

Food Security of Migrants in a Regional Area of Australia: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract : Food security indicates the ability of individuals, households and communities to acquire food that is healthy, sustainable, affordable, appropriate and accessible. Despite Australia's current ability to produce enough food to feed a population larger than its current population, there has been substantial evidence over the last decades to demonstrate many Australians struggle to feed themselves, including those from a cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. The study aimed to investigate migrants' perceptions and experiences on food security in Tasmania. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 33 migrants residing in North, South and North West Tasmania, who were recruited through purposive sampling. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the interview data. Four main themes were identified from the interview data: (1) Understanding of food security; (2) Experiences with the food security in Tasmania; (3) Factors that influence migrants' food security in Tasmania; and (4) Acculturation strategies. Various sub-themes have emerged under each of these four major themes. Though the findings indicate participants are satisfied with their current food security in Tasmania, they still encounter some challenges in food availability, accessibility, and affordability in Tasmania. Factors that influence migrants' food security were educational background, language barrier, socioeconomic status, geographical isolation, and cultural background. By using different acculturation strategies, migrants managed to adapt to the new food culture. In addition, social and cultural capitals were also treated as vital roles in improving migrants' food security. The findings indicate migrants residing in Tasmania face different challenges on food security. They use different strategies for food security while acculturating into a new environment. The findings may provide useful information for migrants in Australia and various private organisations or relevant government departments that address food security for migrants.

Keywords : experiences, food security, migrants, perceptions

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