



Making a knowledge translation platform through the leadership of a student organization to enhance immigrant community engagement with the university

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INTRODUCTION

- Knowledge Translation or Mobilization refers to a wide variety of activities which facilitates the best use of research results.
- An effective knowledge mobilization platform can serve a vital role for engaging stakeholders of a research project in a meaningful way.
- Universities usually arrange public lectures to engage the local community with academic research.
- While these public talks play an important role in engaging the community with academic research, more accessible platform is still required to engage the newcomers of the vicinity as they face additional barriers.
- From our experience, newcomers or immigrant community are generally reluctant to attend public talks organized by universities due to language barrier, undesirable refreshments and unfamiliar environment.
- In this regard, we think that international students of the university can play an important role to engage newcomers or immigrant community with the academic research as they face similar issues.
- To test if an immigrant community spontaneously participate in a knowledge mobilization event which offers culturally familiar environment, we have organized such event recently as a pilot project under the banner of our club called Bangladeshi Scholars' Association (BSA) at the University of Calgary, which is a Bangladeshi graduate student-led organization.
- As a pilot project, we focused on mobilizing new knowledge engendered from Bangladeshi students' research projects to the Bangladeshi immigrant community in Calgary.

OBJECTIVES

- Objective 1:** to observe if international students can play an important role in knowledge translation to the immigrant community
- Objective 2:** to help bridge the divide between research findings and public knowledge.
- Objective 3:** to observe if providing a culturally familiar environment enhance spontaneous participation of the immigrant community
- Objective 4:** to encourage grad students to effectively communicating their research to the public
- Objective 5:** to encourage international students actively participate in community engagement programs

METHODS

- Specific immigrant community selection:** Since we have experience of arranging several Bangladeshi cultural events, we targeted only the Bangladeshi immigrant community in Calgary for our pilot project.
- Communicating with key circles:** We communicated with the following key circles to arrange an easily accessible knowledge mobilization event for the Bangladeshi immigrant community in Calgary

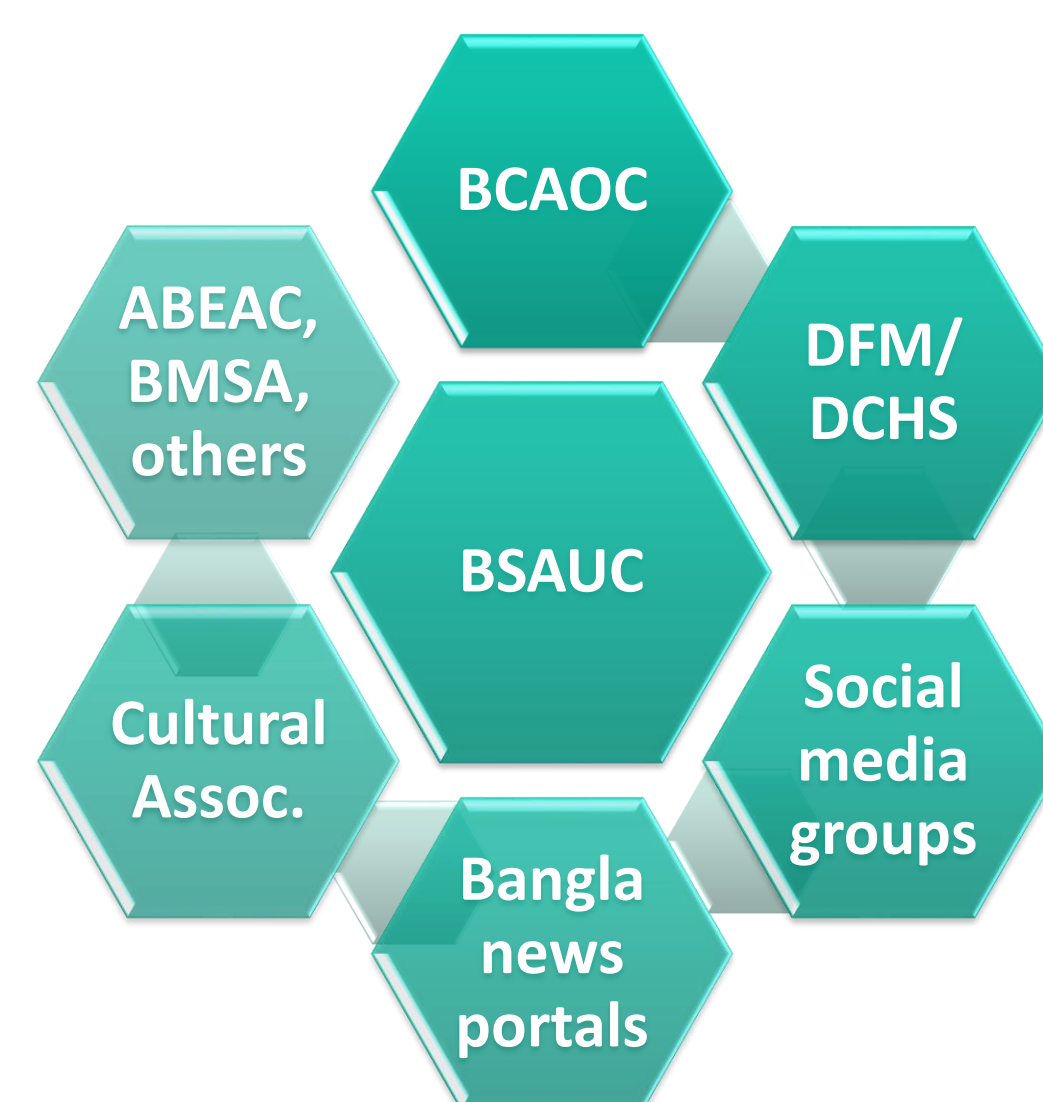


Figure 1: The key circles of our knowledge mobilization event.

METHODS

- Survey:** To assess the needs and continuously improve our knowledge translation platform, we made questionnaire for both type of audience- newcomers/ immigrant community and students.
- 3MT workshops and presentations:** We selected 15 student to give three minute elevator pitches on their research findings. We have arranged four workshops for the students to learn how to effectively communicate research to the public. We invited knowledge translation specialists in these workshops who provided valuable feedback to make each presentation appealing to the audience.
- Venue and Refreshments:** To create a culturally familiar environment for the Bangladeshi immigrant community, we selected Bangladesh Centre (Northeast Calgary) as the venue for the knowledge mobilization event. We also arranged traditional snacks and food for refreshment.

RESULTS

- Community Participation:** In total, 120 people participated as audience of the event. Almost all of them were related to Bangladeshi ethnic origin. Among them, leadership of different professional associations and cultural organizations were present. For example-president and executive committee members of the Association of Bangladeshi Engineers in Alberta (ABEAC), Bangladesh Medical Society of Alberta (BMSA), Natanandan Theatre, Mukto Bihongo, Bangladesh Canada Association of Calgary (BCAOC) came to attend this event. Further, distinguished community members, news portal and TV channel representatives were present at this event.

RESULTS

- Survey findings from audience:** We have received great feedback from audience. Their feedback generated an urge to arrange such event once in year.

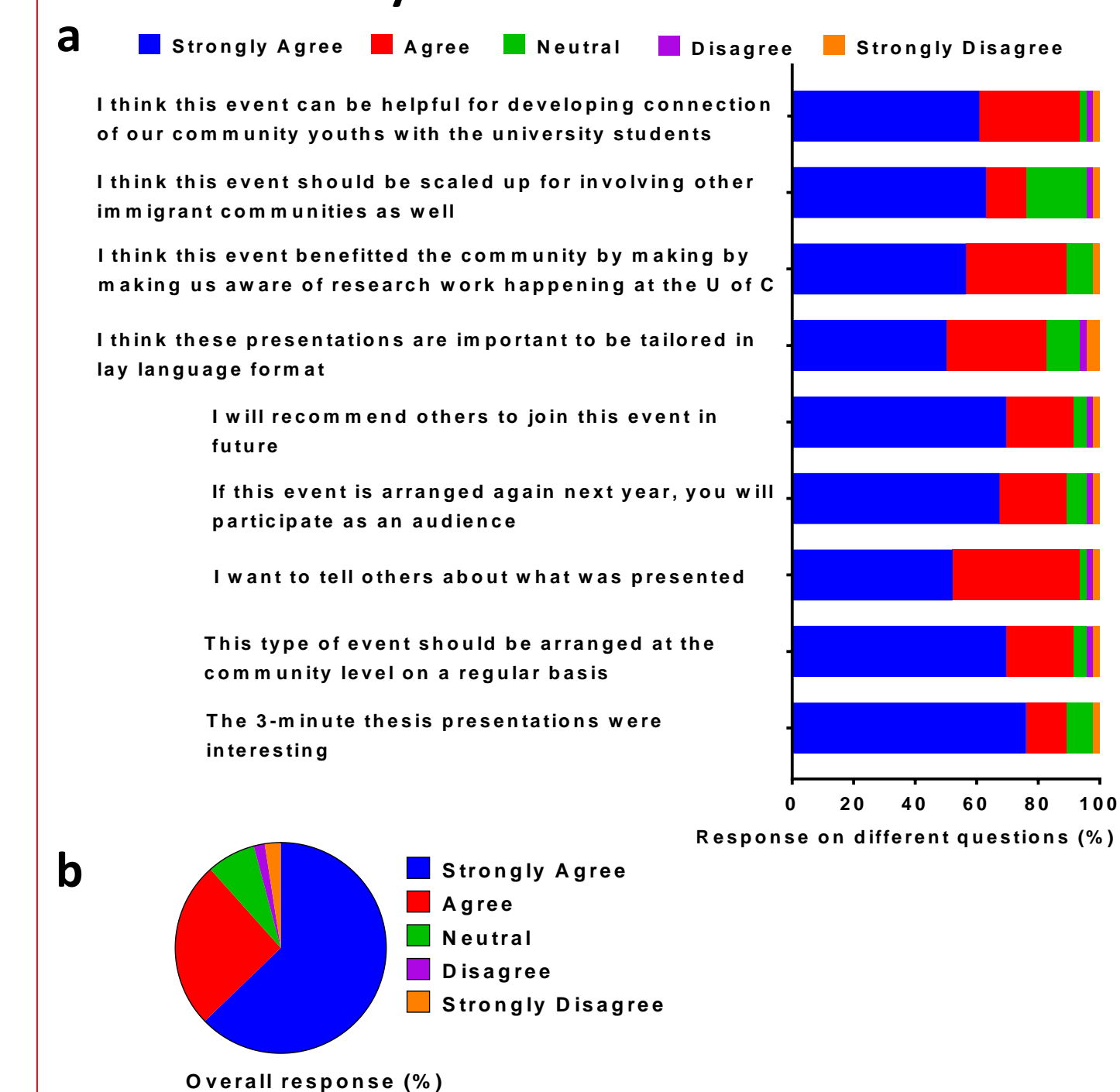


Figure 2: Survey findings from audience of the event. a, bar chart represents opinion percentage to each question; b, pie chart represent overall agreement to all questions.

- Survey findings from students:** We also received positive feedback from students and an urge to arrange similar events regularly.

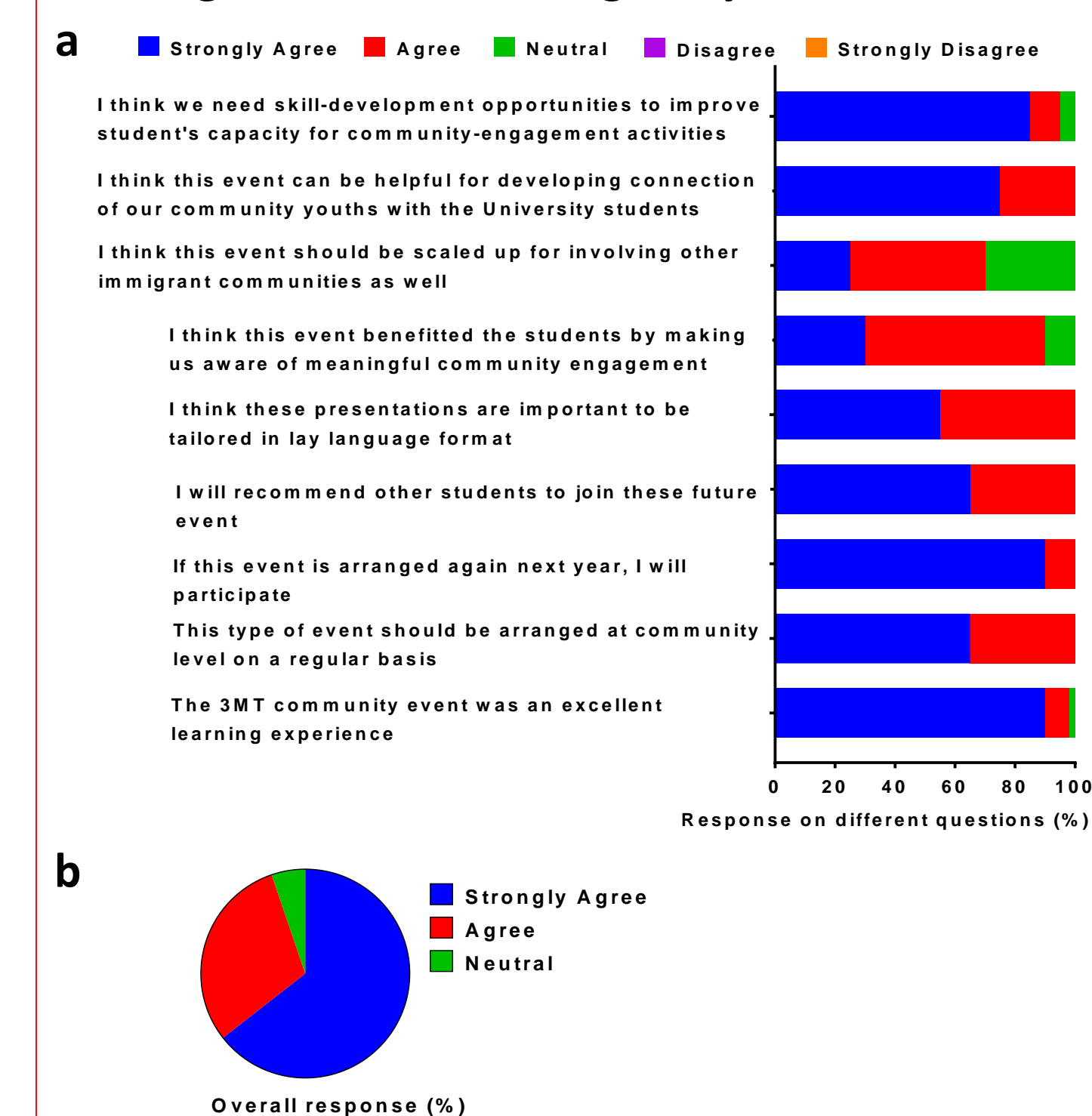


Figure 3: Survey findings from students. a, bar chart represents opinion percentage to each question; b, pie chart represent overall agreement to all questions.

EVENT MOMENTS



Figure 4: Moments captured at the knowledge mobilization event.

CONCLUSION

- International students can play a significant role to engage immigrant communities with the academic research of the university. This will contribute to achieving the strategic plan of the university.

FUTURE OBJECTIVES

- Scale-up this platform for engaging other immigrant communities in future
- Try to meet the demand based on the survey findings
- Try to arrange workshops to enhance students capacity to effectively communicate research findings to public.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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