linking Everyday Information Behaviour and Asian Immigrant Settlement Processes: Towards a Conceptual Framework

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International migration is a worldwide phenomenon. However, the process of immigrants’ settlement is still considered an under-researched area from an information perspective. Navigating information throughout the settlement process is considered challenging but critical for immigrants. The uptake of information is deemed significant to both the well-being of immigrants and their host countries. An important outcome of the capability to navigate information in a new landscape is increasing the likelihood of social inclusion in a new country. More empirical research is needed to identify the characteristics of immigrants’ information behaviour in the context of their settlement. This paper provides an overview of immigrants’ information behaviour studies and the use of public library services by immigrants and identifies gaps in the literature. Supported and tested by a pilot study, a conceptual framework is developed to underpin a study into Asian immigrants’ information behaviour in South Australia, linking their information needs, information seeking, information grounds and information sharing, and corresponding public library services to their ongoing settlement.

Keywords: Asian immigrants; settlement; information behaviour; public libraries; social inclusion; conceptual framework

Introduction

Globalisation makes international migration an important and ongoing concern both for individuals and nations. There were approximately 200 million immigrants throughout the world in 2010 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2011), making almost 1 in every 35 people an immigrant (Caidi, Allard, & Quirke, 2010). While some are forced from their homelands by warfare and famine, others make decisions to move to new countries to seek a better life. Since the end of the twentieth century, Australia increasingly sees itself as part of the Asian-Pacific region (Jakubowicz, 2011). According to the 2011 census, 30.2% of the Australian population were immigrants (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a), with 23% of these immigrants being Asians. In South Australia, the number of immigrants makes up one-third of its population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011b). The last three census periods have shown a significant and consistent increase in immigrants from particular countries.

Table 1 indicates the number of people living in South Australia born in another country across the last three censuses. The ‘growth trend’ column shows the countries of immigrants with an increasing or decreasing trend during this period. While the number of immigrants from European countries (Italy, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands) is still high, the trend over the decade shows a decrease. In contrast, the number of immigrants...
from five Asian countries (India, China, Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia) is increasing rapidly. The two countries contributing the largest number of immigrants in South Australia are India and China, with 60% and 32% growth, respectively, since 2001.

Immigrants may arrive in Australia under various schemes: they may migrate purposefully with professional and/or economic goals (e.g. skilled migration) or they may arrive under other schemes (e.g. spouse or dependent, special carer, family reunion). Therefore, while some immigrants are fully skilled, others may not have sufficient skills based on their educational backgrounds. Less-skilled immigrants are more vulnerable to social exclusion. Lloyd, Anne Kennan, Thompson, and Qayyum (2013) claimed that failure to build the connectedness and collaboration needed for social inclusion is fundamentally an information problem. The authors believed information poverty occurs when people’s information behaviour is not adequate to fulfil their needs. Information poverty, social poverty and economic poverty may be associated, which in turn can create personal suffering and the need for on-going government support. The complexity of these situations means that an intervention in one area will not necessarily alleviate the problem. Inadequate access to information, for whatever reason, is likely to result in exclusion (Yu, 2011). Information poverty may then become part of a cycle in which people with limited access to information may rely further on a social network (Lloyd, Lipu, & Kennan, 2010). However, if this cultural network is well-connected it may act to facilitate information to individuals. It should also be noted that full inclusion may not always be the goal of immigrants; some may prefer ‘partial integration’, maintaining primary links with their home culture (Ward-Lambert, 2014).

Countries accepting immigrants have a responsibility to assist in their settlement and ease the period of adjustment for their immigrants. Efforts have been made in the development of several programs, such as language training and citizenship programs. Yet how immigrants deal with the new information is considered a crucial aspect in immigrants’ settlement (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Navigating information relating to everyday needs such as housing, employment, finance, health and education make the early period of settlement challenging (Caidi et al., 2010). Immigrants’ approaches to and absorption of information may be influenced by various factors, including personal and cultural backgrounds, social networks and general adaptability, the structure of the information landscape, and the role of mediators in a new community (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Lloyd et al., 2013). How immigrants make the adjustment to their new countries has

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Italy 24,964</td>
<td>Italy 22,485</td>
<td>Italy 20,711</td>
<td>↓ 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Germany 12,660</td>
<td>Germany 11,970</td>
<td>India 18,742</td>
<td>60 ↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Greece 11,677</td>
<td>Greece 10,782</td>
<td>China 15,933</td>
<td>32 ↓</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Vietnam 10,441</td>
<td>Vietnam 10,546</td>
<td>Vietnam 12,026</td>
<td>6.4 ↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Netherlands 8301</td>
<td>China 8082</td>
<td>Germany 11,408</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Poland 6911</td>
<td>Netherlands 7798</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Philippines 4512</td>
<td>India 6830</td>
<td>Philippines 8858</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yugoslavia 4270</td>
<td>Poland 6239</td>
<td>Netherlands 7281</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Malaysia 4162</td>
<td>Philippines 5440</td>
<td>Malaysia 6950</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>India 3688</td>
<td>Malaysia 5342</td>
<td>South Africa 6208</td>
<td>12.5 ↑</td>
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Table 1. Top source countries of South Australian immigrants: number and growth trend.
long been of interest. Examining any linkage between an immigrant’s information behaviour to the individual’s outcome throughout the settlement process is an area requiring further study. An understanding of the relationship between the accessing of information and how an immigrant adapts to their new life may provide a key to assist with settlement and improve future service delivery. When the aim of a nation is to develop and maintain social cohesion and to be inclusive of minorities, such empirical studies are required in order to develop frameworks for policy and practice.

The Australian government aims to be socially inclusive of all residents (Vinson, 2009). Many factors have the potential to result in social exclusion, including poverty, illiteracy, educational opportunities, unemployment, poor health, and victimisation and discrimination (Vinson, 2009). Social inclusion is the ability to develop a sense of connectedness and empowerment as informed citizens (Lloyd et al., 2010; Vinson, 2009) and requires the ability to function economically, socially, culturally and politically (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Access to resources is seen as critical during such processes. Yet, as Lloyd et al. (2013, p. 122) report, ‘the most fundamental resource, information, and the information practices and related skills that enable people to access, critically evaluate, and use information (i.e. information literacy), are rarely mentioned’. Without access and an understanding of the necessary information, immigrants are at risk of social exclusion, lacking the capacity to make informed decisions and choices (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Lloyd et al., 2013). Investigating how information provision and information behaviour is related to the lived experience of immigrants may provide a base for understanding the challenges of the settlement process.

In addition to obtaining information and knowledge of their new country, immigrants need to establish themselves in the community with employment and social engagement. Efficient and effective systems and services are required with service providers, such as public libraries, playing an important role. As the number of immigrants, particularly Asian immigrants, in South Australia continues to grow, it is timely to examine the patterns of information behaviour of Asian immigrants. The overarching question is: how do Asian immigrants find and use information and how is this linked to their settlement? This paper first presents a critical review of the literature on everyday information behaviour and immigrants. Then, supported by a pilot study of Asian immigrants in the city of Adelaide, it develops a conceptual framework linking immigrant information behaviour and the outcome of their settlement process. It is hoped that this framework may be applicable to other countries similar to Australia.

**Immigrant information behaviour and information services**

This section reviews the studies on information behaviour of immigrants in several countries. Current state-of-the-art research in Australia related to immigrants is presented. The focus of this review is on everyday information needs and seeking behaviour, information grounds and information sharing. The literature about public library information services used by immigrants is also reviewed.

**Everyday information behaviour**

Information behaviour defines how a person actively or passively connects or interacts with sources or channels of information, either with purposive intention or without any intention (Case, 2012; Du, 2014; Pettigrew, Fidel, & Bruce, 2001; Wilson, 2000). Information needs indicate where a person’s current knowledge is inadequate to satisfy
their goals (Case, 2012) and are often associated with, or lead to, the seeking of further information (Du & Spink, 2011). Everyday life information seeking refers to the information people obtain through their normal daily activities (such as watching television, meeting a friend and visiting a doctor) when they may not necessarily be purposefully seeking particular information (Pettigrew et al., 2001; Wilson, 1994). Recently, Sin and Kim (2013) conducted a survey on everyday life information-seeking behaviour of international students in the USA. The results showed that most of the international students used social networking sites for their everyday life information seeking. It was found that younger students, undergraduates and people with more extroverted personalities tended to use these sites more frequently. Another study, conducted by Williamson, Qayyum, Hider, and Liu (2012), discussed the role of new media in young adults’ (18–25 years old) everyday life information-seeking behaviour. These findings showed that traditional print media was still an important source of information and social media was used to communicate with others rather than to seek information. However, online news media was the most preferred source for purposive information seeking.

**Immigrants’ information behaviour**

The information needs of immigrants vary according to the length of stay in their new country: newcomers (<5 years) may require a lot of information over a wide range of areas, while longer established immigrants (>5 years) may be more pursuing personal interests (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Acquiring necessary information on arrival in a new country may be daunting for newcomers (Caidi & Allard, 2005) and usually this is related to language skills and experience in their home country. The navigation of this period is crucial and immigrants focus most of their attention on overcoming the immediate obstacles. However, the information behaviour of immigrants is under-explored (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004a). Caidi et al. (2010) studied barriers relating to immigrants’ information behaviour and social inclusion, such as communication, lack of knowledge of the new land, poor socioeconomic and family networks, and a lack of recognition of foreign educational or professional credentials. They identified the lack of information as a significant issue. Several possible areas for future research were indicated, including demographics, specific information needs, expressive information activities, information communication and technologies, transnationalism, the value of interdisciplinary behaviour, and information environments.

A limited number of empirical studies have focused on specific immigrant groups in (or from) the USA. For example, Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sánchez, and Cunningham (2004b) studied immigrants of Hispanic farm workers in the Pacific northwest using direct observation and interviews with users and staff of community technology centres. The results showed that the immigrants relied more on personal networks (71%) compared to other information sources. The study also identified some barriers such as language and culture difference. Rho (2002) investigated information needs, information-seeking behaviour and the use of public libraries in the first generation of adult Korean immigrants in Texas. The findings revealed 12 areas of information need: children’s education, educational opportunities for career development, survival information, family relation matters, mainstream community information, business, legal aid, health insurance, housing, computer skills, tax assistance and English literacy improvement. Like Fisher et al. (2004b), Rho concluded that personal networks were the primary information source for the Korean immigrants, while use of community public libraries was limited to their
children’s educational needs. Shoham and Strauss’ (2008) study identified US immigrants’ information needs while settling in Israel. These needs included housing, schooling, health, driving, banking, legal issues, work and language. More recently, Rodriguez-Mori (2009) examined the information behaviour of Puerto Ricans who relocated to central Florida, focusing on how social networks were used in the immigration process. The results demonstrated that personal social networks were used to satisfy most of their information needs. With poor public library facilities in Puerto Rico, these immigrants had little experience of using libraries as a resource. The aforementioned studies show that interpersonal relationships are crucial for immigrants’ information needs, positing that the historical lack of a library in their homelands geared these immigrants’ information behaviour towards social networks. Throughout the literature, there is a strong emphasis on immigrant’s reliance on social networks (Courtright, 2005; Fisher et al., 2004b; Hakim Silvio, 2006; Tompkins, Smith, Jones, & Swindells, 2006).

In Australia, there have been a few information studies on immigrant populations (Kennan, Lloyd, Qayyum, & Thompson, 2011; Lloyd et al., 2010, 2013). For example, Kennan et al. (2011) reported on refugees’ information behaviour in relation to social inclusion in New South Wales using a socio-cultural approach. The participants included representatives from public libraries, multicultural councils, settler groups and service provider groups. The study findings showed that refugees moved through three different phases: transitioning, settling in and being settled, which did not always happen sequentially and were often iterative. In a further analysis, Lloyd et al. (2013) discussed refugees’ information literacy behaviour and how these practices contributed to social inclusion. The study reported that there was a significant relationship between information literacy and social inclusion, with poor information literacy leading to social exclusion. In that study, visual information sources, such as shopping catalogues and store circulars, and social and embodied information, such as learning from other people’s experiences to shop cheaply, wearing appropriate clothing for a job interview, were identified as significant parts of the information landscape. The findings also emphasised the importance of service providers, including public libraries as mediators and navigators for the refugees. The studies by Kennan et al. (2011) and Lloyd et al. (2013) focused on humanitarian refugees. Their findings may not necessarily generalise to Asian immigrants who have not been forced from their homeland and are subject to a different set of policies and programmes.

When social inclusion exists, people have the resources, opportunities and capabilities to learn, work, engage and have a voice in a country (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2012). In the case of immigrants, it refers to the outcome of a successful settlement process. This means immigrants have access to formal and informal education, work in society professionally or voluntarily, connect with people in cultural settings or recreational services, and have the ability to express an opinion on circumstances affecting them. Barriers emerge in the process, often relating to language skills, education and previous cultural experience, including work-related information skills (Lloyd et al., 2013). Access to information, as well as the ability to evaluate it and apply it in daily life, are considered fundamental for people in a new environment (Lloyd et al., 2013).

At this point in time, little research has been carried out to understand specific groups of immigrants and how they settle into their new country. Studies of Asian immigrants’ information behaviour have not been conducted in the Australian context. To the best of our knowledge, no study has investigated the information needs of Asian immigrants, the way Asian immigrants use their networks, and the role of the Internet and other technologies in their information seeking and linked this behaviour and experience to their
settlement process. While we propose to study immigrants from the group of the top five Asian countries, differences between cultures, age groups, professions and Information Technology (IT) familiarity (among others) may emerge.

**Information grounds and sharing of information**

As one of the foci in this paper, information grounds are considered an important dimension of information behaviour. Pettigrew (1999, p. 811) defined an information ground as ‘an environment temporarily created by the behaviour of people who have come together to perform a given task, but from which emerges a social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information’. Informed by this definition, many places may be seen as information grounds, such as restaurants, supermarkets, salons, fitness centres, folk festivals, book clubs and other informal social settings. Fisher, Landry, and Naumer (2007) proposed three dimensions of information grounds: people related, place related and information related. Table 2 presents these information grounds and the characteristics that are associated with each. In Adelaide, an example of where all three dimensions are present is the Central Market area, where numerous Asian shops, cafes and restaurants are located.

Counts and Fisher (2010, p. 99) presented a framework for information grounds, which is an underpinning of the study reported here. They stated that an information ground has seven defining characteristics. It can occur anywhere, has purpose, is attended by different social types, creates social interactions, facilitates information sharing and flow, facilitates information use and creates benefit and contexts (see Figure 1). The basic assumption in viewing information grounds from this perspective is that where social interaction is free and easy then information flows in many directions. While these propositions are created from a study with mobile social networking users, they may be confirmed, changed or improved when testing to different contexts such as Asian immigrants.

Information sharing is a crucial dimension of information grounds (Caidi et al., 2010), often described as the interaction between people and sources of information, between formal and informal channels, and between social and technical searching (Du, Liu, Zhu, & Chen, 2013; Talja & Hansen, 2006). Through a clear understanding of information grounds, it is possible to create or develop new ways to facilitate information exchange (Fisher et al., 2007). With the phenomenon of online social networking, the online environment should now be considered as a new space where immigrants meet and share information. This means that immigrants without skills and access to this space may be at a disadvantage.

Table 2. Information ground characteristics. Adapted from Fisher, Landry, and Naumer (2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People related</th>
<th>Place related</th>
<th>Information related</th>
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<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Types</td>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td>Frequently discussed</td>
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<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>How created/shared</td>
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<td>Roles</td>
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<td>Motivation</td>
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<td>–</td>
<td>Ambience</td>
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Public library services for immigrants

The role of public libraries is changing; they are not only places to keep books and information, but also public spaces to promote community interaction and involvement in society (Caidi, 2006; Khati, 2013; Yu, 2011). In the digital age, information culture related to libraries and learning needs to stress knowledge and learning styles that take into account user needs and services, rather than focusing on collection development (Caidi, 2003). However, public libraries still have the responsibility to contribute to the provision of information resources (Caidi, 2006).

Ongoing global trends of increased international migration and the digital revolution form the basis of many changes within the public library system over the past decades (Chelliah, 2014). As a public service and social institution, public libraries are responsible for serving a diverse community with varied needs (Branciforte, 2012) and potentially may act as a ‘university of the people’ (Antwi, 1989, p. 286). For example, public library services are able to support social inclusion through education programmes (Khati, 2013). It is noted that the public library may be seen as a hostile environment to immigrants who perceive it as ‘an unwelcoming environment that may create a sense of being outsiders’ (Burke, 2008, p. 34). However, it may actively facilitate social networking for immigrants in providing a safe and welcoming public space, catering to their needs (Caidi & Allard, 2005) and helping with the challenges of multiculturalism (Audunson, Essmat, & Svanhild, 2011). Audunson et al. (2011) concluded that the role of public libraries for immigrants includes helping in the settlement process, providing opportunities for keeping in touch with their culture of origin, facilitating communication and providing a bridge between minority and majority cultures. Several studies have been undertaken to explore the services and use of public libraries by immigrants (e.g., Audunson et al., 2011; Fisher et al., 2004a; Shoham and Rabinovich, 2008).

Fisher et al. (2004a) acknowledged the necessity of using ‘building blocks’ to assist immigrants in their use of public libraries, such as beginning by explaining the role of the library and its safe and accommodating environment; introducing the resources available and teaching acquisition of library skills; and encouraging them to tell family and friends about how libraries can help them. These building blocks may develop a trust that will allow immigrants to seek assistance from library staff. As libraries have been established for the use of their communities, seeing the library from the immigrants’ perspectives and
being aware of some necessary stages to build immigrants’ confidence in the institution may overcome some of the challenges immigrants face. This may consequently allow the public library to more adequately support immigrants’ information needs.

In the last 5 years, the provision of multicultural library services within public libraries in Australia has been a priority; seen in the development of programmes such as those for culturally and linguistically diverse communities (Cunningham, 2004; Steed et al., 2011). Providing multicultural public library services is more than just providing collections in languages other than the national languages (Cunningham, 2004). To support cultural diversity in Australian society, state and territory libraries collaborated on the creation of the MyLanguage project (Steed et al., 2011) in order to provide resources through a web portal which accesses search engines, web directories, government websites and updated news headlines across the globe in many languages. MyLanguage serves patrons speaking over 60 different languages, enabling them to find information in their first language (Steed et al., 2011).

Focusing on the information behaviour of Asian immigrants

Understanding what immigrants want and need is not a simple task. It is challenging and needs evidence-based research (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Looking at the settlement of immigrants through the prism of information behaviour should open new insights into the current trends in accessing and processing information. Traditionally, immigrants have been studied with the assumption of information poverty. While this may still be true for humanitarian refugees (despite goodwill), focusing on Asian immigrants may provide a new and dynamic picture of the way immigrants can access and mobilise resources to facilitate their settlement. This population comes to Australia with new skills and aspirations, into a world geared to facilitating international exchanges.

A review of the current literature in the field highlights the absence of empirical studies relating to the information behaviour of immigrants in Australia:

- While there is research relating to refugees, there is no study focusing on the growing Asian population.
- Few studies differentiate between the information needs of newcomers and longer established immigrants.
- The relationships between information needs, information seeking, information grounds, and information sharing throughout immigrants’ settlement and how these relate to settlement are not well understood.
- There is little analysis into whether current services provided for immigrants in Australian public libraries contribute to supporting immigrants in their daily lives (e.g. whether library services meet immigrants’ real information needs).

A large-scale study is planned to bridge these identified gaps and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Asian immigrants identify information needs, and how they seek information when they are settling in Australia. It is also considered useful to examine places where they meet and share information including physical and virtual places. These may influence how and where they communicate and interact with a new community and how they connect with their home land.

Pilot study

A pilot study preceded the planned large-scale research to test the data collection instruments and to gain preliminary results. The pilot study was conducted in mid-2013
with eight Asian immigrants from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea, India, Vietnam and China using three data collection methods including survey, photovoice and interview. A printed survey was designed to capture the overall landscape of immigrants’ information behaviour during their settlement. In order to incorporate participant-generated perspectives into the data, photovoice was used; ‘a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique’ (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369). This method gives a voice directly to people who have little or no access to policy makers to record, document and discuss their life as they see it and capture it through images (Wang & Burris, 1994, 1997). All participants decided that the use of their mobile phones would be the easiest way to capture images relevant to their experience. The participants participated in a short training session concerning picture themes relevant to the research and were informed of ethical issues relating to picture taking, such as privacy, subjects’ permission and prohibited places. Using photovoice allowed a more personal expression of participants’ experiences, enabling them to indicate areas of frustration and concern as well as encouraging them to share personal experiences of which they were proud. Once the photographs had been taken, a face-to-face, semi-structured interview was conducted to explore more deeply the immigrants’ perspective of their information behaviour. All interviews took place in locations convenient to the participants and each lasted from 30 to 60 minutes.

The data were analysed using several methods. Questionnaire data were statistically coded and analysed. Photographs were analysed under themes according to the photographs selected by the participants and the corresponding stories they told in the interview sessions (Wang & Burris, 1997). The interviews, including the discussions of participants’ experiences that went beyond the presented images, were analysed using an open coding method (Du & Evans, 2011; Weber, 1990). The data from questionnaires, photos and interviews were then combined together for further analysis.

The preliminary results indicated that immigrants’ information needs are divided into three categories: general (such as accommodation, transportation and local culture); personal (personal needs such as jobs, English literacy and networking) and formal (official needs such as immigration, education and tax assistance). Finding accommodation and employment were the two most urgent information needs. The immigrants faced new procedures in dealing with accommodations such as bonds, rentals arrangement and inspections, while job references, local experience and addressing selection criteria were concerns in finding a job for the immigrants. The analysis indicated that general and formal information needs were sourced primarily through the Internet, while personal networks were the major information source used to satisfy personal information needs. Informal settings were the prime information grounds, with participants meeting friends and acquaintances in homes, cafes and malls. More formal grounds were offices, campuses and libraries. Online social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, also became important information grounds for immigrants. The findings showed that most participants were able to satisfy their information needs. They experienced themselves as settling well into their new country, largely feeling accepted into their communities and intent on securing citizenship. Moreover, public library services were used by some participants to meet their information needs, particularly in the first days of settlement. Services such as English classes, collections about Australia including printed, online and audio visual collections, and library multicultural programmes were considered helpful to support their new life in South Australia. Public libraries were also seen as good places to find new friends, though some participants did not use the services or only used it for their children.
From the pilot study, the questionnaires, photovoice instructions and interview protocols were improved to include specific questions for the larger scale study to proceed. Both printed and online questionnaires were designed to ensure a larger scope in the data collection process. It should be noted that all participants in the pilot study were young adults with tertiary education and a facility with English before their arrival. More details about the pilot study can be found in Khoir, Du, and Koronios (2014).

**Immigrants’ information behaviour framework**

The pilot study provides a better understanding of how to position the future research and shape the focus. Based on the pilot study and the reviewed literature, an initial framework is presented in Figure 2.

The framework is presented to illustrate the link between the information behaviour of Asian immigrants and their settlement processes. The duration of stay is considered as it is anticipated that immigrants who have arrived more recently will have different information needs, characteristics and habits from those who have been in the country for 5 years or more. Hence, they may face different challenges and barriers, as well as have different strengths. This framework helps to identify the kinds of information the immigrants need for their settlement, how they seek information, from what sources, and where they meet and share information. The categories of information literacy and information poverty and social inclusion/exclusion exist in a continuum and may be situational and time-specific, or in fact definitive. We propose that capability in information behaviour will generally result in a positive settlement process that reflects social inclusion; the corollary of this is that information poverty may be associated with social exclusion.

Public library services in Australia, with commitments to serve immigrants as a specific group, are also to be examined in the large-scale research. Thus, aspects of information behaviour and public library services have the potential to influence Asian immigrants’ settlement and social inclusion into their new country. Immigrants face barriers and challenges in their new country, but they also have strengths or special

![Figure 2. Proposed conceptual framework of Asian immigrants’ information behaviour relating to settlement.](image)
capabilities which will be explored in this study. The study is intended to contribute to the information behaviour field and public library services, providing an in-depth analysis of Asian immigrants’ information behaviour and settlement process using a mixed-methods approach.

**Conclusion and future research**

There has been little research concerning the information behaviour of Asian immigrants and their use of public libraries in Australia. This paper describes the phenomenon of immigrants’ information behaviour and its linkage to their settlement processes in a new land. It also provides an understanding of how public libraries are expected to facilitate immigrants’ settlement by creating more specific and tailored programmes based on immigrants’ information needs. A pilot study was conducted based on the review of the existing literature and identified gaps. From this a conceptual framework was developed, which may be further refined as the project progresses, linking the quality of information practices and settlement process.

The large-scale study will encompass a population reflecting the immigration intake in South Australia, as shown in Table 1, using a stratified sampling (Creswell, 2009; Fowler, 2009; Neuman, 2011). It will adopt the definition of an international immigrant provided by Caidi et al. (2010, p. 495): ‘International migrants include anyone living outside their country of citizenship but the conditions of permanence in the term immigrant exclude those living abroad temporarily, such as visitors, migrant workers, and international students.’ Therefore, the participants in the forthcoming study will be screened based on the following criteria: those who were not born in Australia and come originally from India, China, Vietnam, the Philippines or Malaysia are adult (at least 18 years old), are not visitors, immigrant workers or international students, who hold a permanent resident visa or have become an Australian citizen, and who live in South Australia. Among the available immigrant studies in Australia, this evidence-based study is potentially significant and novel, particularly for South Australia. The proposed research will distinguish between new and longer established immigrants and enable an understanding of how their information needs vary at different stages. How immigrants’ information behaviour relates to the success of this settlement process will be investigated, as well as public library services. The study will be conducted based on the immigrant’s perceptions of their experience in their settlement and the theoretical concepts of information literacy/poverty and social inclusion/exclusion.

This project will contribute to the information behaviour field and information services both theoretically and practically. Utilising three different approaches (survey, photovoice and interviews) will provide a substantial base to enable a more comprehensive picture of information behaviour. Researchers may benefit from the theoretical analysis and the model to be developed and stakeholders may have the empirical data necessary to create more conducive institutional environments for immigrants. The results will have implications for cultural, social and economic studies concerned with immigration across Australia. In doing so, it may also contribute to studies of immigration in similar countries. More specifically, recommendations will be made to public libraries as an important type of information institutions, to provide services that match the needs identified in supporting immigrants in an adopted country. As a result, more practical and tailored library programmes may be created to facilitate the immigrants’ information needs through an understanding of both the skills they bring to their practices and the barriers and challenges they face during their settlement. As a by-product of being involved in this
project, immigrants participating in this research may become more aware of the public library services available for their benefit.

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