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Challenges of Professional Integration

Experiences of Non-EU Highly Skilled Professional Immigrants in
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Abstract

Title: *Challenges of Professional Integration: Experiences of non-EU Highly Skilled Professional Immigrants in Gothenburg, Sweden.*

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Migration has been a global phenomenon. Sweden being one of the most industrious countries of Europe, with the best welfare system, Sweden has experienced considerable flow of both professional and nonprofessional immigrants. When immigrants move into another country, they meet several challenges and among them are professional employment challenges. Therefore, the aim of this research was to analyze skilled Professional non-EU immigrant's narratives about their difficulties in finding a job in their profession in Gothenburg, Sweden, and with a view to improving their access to the job market.

The research was a qualitative study that focused only on non-EU professional immigrants from Africa, Asia and Middle East. The findings presented in this study, answered two research questions. One; what are the experiences of non-EU skilled professional immigrants in accessing the labour market within their profession in Gothenburg, Sweden? And two; What Strategies have the non-EU skilled professional immigrants used to improve their access to the labour market? Findings were obtained from eight participants by use of semi-structured interview guide. Human capital theory, social capital theory and disparate treatment theory as an employment discrimination theory was used to analyze the findings.

The study demonstrates that, professional non-EU immigrants face quite several difficulties in finding jobs related to their profession and academic qualifications. These challenges are mainly due to social-cultural differences, language, devaluation of their qualifications and work experience, stringent national policies, limited social networks and discrimination. The findings further indicates that non-EU skilled professional immigrants confront challenging labour market situations by; improving on the quality of their social and professional networks, learning the Swedish language, actively getting involved in voluntary work and internships, upskilling, making follow ups on application and need for reformed government programs as a suggestion was among the themes that raised.

Key words: Non-EU skilled Professional immigrants, experiences, Swedish labour market, employment, human capital, social capital and low skilled jobs.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved Mother Mrs. Nyamwenge Milly Tereza and to my two beloved sons Jethro Aliti and Jotham Aliti. Thank you for making me proud as a mother.

List of Abbreviations

EEA	European Economic Area
EEPO	European Employment Policy Observatory
EMR	European Migration report
EMN	European Migration network
EU	European Union
HSPIs	Highly Skilled Professional Immigrants
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
ILO	International Labour organization
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
IOM	International Organization for Immigrants
SFI	Swedish for Immigrants
SCB	Sweden Statistics - Statistiska Centralbyrån
UN	United Nations

Chapter One

Introduction and problem area

1.1 Background

Migration is a global phenomenon and according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Migration refers “to movement of a person or groups of persons either across an international border or within a state” (IOM world migration report 2018). Considering the state of migration globally, recent studies reveal that approximately 244 million people of the world population reside in a country outside their original country of birth (IOMS global migration fact sheet 2015). Reports reveal that industrialised countries of global north are the most attractive destinations for foreigners compared to the less developed regions. Nearly 58 per cent of the international immigrants are hosted in the global north whereas, 42 per cent of the immigrants are hosted in less developed countries of south (UN International migration reports 2015).

Sweden being one of the most industrious countries within European Union, because of the best welfare system, Sweden has experienced a considerable flow of both professional and nonprofessional immigrants for the past years. This has led to an increase of the country’s population and today, about 10 million people are estimated to live in Sweden and out of this, nearly 1.7 million people are foreign born (Statistics Sweden SCB 2014). There are several reasons that causes people to leave their countries of birth and seek to be hosted elsewhere. Various scholars have classified these factors differently and mainly these factors are push and pull factors of migration associated within environmental, economic, cultural and social-political dimensions (Segal, Elliott, & Mayadas 2010). As for Sweden, the reasons for increased flow of immigrants is need to escape from wars and conflict, poverty, hope for better employment and enjoy good life, hope to join families and relatives, among others (Sweden and Migration 2015 online; Statistics Sweden 2014). According to Gustafsson, Innes, & Österberg (2017) immigrants do migrate when they have reached their middle or old aged phase and with majority of them coming from middle and low-income countries.

Immigration has transformed Sweden from being a homogeneous society into a multicultural country comprised of individuals or groups of different origin (Runblom 1994). Many of the big cities of Sweden such as Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö have not only been overwhelmed with high growth of people from different cultures, but also unemployment and low earnings among immigrants compared to natives (Gyening Owusu 2010). Studies indicate that when people from different background collaborate, it significantly impacts on the country's development. These developments are brought in by exchange of cross-cultural skills between immigrants and native-born. However, on the other side, it is challenging to government when it comes to creation of employment and formulation of integration policies (Reitz, Breton, Dion & Dion 2009). Swedish integration policies are one of the most generous in Europe. The government has worked hard to see that its immigration policy is focused on integration with the goal of ensuring "equal rights, obligation and opportunities for all regardless of ethnic or cultural background" (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, 2009). This aimed at combating discrimination and protecting immigrants against social-economic challenges including employment challenges (Rydgren 2004). To achieve this, the country has put in place supportive programs and initiatives for newcomers. Immigrants have been provided access to good living condition (housing and health), Swedish language learning and Vocational training programs among others (ibid.).

However, despite of all the efforts and policy strategies the Swedish government has put in place, reports from previous studies indicate that there are still challenges within the Swedish labour market. When it comes to consideration of employment, immigrants including highly skilled professional immigrants (HSPIs) take a small percentage in the job market. Immigrants who come to Sweden with academic qualification from abroad find it hard to get jobs that match their profession and qualification. Skilled professional immigrants mainly from non-EU countries find it harder to enter into Swedish job markets than native Swedes or other European Union citizens despite of them meeting all the new country's requirements. Besides, it has been reported that non-EU immigrants, particularly from Africa, Middle East and Asia face more challenges to get jobs that matches their foreign qualifications than other immigrants from Western world countries outside EU.

Literature reveal that non-EU immigrants struggle a lot to even get jobs of low standard. For survival purposes, they accept taking on low status jobs that don't suit their academic undertakings (Rooth and Ekberg 2006). The jobs that they do, ranges from cleaning, newspaper

distribution to driving. These hardships are always attributed to factors like having insufficient knowledge of Swedish language, lack of social networks, lack of acknowledgement of professional immigrant's academic qualifications, discrimination among others (Faris Ahmed 2016; Al-Atassi & Alebiary 2017; Guo & Andersson 2005). This means the rate of professional unemployment is still high and it is highly prevalent among professional immigrants from Africa, Asia and the Middle east. Moreover, other studies note that when immigrant's employment concerns are not addressed and given attention by authorities concerned, immigrants will always be subjected to vulnerabilities of unemployment or getting jobs characterized by all forms of exploitation (Zimmermann and Constant 2012). In addition, failing to consider immigrant's previous knowledge and skills, their integration in the system of the new country will always be hindered. This will lead to continual social problems such as unemployment and wage inequalities between foreign-born and native-born. Other studies show that immigrants have always lived unsatisfactory life and many of them are reported to be at a risk of remaining poor at old age due to limited accumulation of enough pension compared to the natives (Gustafsson et al. 2017; Zimmermann, Constant & Gataullina 2006). The underutilization of immigrant's abilities has left most of them feel deprived, devalued, marginalized and subjected to social exclusion in society (Suto 2009). According to Sen (2001), exclusion leads to human unfreedom which may be a limit to personal development in society.

Several studies have looked at the general employment trends of immigrants within the Swedish labour market. Topics on income inequalities between native born and foreign citizens, migration and integration policies, employment challenges faced by non-Eu immigrants in general, has been covered but few studies have focused on labour challenges of highly skilled immigrants from non-EU developing countries of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. It is against this background, that the researcher seeks to know from immigrant's narrative stories why there are still employment gaps in the labour market despite of the existing country's policy initiatives to fight these challenges. The views of this study are mainly drawn from the perspective of non-EU professional immigrants who moved to Sweden with different specialties, but they have not yet got jobs that matches their foreign qualifications. Also, immigrants currently working within their academic fields have been considered for interviews and the motivation behind this decision, is that, these are groups of professional immigrants who have been in such a similar situation. Them working currently in their profession, implies that they could have experienced hardships and applied certain strategies to get rid of employment challenges and entered the labour market. Therefore, the researcher was interested

to get more insights on what strategies they deployed to facilitate their employment chances in Sweden. Having interviews with non-EU skilled professionals from Africa, Asia and the Middle east is chosen to be relevant to the study because these are groups of immigrants that are equally considered to be underrepresented than other immigrants in the Swedish labour market.

1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze non-EU skilled Professional immigrant's narratives about their difficulties in finding a job in their profession in Gothenburg, Sweden, and with a view to improving their access to the job market.

1.3 Research questions

The following questions were adopted to meet the above purpose:

- 1) What are the experiences of non-EU skilled professional immigrants in accessing the labour market within their profession in Gothenburg, Sweden?
- 2) What strategies have the non-EU skilled professional immigrants used to improve their access to the labour market?

1.4 Relevance of study to social work

One of the frontline tasks of social workers, is to respond to some of the most complex individual, family and community challenges (Truell and Jones 2012:4). According to Truell and Jones, human problems are caused by many factors, and among them are the professional employment challenges identified in this study. It's evident that as immigrants and refugees move into another country, they face unique challenges which can be entrenched in country's policies. These policies influence or limit service provision and wellbeing of immigrants which is a human rights concern. This study, therefore, is important to social work profession in a way that it raises awareness of the existing restrains or challenges faced by HSPIs in the employment sector of Gothenburg and Sweden in general. According to IFSW, social work is a profession that aims at upholding of social justice, challenge human rights violation and engage in advocacy (IFSW n.d.). Results of this study provides a platform for social workers to confront/challenge unpleasant policies and laws in the regime which may have effect on the rights of immigrant professionals. It further presents opportunities for social workers and other

actors to advocate for anti-oppressing policies on issues that are lately hindering professional integration of skilled immigrants in the job market. This will facilitate to the formulation of better integration policy frame works and programs by government and other influential stakeholders. The study will enable policy makers to have a reflection on the shortcomings of the already existing policies regarding employment of skilled immigrants. Thereafter, new better policies can be formulated with an aim of rendering social and economic equality under the principle of social justice for all which is the heart of social work profession.

In addition to the above, the study contributes knowledge to the already existing literature on the employment trends of skilled professional immigrants in Sweden. Most of the already existing studies are in Swedish version, this study will add up on a few studies done in English. The findings will help new researchers who have similar interest in this area of study to clearly understand the new trends pertaining job acquisition within one's profession in Sweden by non-EU professionals mainly from Africa, Asia and Middle East.

1.5 Structure of the study

Chapter one of this study begins by highlighting the background information and problem area of the study. Then purpose of study, research questions and relevancy of the study to social work profession is presented. In the same chapter, the definition of an immigrant, highly skilled professional immigrants (HSPIs) and their legal protection is presented. There follows chapter two which gives the contextual background information on labour immigration to Sweden, headings such as Sweden and emigration, post war immigration between 1940-1979 and labour immigration policy in Sweden, non-labour immigration to Sweden, policy changes on labour immigration and Swedish labour integration policy are discussed in here. The third chapter provides the Literature reviews on challenges HSPIs encounter in the labour market and the strategies they use to improve their employment chances is presented. Theoretical frame work under chapter four is highlighted, where by human capital theory, disparate treatment theory of unemployment and theory of social capital are discussed and believed to be suitable for analyzing this research. Chapter five presents a description of methodological frame works applied to this study both qualitative approaches, research design, study setting, sampling procedures, methods of data collection, analysis, determinants of data quality and ethical considerations are viewed under this chapter. Chapter six provides findings, analysis, discussions and summaries of findings on labour market experiences of HSPIs in Gothenburg, Sweden. Finally, chapter 7 presents conclusions and suggestions for other research.

1.6 Definition of key terms

1.6.1 An immigrant

According to Bäck and Soininen (1998) the term immigrant is used to describe individuals that are in one way or the other have foreign origin. The authors state that “foreign born” and “foreign citizens” are used interchangeably to give clear definitions for immigrants. This concept is perceived as a collective noun that is used to describe different categories of people (ibid). The current study is only concerned with employment trends of foreign-born skilled professionals particularly from non-EU developing countries in Sweden (immigrants to Sweden). In this study therefore, an immigrant will refer to a person born out of Sweden, but he/she has been authorized to come and live in Sweden because of marriage, family reunion, humanitarian and economic reasons (Lorentsson 2015; Irastorza & Bevelander 2017).

1.6.2 Highly Skilled Professional Immigrants (HSPIs)

This concept of highly skilled immigrants is viewed and defined differently depending on each country. To some countries emphasis is placed on skills got through occupational experience rather than considering only formal educational experience. Therefore, highly skilled immigrants are described as those individuals with academic qualification in a certain occupation and possesses extensive professional skills acquired through experiences over time (European Migration Network [EMN] 2007; Iredale 2001). This group of skilled workers include among others; highly specialists, independent executives, specialized technicians and business personnel (Iredale 2001). Cerna (2009:3) highlights that definitions of skilled professionals considers both education, occupation and salary. Highly skilled immigrants often work in private, internationally competitive sectors, but also in public sectors, such as education and health care (Emilsson et al. 2014). In accordance to Iredale’s (2001:8) definition, the concept of highly skilled professional immigrants in this study refers to persons with professional experience gained through an academic training, both from ground level to university and are competent to get involved in jobs that requires university qualifications. These individuals are also considered to have specialized in a certain field, as well as possessing skills acquired over time through experiences. In this study the concept of highly skilled professional immigrants and highly educated professional immigrants are used interchangeably.

1.7 Immigrants and the Legal Protection

Several conventions define and grant protection of the rights of immigrant workers globally. Both the national and international instruments have been formulated and adopted by member states to tackle and give solutions on issues regarding human rights and the labour market of immigrants. International instruments like the ILO's migration employment and occupation convention of 1958, the international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (ICERD) (1965) and the UN convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families (ICRMW) (1990) give legal protection to immigrant workers of all categories including highly skilled professionals (International justice resource center n.d.) These are UN human rights conventions that bind member states to prohibit discrimination against all individuals who live within their areas of jurisdiction on grounds of race, sex, age, colour, descent, language, religion, national or ethnic origin. Article 1 of the ILO particularly gives protection against any distinction or exclusion that may have the "effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation" (ILO convention No: 111).

Cholewinski 1997 cited in Syed (2008) highlights that all immigrant workers and members of their families have a right to be protected irrespective of their legal status. On the employment perspective, article 25 of ICRMW (1990), the convention grants that there should be equal treatment between nationals and immigrant workers on grounds of remuneration and other conditions of work. Article 26 entails states parties to grant immigrant workers and members of their families the right to join freely, attend meetings and activities of any trade Union. Article 40 grants immigrant workers and members of their families to enjoy the right to form associations and trade unions in the state of employment and the right to equality of treatment with nationals in respect of protection against dismissal, unemployment benefit, and access to alternative employment in case of loss of work (article 54 of ICRMW) (Syed 2008).

Sweden is one of the member states that signed and ratified to both the UN conventions on elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (ICERD) and the convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families (ICRMW). Since international instruments grants immigrant workers to enjoy same human rights as citizens and Sweden having ratified to all these international instruments, there should be equality of opportunities and fair treatment in employment to all immigrant workers. However, this may

not be a priority in some country's agenda. Syed (2008) states that, even though many countries ratified and signed up for these international instruments, chances of human rights violation on grounds of employment is still ongoing. It's evident that these countries use poor administrative procedures and laws to clearly violate human rights (ibid.). Sweden besides having international conventions, they formulated anew anti-discrimination Act in 2009. This aimed at giving sanctions on issues of discrimination. However, the applicability of this Act is still on low base. Immigrant workers are still faced with challenges of employment inequality in the Swedish labour markets (Ministry of Integration & Gender Equality 2009).

Chapter Two

Contextual background information on Labour immigration in Sweden

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data from other publications and reports. Detailed contextual information on labour immigration in Sweden is presented in here. Issues such as Sweden and emigration, post war immigration and labour immigration policies in Sweden, non labour immigration, immigration policy changes and labour integration policies are reviewed respectively.

2.2 Sweden and Emigration

Historically, between the nineteenth and the twentieth century, Sweden witnessed greater loss of its population. The Swedish workforce was reduced, a round 1.5 million citizens of working age in Sweden opted to leave the country to other countries such as USA, Australia and Canada in search for better opportunities and escape from religious persecution (Bourrousse, André, Koen & Pareliussen 2017; Sweden and Migration). As part of the country's population moves out, the country encounters challenges with supply of labour force and growth. Sweden being a country with a small population of about 3.5 million people by then, the gap in the labour market was felt (Statistics Sweden 2013). Sweden had minimal number of foreigners not until the outbreak of second world war. Since Sweden did not take part in the war, its economy stabilized progressively, the natives stopped exiting the country but rather Sweden became a destination point for immigrants (Lemaître 2007). Lemaître reveals that, Sweden has shifted from being an emigration country into a country suitable for global attraction of immigrants.

2.3 Post War Immigration between 1940-1979 and Labour Immigration in Sweden

After the period of Second World War, European countries experienced great damage and their industrial sectors were on standstill. Many people were left jobless and this increased the number of refugees from Nordic and other EU countries to enter Sweden. Sweden having been

neutral in the war, its resources, industrial and infrastructural sectors is said to have remained intact (Lemaître 2007). The Swedish economy remained booming both nationally and internationally. This called for increased demand for laborers from both highly skilled and low skilled foreign citizens to work in their industrial sector particularly the textile industry (ibid.). Chances of work was first opened to citizens from Nordic countries and then later, other countries such as Germany, Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey joined in the 1960s (ibid.).

2.4 Non-Labour Immigration to Sweden

Sweden besides other countries in the OECD, has for the past years registered the highest number of asylum seekers. This has increased pressure on its population size and the reasons for this move, is that many people tend to flee from their countries to seek for humanitarian protection and family reunions (Bourrousse et al. 2017; Lemaître 2007). As a result, the composition of the immigrant population changed from Nordic citizens who worked in the manufacturing industries towards non-Nordic citizens who needed protection and family reunion (Bourrousse et al. 2017). It's now approximated that the number of people with foreign origin in Sweden has risen to about 20 percent from the period of 1980 to date. This percentage comprises of Swedes on return from abroad and majority of them are of non-Swedish background (Bask 2005:73; Statistics Sweden 2013). As new asylum seekers from countries outside Europe begun to enter Sweden, the country's population has been highly overwhelmed compared to the early years.

In the year 2015 alone, the number of asylum seekers in Sweden reached to a peak of 163,000 with Syrians being the highest in number. Out of the total population of asylum application, 111,979 decisions were undertaken within a period of one year and this has been the highest number in history to be granted asylum Swedish Migration Agency (2017). On the other hand, Bourrousse et al (2017) reveals that the number of asylum seekers significantly changed in 2016 with a decrease of 28,939 people having applied for asylum. More over these authors further explain that this drastic decline was brought about by the tight changes within the immigration policies and rules alongside external factors such as closed-border controls.

Wilken (2016) stresses that structural changes that took place in 2016, fostered the rise of tight laws which led to cross-border controls. This came as a result of structural changes particularly

when the conservative party headed by Fredrik Reinfeldt the prime minister by then, lost power to Social Democrats who seem to be having anti-immigration feelings (ibid.). Wilken continues to argue that these structural changes have made the leading party now to aim at discouraging potential asylum seekers from targeting Sweden as their major destination point. This has shifted Swedish position on immigration issues, from being welcoming of refugees and asylum seekers into a practice of closing borders to anyone without official identification documents.

2.5 Labour Immigration Policy Changes in Sweden

The immigration policy in Sweden is never constant, on several occasions, it has kept on changing over time (Gerdes & Wadensjö 2013). The policy regarding immigration in Sweden was liberal in the 1860s until world war one. There were no restrictions regarding visas, passports and work permits imposed on whoever wanted to enter Sweden. Immigrant within the Nordic countries were free to move to Sweden for work, but this opportunity greatly changed in 1914 after the outbreak of world war one.

The immigration policy changed drastically from being liberal towards the stringiest one. They imposed restrictions on work permit and acquiring a permit was hard for anybody who wanted to work in Sweden at that time (Gerdes & Wadensjö 2016). However, after a period, this policy again changed to a less restrictive direction. With collective effort from other Nordic countries together with Sweden, the establishment of common Nordic labour market came in place in 1954. This turned Sweden into an attractive point, Sweden started receiving refugees from neighboring countries mostly within the Nordic region and southern Europe to fill up vacant positions in the labour market. However, this easy access was again restricted in 1972 (Emilsson, Magnusson, Osanami Törngren & Bevelander 2014).

After Sweden becoming member of the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1994 and member of the EU in 1995 several institutional changes were developed. As many immigrants continued entering Sweden, challenges in the labour market begun to unfold (Gerdes & Wadensjö 2013). These challenges in the labour market raised concern from both the government, unions and the public which later prompted the need for more new laws to be enacted (ibid.). In 2006 as Sweden had changes within government, the proposals for formulation of new policy regarding labour immigration was tabled from November 2007 till November 2008 and on the 15th December 2008 new liberalized immigration laws came to force (Cerna 2009; Törngren

&Holbrow 2017). In fact, before these new laws, the labour market was only open to specific occupations that faced labour shortages in countries of origin.

The later policies modified the former one by shifting it from the restrictive direction towards a more liberal/open market. According to Emilsson et al (2014:6) in their working paper entitled the world's most open country, it's revealed that "after several decades of having a restrictive system, Sweden now has one of the most open labour migration systems in the world". The changes in this policy is said to be not only of great significance in meeting present and future challenges on the Swedish labour market but also in the long run would respond to what Emilsson et al (2014:9) highlights as, the "demographic challenges of an aging population". With the effect of the liberal policy, labour immigrants from non-EU and EEA countries started entering Sweden in search for employment (Emilsson et al.2014; Törngren and Holbrow 2017). This new system of laws is aimed at being employer-driven where by employers are given the mandate to hire skilled workers from any country to fill up the vacant positions. Besides, these new laws have created changes within the labour immigration paradigms, both high-skilled, low-skilled, seasonal workers and students can work in Sweden without restrictions regarding skills and occupational categories (Emilsson et al. 2014; Cerna 2009; Törngren & Holbrow 2017).

2.6 Labour Integration Policy in Sweden

Integration means the "process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights and obligations, gaining access to positions and social status, building personal relationships with members of the host society and forming a feeling of belonging to, and identification with, that society. For the host society, integration means opening institutions and granting equal opportunities to immigrants" (Bosswick & Heckman 2006:11). As immigration continues to take shape, integration also becomes an ongoing process, and for it to be seen successful, immigrants are expected to adopt and take part in all dimensions of integration (i.e. political, social, economic and cultural dimensions) in the new country.

The new global trend of migration has placed integration of immigrants to be an issue of discussion for countries throughout the world. Demographic challenges of Swedish population and the differential employment trends between immigrants and native population has caused integration issues to be considered top priority on the Swedish political agenda (Dahlstedt &

Bevelander 2010). Sweden being a non-homogeneous country, marginalized subcultures have evolved which has brought challenges to its integration strategies (Bosswick & Heckman 2006). On Several occasions, just like the migration policy, Swedish integration policies has kept on changing. Formally, immigrants in Sweden did not have the right to ownership and participation in the country's activities. However, these restrictions changed with time in 1974, with exception of jobs in police, Judiciary, armed forces and high-level government positions, foreign citizens were granted similar opportunities to access other public jobs as native Swedes (Lemaître 2007).

Besides the liberal immigration policy, Swedish integration policies is also known to be one of the most generous in Europe. Policy initiatives and measures are implemented through government agencies and ministries. Each ministry has a role to play regarding integration for example, ministries like ministry of employment and the Swedish public employment service is responsible on issues concerning integration in the labour market (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009). Ministry of Integration & Gender Equality coordinates integration work and it is concerned with issues regarding introduction of new arrivals to Sweden, Swedish citizenship, combatting discrimination and racism, provision of democracy and human rights, monitoring and evaluation of integration programs among others. Municipalities take bigger responsibilities too, regarding integration but also the government is represented by the county administration who coordinate all integration works of the central government, agencies, municipalities and county councils (Lemaître 2007; Ministry of Integration & Gender Equality 2009).

The overall strategy of integration is grounded on the two-year introduction program of new arrivals to Sweden. This is intended to prepare immigrants for, and facilitate their transit to, the labour market. As asylum seekers wait for their decisions on residence permit, the Swedish migration board organizes several programs through different municipalities for asylum seekers to participate (Lemaître 2007). These programs involve; language training (SFI) which serves as the most essential part of the introductory program. When immigrants get trained in the new country's language and obtain work experience, their chances to participate in the labour market improves (ibid.). Besides language training, other programs such as workplace introduction program for immigrants was adopted by Swedish labour market between the year 2003 and 2005. An introduction dialogue in form of civic orientation is given, vocational trainings and upgrading programs are organized by public institutions and universities for

immigrants to supplement on their foreign trainings and experiences (Lemaître 2007). The training lasts for some time thereafter, immigrants seeking for employment are matched with employers with consideration of their qualification (Lemaître & Liebig 2007, as cited in Faris Ahmed 2016). All these initiatives are aimed at helping immigrants gain experience and quicken their entry to the job market (Ministry of Integration & Gender Equality 2009).

As part of integration, Swedish government has a program that helps immigrants convert their foreign credentials into Swedish equivalent with an aim of preparing them for the job market (Faris Ahmed 2016). Anti-discrimination initiatives as a measure to prevent discrimination, are being put in place. On the 1st of January 2009, a new anti-discrimination Act was introduced in combination with other regulatory framework, the aim of this Act is to see that there is effectiveness and transparency in all areas of operation in the system (Ministry of Integration & Gender Equality 2009). Other initiatives such as provision of allowances to asylums but on means-tested, mentoring schemes are set up for easy networking and new arrivals are matched with mentors who have similar occupation and qualification.

Despite of the above initiative, Sweden having the most liberal integration policies, refugees and asylum seekers (including highly skilled labour immigrants) who come to Sweden still find it challenging to get established in the system. The OECD working paper on wealth and equal opportunities in Sweden, a research conducted by Bourrousse et al (2017) shows, that though Sweden is the most egalitarian among the OECD countries, there is a significant difference in employment and earnings between natives and foreign born. Immigrants are “less likely to be employed and if employed they earn less and in most cases get employed in low status jobs than natives with similar qualifications” (Bourrousse et al. 2017: 6).

Chapter Three

Literature Reviews

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents previous literature obtained from academic, government and organizational reports and publications. It starts by reviewing HSPIs and the labour market trends in Sweden, thereafter, challenges HSPIs encounter in the Swedish labour market is presented.

3.2 Highly Skilled Professional Immigrants and the Labour Market in Sweden

Demand for skilled labour has become a global concern, many industrialized countries compete for skilled workers to not only fill up labour shortages in the market but also gaps caused by demographic challenges of the most growing aging population. Sweden being one of the countries experiencing aging population, it has joined the global competition for skilled workers (Törngren & Holbrow 2017; Emilsson et al. 2014; Irastorza & Bevelander 2017). In Shklyar (2012:5), “highly skilled immigration has become a new power and a “weapon” to win in the “war” of the fast-technological innovation and economic competition”. Many countries get attracted to employ high-skilled immigrants with a view that this will cause economic innovation and development in the host country (ibid.). Competition for skilled labour has been a global challenge to most of the western countries (OECD 2001). To overcome this challenge, Europe came up with effective hiring and management strategies for highly skilled professionals (Kahanec & Zimmermann 2011).

Sweden is among the EU countries faced with shortage of highly skilled man power in positions that require advanced professional trainings. This gap has attracted public attention, lots of public debates have been ongoing on issues concerning international mobility of skilled professionals within Europe and Sweden in particular. The aim of this debate is to come up with better ideas of addressing professional labour shortages (OECD 2001). With advanced information and communication technology (ICT), Sweden is attractive to many highly skilled

professionals who seek employment in Swedish traditional industries such as Pharmaceuticals, automotive, house hold appliances among others.

Computer or information technology specialists, engineers and architectures are the most popular occupations in Sweden that attracts majority of skilled professional immigrants. Now it's estimated that over 20,000 work permits have been granted from the period of 2012 to date in these fields (Sweden and Migration 2015). Health care and nursing, veterinary medicine, agriculture and forestry, social care sectors are among the occupations that are underrepresented compared to other nonprofessional sectors such as cleaning, restaurants and assistants in agriculture specifically in berry picking. These are not only the most attracting sector but also the beginning points of employment to all groups of immigrants who come to Sweden either on student's visa or as refugee/ asylum seekers (Migrationsverket 2012, cited in Shklyan 2012; Faris Ahmed 2016). About 80 percent of the highly educated immigrants residing in Sweden come from countries within the European Union, Nordic countries, Middle East, Asia and Africa (Irastorza & Bevelander 2017; Sweden and Migration 2015).

Reports show that immigrants have richer educational background compared to natives Swedes and about 50 percent of the total immigrants who came to Sweden in the past years possess higher academic qualification. This qualifies immigrants to be considered highly skilled (Faris Ahmed 2016). Sweden is listed as second to Denmark among the OECD countries with foreign born individuals that possess higher education and are employed in jobs for which they are overqualified (OECD 2014). There have been slight changes in employment trends in Sweden compared to previous years. About 40,000 individuals of working age have been considered in the Swedish labour market. As a result, the number of unemployed persons dropped by 0.8 percent but with an increase of 6.7 percent in 2015 following the increased flow of refugees by that time (Arbetsförmedlingen 2015; SCB 2015a, cited in Faris Ahmed 2016). Basing on these trends, reports reveal that immigrants (including highly educated professionals) from non-EU countries are less represented in the labour market. It is estimated that from the period of 2008 to 2015 the registered cases of unemployment on non-EU immigrants increased from 40,000 to 130,000 persons (ibid). Among the OECD countries, it is challenging for immigrants to find employment in Sweden compared to their counterparts the native-born. Lemaître (2007) states that even though Germany and Sweden are the top countries with the highest number of unemployed foreign-born, Sweden ranks first with higher rates of unemployed immigrants.

The employment disparities between immigrants and the natives, put Sweden to be among the worst performing countries in the OECD in terms of professional labour integration (ibid.).

3.3 Challenges HSPIs encounter in the Swedish Labour Market

When considering reviews from previous studies and reports, literature reveals that there are lots of challenges and barriers that immigrants experience in the labour markets. Challenges such as unemployment, lack of sufficient skills in the host country's language, lack of social and professional networks, devaluation of foreign academic credentials, Qualification miss match, discrimination, inadequate employment information and the general knowledge of labour market functioning, challenges associated with regulations regarding residence permit and lack of recognition of foreign working experience among others, are the most pressing hindering factors to professional labour market participation (Faris Ahmed 2016; Al-Atassi & Alebiary 2017; Guo & Andersson 2005). In Benton, Sumption, Alsvik, Fratzke, Kuptsch, & Papademetriou (2014) it's confirmed that newly arrived immigrants find it challenging to have a foothold in the EU labour markets. Both non-EU and mobile EU citizens experience hardships associated with insufficient language skills, lack of proper information on jobs in the host country, discrimination, Restrict policies and difficulties in recognition of their foreign qualifications and work experiences. With such barriers, it becomes so hard for immigrants to meet employer's expectations. This leaves them to opt for low-skilled jobs, which in the end becomes "brain waste" (Benton et al. 2014:1). These factors if not properly addressed, may have effect on policy intentions and outcomes (Törngren & Holbrow 2017).

3.3.1 Experiences of Language barriers in professional life

According to European Migration Report (EMR) (2013) one of the challenging obstacles to labour market integration of HSPIs is language difficulties. Reviewing studies from the Swedish context, insufficient skills in Swedish language is a constrain to job recruitment of immigrants (Delander, Hammarstedt, Månsson & Nyberg 2005). Lorentsson (2015:7) "argues that lack of language skills and little knowledge of international structures in the host country are possible explanations to employment differences." Swedish being the working language, it becomes difficult for new immigrants who have not yet invested their time to study the language be able to compete in the labour market. Most jobs require one to have at least knowledge of Swedish language to quicken interaction between parties. Language facilitates

employer-employee relations as well as interactions with clients. OECD (2011) cited in EMR (2013:28), it is noted that:

Swedish is little spoken outside of its national boundaries, and thus Sweden cannot count on a natural basin of workers who can be recruited immediately into a job which requires interaction in Swedish. Anyone coming from outside these countries must generally go through a learning process. While English could be used as a transition language in some workplaces, as is already the rule in multinational corporations, language remains a serious barrier for most potential labour migrants to Sweden.

Proficiency in the country's language is an essential factor for integration. Immigrants can build social and professional networks with the surrounding community when they can communicate the language preferably known to natives. Good networks enable immigrants learn of new job opportunities in the labour market and in the end, they can further strengthen their capacity to improve on the new language skills (Faris Ahmed 2016; Al-Atassi & Alebiary 2017; Rogova 2014; Emilsson et al. 2014).

Language difficult is not an effect to only immigrants but it is a factor that equally affects employer's capability to recruit potential immigrants from abroad. A study conducted by Törngren and Holbrow (2017) on comparing the experiences of highly skilled labour migrants in Sweden and Japan, the findings reveal that Language barriers are factors that can affect employers in the host country to have the ability to attract and retain skilled immigrants. In fact, companies both in Sweden and Japan get challenged to equally integrate immigrants into their workplaces because of language barrier. Comparing the situation in Sweden and Japan, insufficient knowledge of the host country's language is detrimental to immigrant's career development. For the case of Sweden, Törngren and Holbrow (2017:76) goes ahead to state that "Not knowing Swedish is a disadvantage when applying for work in Sweden". Moreover, these authors highlight that even though the country may not be having other challenging factors such as discrimination, immigrants still finds it challenging to advance in life.

Atassi and Alebiary (2017) highlights that, integration strategies focusing on introduction programs such as language courses has not been effective to yield good outcomes for new arrivals as anticipated. Majority of immigrants who have tried to invest in learning the language, find it challenging to put this language into practice. Interactions between immigrants and native Swedes is still on low capacity and this leaves integration programs focusing on language alone loose meaning (Rogova 2014; Atassi & Alebiary 2017). Studies

suggest that for immigrants to excel and function well in the labour market, it would be significant to link language skill with previous work experience (Krumm and Plutzar 2008, cited in Atassi & Alebiary 2017).

3.3.2 Foreign Credentials and prior Work experience (Deskilling and Discounting)

One of the central issues that build and facilitates integration is when there is an opportunity for transferability of skills and qualifications acquired from abroad in the host country. Guo and Andersson (2005: 2) points out that this issue has been given less attention in many countries that attract skilled professionals. With many studies undertaken, findings reveal that highly educated professional immigrants experience challenges with deskilling or discounting of their prior knowledge and work experience when they reach in the new country. Devaluing of HSPIs educational qualification and work experience, is seen as the most outstanding obstacle that restrains skilled immigrants from finding jobs that matches with their academic background (Lorentsson 2015; Lemaître 2007). A comparative study on non-recognition of foreign credentials for professional immigrants in Canada and Sweden, results show that professional immigrants in these two countries “have experienced devaluation and non-recognition of their prior work experience after arriving in their new country” (Guo & Andersson 2005:18). This has strongly affected the lives of immigrants. Faris Ahmed (2016) in his paper on challenges faced by highly educated immigrants in Swedish labour market, findings reveal that lack of practice has led to loss of professional knowledge amongst skilled immigrants. In fact, these groups of professionals end up giving up on their former career and settle out for something else in the labour market (Lorentsson 2015). Immigrants feel demoralized and disempowered thus subjecting them to be less successful with life in the new society.

Bursell (2012) argues that, when individuals attain strong positions in the labour market, the lesser are the chances of them being vulnerable. Some skilled professionals try so hard to complement or transform their foreign qualifications by engaging into new skills when they reach their destination. The purpose for this, is to see that they add value on their career to meet the labour standards in the market which later, will result into them achieving better positions. However, this seems not to be successful for some professionals. They have failed to add on the new country’s skills because of financial limitations and the long processes involved (Bursell 2012). It has been noted that when immigrants come, they bring new ideas, new

knowledge and experience which may be of benefit to the new country's progress. However, this claim has not been appreciated and given attention by many countries that open doors for immigrants. There has been a misconception that professional immigrants from Third World countries are incompetent, inferior and so their knowledge is invalid to be put in practice (Guo & Andersson 2005). Even though Sweden through the open and tolerant system, has been acknowledged of its commitment to diversity and promotion of social justice, it has been criticized for failing to embrace what is called "valid" and "valuable" expressions of human experience. The recognition of foreign credentials and work experience of immigrants is given less attention (Guo & Andersson 2005:2). Highly skilled professionals in Sweden, experience devaluation of their academic documents and skills. The devaluation is taken to be a waste of human capital. If the knowledge and new skills professionals carry with them to a new country is underutilized, their chances to prove their capabilities are limited hence human capital is wasted (ibid.).

The nonrecognition effect varies depending on the origin of an immigrant. Guo and Andersson (2005) further highlights that even though an immigrant acquires Swedish citizenship and undertakes Swedish education but when this person is not born in Sweden, they can still find it challenging to acquire professional jobs. For any foreign qualification to be recognized, it must be assessed first to see if the qualification equates with Swedish standard. National agency for higher education is responsible for verification and this process takes a period of two years with intensions of providing a baseline for employers. Not all professions are open for recognition in Swedish system, regulated professions like physicians and other professions within the health sector, accountants and lawyers will first need authorization and certification by responsible authorities before practice is allowed.

Document verification is not a simple procedure as it is associated with technicalities and delays which may be challenging to professional immigrants. The "processes require foreign-trained professionals for example in medicine to take a certification examination in combination with language testing and/ or to undertake a period of internship or practicum in licensing country" (Guo & Andersson 2005:9). Moreover, certification of documents does not guarantee securing of immediate job positions for immigrants. Instead they will first have to struggle and look for employers who are willing to offer them employment hence a challenge in the job market. Highly skilled professionals are unable to compete for well-paying professional jobs due to retained strict control over foreign credentials and this results them

ending up taking over low status paying jobs compared to their education. They end up taking jobs in housekeeping, cleaning, tax and bus driving, newspaper distribution, working in restaurant to mention (Guo & Andersson 2005; Faris Ahmed 2016; Lemaître 2007). This practice has been referred to as an act of “brain waste” or “brain drain” as it has been explained in studies conducted by (Brandi 2001; Fosslund 2013).

3.3.3 Lack of Social and Professional network

The role of social network should not be underestimated because human beings usually belong to one group or the other. Having social network boosts the value of an individual thereby helping him or her in getting a job through one of his/her social contacts. (Faris Ahmed 2016:61)

One of the best channels to employment is through social networks. According to studies, social network plays a significant role for individual persons to get employment within Swedish labour market. Petersen, Saporta and Seidel (2000) concluded in their study that out of 60.4 percent of people who apply for jobs, about 80 percent of them manage to get job offers through personal and professional networks. These networks are significantly good because job seekers can be matched with different firms and employers who may need potential workers. Relevant information regarding job opportunities can easily be availed and potential employers who are ready to hire are got through different channels of networks (Hensvik & Nordström 2013). A mere frequency to contacts with others, important information is got and in a long run professional networks and affiliations can be built. In Sweden employers make use of public employment service (PES) which is a formal network to post job vacancies. This seems to make job search easy for employees. However, on the other hand, OECD (2014) report shows that the use of public employment service has not been significant. It does not enable immigrants have these jobs, instead most of the vacancies are filled through informal networks of friends and relatives. Immigrants who do not have enough frame work of friends will always find it challenging to access proper jobs in Sweden. Social and professional networks is important for HSPIs in the way that it acts as informal channels effective to attract employment chances in the labour market. A study shows that 70 percent of people who fall within the range of 19-25 years have got their jobs through informal contacts (Nilsson 2011, cited in Faris Ahmed 2016; Lemaître 2007). Moreover, according to Hensvik and Nordström (2013) reviews from previous studies shows that 60 to 70 percent of employers consider use of informal channels to find their workers. In addition, it is also important to note that, not all social

networks can add value on one's employment chances. Al-Atassi and Alebiary (2017) highlights that some networks cannot be effective in influencing an immigrant to get a professional job because according to Bentolila et al. 2009, cited in Hensvik & Nordström (2013:28) having "a heavy reliance on contacts from the social domain may distort occupational choices into fields where the youths have access to better social networks and away from the fields of their productive advantage". In practice this implies that it may be challenging for HSPIs to find employment within the field of their study if their social contacts contain people who are nonprofessionals. For increased chances to get better jobs, immigrants need to check out the quality of networks and contacts they have in stock. Having contacts of people trained within similar occupation is equally important for one to acquire a job in the market (Coleman 1988).

3.3.4 Prejudice and Discrimination in the Labour Market

Discrimination is one of the key issues limiting immigrants from getting employed within their area of academic qualifications. Factors such as race, ethnicity and one's country of origin determines employment chances in the nations' labour market. Previous studies indicate that discriminatory practices are present in most industrialized societies more so those that have been successful in attracting and retaining skilled immigrants. In Sweden, because of immigrant's different national and cultural background, studies show that immigrants with foreign academic credentials have been excluded from participating in the labour market (Törngren & Holbrow 2017; Lemaître 2007; Faris Ahmed 2016). According to Törngren and Holbrow (2017) in their comparative study on experiences of highly skilled migrants in Sweden and Japan, their findings show that immigrants in both countries share the feelings of prejudice and discrimination, which has been a barrier to professional integration. Prejudice is reported to be commonly experienced in public places including workplaces and this has contributed to their low quality of life in the host societies. Moreover, this agrees with what Rogova (2014:3) who stated that "ongoing discrimination, especially in the labor market, restricts immigrants from fully participating in everyday life. Without positive interaction and active participation, language learning and integration in general cannot be successful".

Another study conducted by Rydgren (2004) on mechanisms of exclusion in the Swedish labour market, the findings demonstrate that extensive ethnic discrimination do exist in the Swedish labour market and the most disadvantaged group to feel this kind of treatment are non-

EU immigrants from Africa and Middle East. A study conducted by Carlsson and Rooth (2007) on ethnic discrimination in Swedish labour market, shows the differential treatment in the recruitment process and this happens due to ethnic differences. Furthermore, Carlsson and Rooth's study shows that recruitment agencies always have more interest on applications coming from Swedish sounding names. Swedish applicants received 50 percent of more callbacks for an interview than their counterparts with immigrant origin. These authors further go on and explain that applicants who are Swedish named were three times called for every ten job applications they made, and this was different with the Middle East applicants. For they needed to go an extra mile and apply for at least ten to fifteen jobs to be called back for another stage of recruitment, yet they may be possessing equivalent qualifications with the natives. This study result also shows that differential treatments varied in gender, always male foreign citizens found it challenging to be called by female employers and the same applied to foreign female job seekers (ibid.).

3.3.5 Other Challenges and Barriers affecting the Labour Market outcomes of HSPIs

Besides the above discussed factors considered as the biggest challenges on the employment possibilities of HSPIs, other reports indicate that this group of immigrants do experience hardships with the national policies. The length of time one takes trying to process for a work permit with the Swedish migration office has negative consequential implications on immigrant's employment. Normally immigrants who come as students or as asylum seekers find it challenging to convince employers that their case on permit is being handled by migration board. In fact, some employers wouldn't want to risk considering hiring someone without a valid work license (EMN 2013; European employment policy observatory [EEPO] synthesis report 2016). Besides, the time it takes to validify and have complementary courses is not appropriate enough to allow immigrants participate in the job market.

Other hindrances to the labour market integration are associated to lack of knowledge on the new country's social-cultural norms. Immigrants who come from different social-cultural and religious settings always find it hard to adapt by the new country's practices. This can be a hindrance because when immigrants are not aware of how the society's labour market functions then it becomes a barrier to their recruitment (EEPO 2016). Immigrants also experience personal vulnerabilities associated to physiological and physical traumas. Their mental or physical capability has been affected due to traumas hence a hindrance to job searching process.

When immigrants try out several times to apply for jobs and they don't receive any call backs, this affects their emotions. Other needs such as housing has also been noted to be among the causal factors to stress and trauma. This has effects on their capability to labour market participation (ibid.).

3.4 Strategies Professional Immigrants use to improve their access to the Labour Market

A strategy can be a plan of action used by an individual to accomplish a specific goal (American Heritage Dictionary of the English language 2011). Studies indicate that for professional immigrants to manage their circumstances in the labour market, they need to demonstrate use of diverse strategies to enable them to get re-established as professionals in the new country (Van Ngo and Este 2006: 41). According to Olli Segendorf (2005) usually when immigrants deploy use of both formal and informal strategies to search for jobs, they get good outcomes in the job market. Olli Segendorf (2005) in his research analysis on job search strategies by immigrants in Sweden, this indicates that immigrants born out of EU countries use different search strategies while looking for jobs. The findings revealed that immigrants used both formal, informal and direct search strategies to get jobs. Still on this study, strategies such as making good use of employment agencies, use of social media and personal initiatives of making phone calls was mentioned as the most effective formal strategies immigrants used to improve their chances in the labour market. Informal methods involved use of friends and relatives to acquire jobs. Whereas, direct strategies involved immigrants contacting employers directly by walking in, to hand deliver their applications and contact companies/firms directly on the available jobs (Olli Segendorf 2005). The study also emphasized on the importance of job search hours, the number of applications immigrants submit and the impact of using different strategies in the job search. Immigrants who spent many hours applying for different jobs through use of different search methods received positive outcomes in the job market than the ones who did not (ibid.).

When looking at the professional immigrants from other countries, Van Ngo and Este (2006) in their study entitled "Professional Re-entry for Foreign-Trained Immigrants" in Canada, results reveal that immigrant professionals were able to overcome their individual professional and structural hindrances to the job market by strategic use of effective "social networks, suggested use of another kind of human capital that goes beyond educational investment and

work experience” to brighten their future in the Canadian labour market Van Ngo and Este (2006:45). The findings of this study demonstrated that for professional immigrants to improve on their social connections, they deployed a strategy of seeking for networking opportunities with native born and other professional personnel other than staying in a network of immediate friends and relatives. These immigrants further worked hard in seeing that their relationship with the already existing networks is kept intact, but also trying to re-establish new relationships that seemed important for labour market establishment (ibid.).

Obtaining additional education within the new country’s system as an adaptive strategy is important. The study further indicated that professional immigrants in Canada initiated a strategy of upgrading on professional courses/ trainings within the established educational system of Canada. This was done with a purpose of getting rid of lack of trust in foreign education among the employing agencies. To be able to equate their academic undertakings to meet the Canadian standard, they used available chances to enroll for the country’s language training, they mainly enrolled for new courses and skills training in computer (ibid.). In dealing with the structural barriers of academic qualifications and work experience devaluation, besides upgrading, professional immigrants got involved in internships and volunteering opportunities with established companies. They assumed that them getting engaged in doing voluntary work would facilitate their entry point to the jobs that equate with their professions. Besides, professional immigrants also demonstrated adaptive strategies to manage social-cultural differences. Through their social networks, they equipped themselves with job search skills such as skills in resume writing, interview preparation skills and general mannerisms of the new society (Van Ngo and Este, 2006).

Chapter Four

Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction

A theory is defined as “a set of concepts, definitions and propositions that explain or predicts events or situations by specifying relations among variables” (Glanz & Rimer 2005:4). Bryman (2010) explains that the relationship between theories and research is that theories guide research because they give fundamental reasons as to why an investigation takes place. In other words, it can be difficult to conduct social research without engaging use of theories. An investigator cannot depend on an imaginary thought to come up with conclusions without use of theories as a guide to research objectives (Faris Ahmed 2016).

Considering the reviewed literatures in line with the study, this chapter presents three theories that the researcher believed was appropriate for discussing and explaining issues effecting professional integration of HSPIs in the labour markets of Sweden. The theories identified in this research therefore include Human capital theory, employment discrimination theory considering the use of disparate treatment theory and the theory of social capital. These theories are believed to be suitable for the study because they help us understand and interpret why things happen. In this case, the theories explain why there are discrepancies amongst professional immigrants and the native population in the labour markets of Sweden.

4.2 Human Capital theory

Human capital refers “to one’s ability to express himself using the knowledge, skills and qualifications, acquired through an academic training and experience (Becker 1993, cited in Felício, Couto, & Caiado 2009:7). This theory was developed in the 1960s by two economists i.e. Theodore Shultz and Gary Becker under the themes of “investment in human beings” and human capital” (Blaug 1976:827). According to Blaug, the theory explains that people will always make sacrificial attempts to engage in what they believe can cause profitable impact in future despite of the risks involved. Individuals prefer spending income in healthcare, have additional academic trainings, spend time looking for quality paying jobs, risk to invest in information regarding job offers, migrate to get better employment chances though with law

initial payments but with hopes of improved payments in future. This process is referred to as the process of “investment rather than consumption” (Blaug 1976:829). When an individual invests in good quality education, there will be good returns always in the labour market (Popovic 2012). Human capital is beneficial in a way that it influences one’s chances in the job arena, it creates an opportunity for one to identify, create and strengthen social and informal relations/contacts which can be used to have access to the labour market Mossaad (2014).

According to Mossaad (2014:20), “individual characteristics particularly the language, level of education, working skills and knowledge about economic, social, cultural and political situation in the receiving country” is what constitutes up an individual human capital. When immigrants have such capital, their chances to participate in employment is high and thus their earnings also improve. In fact, this is viewed as individual’s capital good that serves as input for social and economic transformation in society. The skills acquired through education can be transferable in one’s life time. When individuals particularly immigrants invest in their education, they can be in position to meet the demands in the labour market (Olaniyan & Okemakinde 2008; Lorentsson 2015; Popovic 2012). If immigrants have better levels of education and skills, they will be at lower risks. They become more confident, motivated and capable to compete for well-paying jobs in the labour market (Felício, Couto & Caiado 2009).

Popovic (2012) suggests that, natives and immigrants are worth of equal consideration for job opportunities available for as long as they possess similar academic qualifications and skills. Education, experience and knowledge is taken to be the most famous human capital for better employment opportunities in the job market (Felício, Couto & Caiado 2009). Mossaad (2014) suggests that if there are possibilities and chances given to skilled professional immigrants to transfer their potential skills obtained from a broad into the systems of the new country, their chances to be active in the job market will remain intact. Professional challenges of unemployment and low status job employment will be solved (ibid.). However, this argument is diminished because literature on migration research, indicate that immigrants are still faced with difficulties of not allowing them to unlock their capabilities in the labour market (ibid.). The market value for immigrant’s qualification is low compared to the native-born. These variations that exist between immigrant’s qualification and the native born is what some researchers described as “a human capital devaluation” (Salmonsson & Mella 2013; Reitz 2007).

According to Salmonsson & Mella (2013) in their study on cultural demands and a devaluation of human capital on skilled physicians in Sweden, Human capital theory suggests that both individuals and societies should have trust and respect for one's education as part of human capital. However, their findings reveal that human capital devaluation remains a challenge to some professions in Sweden. Non-EU professionals within the medical field find it hard to practice in Sweden because of lack of authorization to possess medical licenses. Physicians with foreign backgrounds have not been trusted, their cultural competence and academic levels have not achieved recognition compared to native doctors. This has led to marginalization of non-EU skilled professionals in Sweden and moreover with fear that this kind of inequalities which exist amongst professionals may lead to creation of "second class doctors within the Swedish system". This implies that this division might create differences in accessibility of medical treatment within the healthcare system. Non-Swedish doctors will be flexible to care for non-Swedish patients and Swedish doctors will find it easier to care for Swedish patients (Salmonsson & Mella 2013:8).

Another study reports that when individuals have less human capital, the chances to be considered for well positioned jobs within their skills and profession will always remain limited (Rooth & Ekberg 2006). In Rydgren (2004), it is confirmed that the differential situations in the labour market is caused by differences in human capital factors such as education, skills and experiences. A Canadian research on immigrant employment success shows that immigrants' economic success in the new country is shaped by interrelated factors such as education and institutional forces of the welfare state (Reitz 2007). The education and skills that most migrants carry with them from their home countries is what constitute their human capital but then there is no value attached to this. What explains this is that foreign education is considered of lower quality compared to the education standards of the new country and this possess a challenge on foreign qualification and skills transferability (ibid.).

For the case of Sweden, it seems that there are factors that go beyond an immigrant's academic level to determine their foothold in the job market. It's revealed that HSPIs come to Sweden well educated but then they need to re-invest more on country's human capital so that they may in one way or the other limit on the challenges of finding jobs. Failure to do this, they will be subjected to low payment jobs that do not suit their academic standards (Rydgren 2004; Faris Ahmed 2016). Faris Ahmed (2016) explains that complementing foreign degree with Swedish education and having knowledge on the social-cultural norms of Sweden is equally important.

For it increases one's chances to succeed in the labour market. Swedish employers will feel confident to employ someone whom they believe has the knowledge on the working culture of Sweden (Faris Ahmed 2016).

By use of human capital theory, the researcher gives an explanation on the employment outcomes of non-EU HSPIs in the Swedish labour markets. Regarding this, the researcher focuses on by looking at the difficulties that professional immigrants face with making their foreign human capital acceptable and recognized in Sweden.

4.2 Disparate treatment theory

Immigrants experience several welfare challenges when they reach a new destination, these challenges are associated to problems of housing, health, language difference, differences with cultural practices and unemployment among others. These are perceived as prominent grounds to yield social exclusion and discrimination among immigrants (Bask 2005). Studies reveal that discrimination is one of the hindering factors for immigrants to enter job markets (Giertz 2004; Rydgren 2004; Lemaître 2007). According to Vandenhole (2005:33), discrimination refers to “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on a number of grounds which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic social and cultural or any other fields of public life.” Discrimination can be carried out on intentional or nonintentional grounds with a purpose of impairing rights and freedoms of persons (ibid). This accounts for the reasons to why employment outcomes are different between Swedish-born population and immigrants (Lemaître 2007). Lemaître's report explains that immigrants have thrived in acquiring the new “country's-specific human capital, learnt their language and customs, built networks with hopes of exceling in the labour market. However, this has not caused any impact. The differences and shortfalls in the job market could be counted on factors of discrimination. Employers make their recruitment choices based on preferences on one's nationality background (Lemaître 2007). This has been viewed as statistical discrimination by other scholars.

This study considers disparate treatment theory as an employment discrimination theory that explain why employers treat people differently because of their race, colour, ethnicity and gender within the job market. When it comes to job hiring, change of job positions and salary

increments still some people are treated differently than others due to racial differences (Gold 1985). Faris Ahmed (2016) illustrates this as an act of unjust treatment based on certain distinctions where one's ethnicity plays a major role to fuel prejudice. This theory was developed because of evident racial discrimination blacks experienced while in white owned companies in the USA. It is found under the Case Law Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of the 1964 majorly to oppose employment discrimination by employers. This Act does not only protect the blacks but covers other racial groups who may be experiencing discrimination due to their ethnic background (Gold 1985). In Green (2003:91), it's asserted that, "ever since Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was enacted to combat discrimination in employment, we have seen a shift in the ways in which discrimination operates in the workplaces. It often takes form in a fluid process of social interaction, perception, evaluation and disbursement of opportunity." Today in most organizations, groups and companies, discrimination bias is highly influenced by individual's motives, structures, practices and dynamics within workplaces. Employers are reported to be directly responsible for institutional practices that stand aground for workplace discriminatory biases (ibid.).

According to Green, there are two ways of disparate treatment and this gives a better explanation on how discrimination bias takes shape in modern workplaces i.e. individual disparate treatment and systematic disparate treatment (Green 2003). Under individual disparate treatment, discriminatory biasness is influenced by decisions under taken by an individual who holds a top position in the organization. Decisions made are intentionally influenced by what one sees with the help of mixed motives at that moment of time. Whereas in the context of systematic disparate treatment, the contributing factors of discrimination tend to shift from individual decision makers to the organization as an entity. Green explains that traditional organization and firms tend to have discriminative bias grounded within their stringent institutional rules and policies. This encourages exclusion and serve as a hindrance for job opportunities by minority groups including professional immigrants (ibid.).

One can use disparate treatment theory to understand and explain employment discrimination in the job market. In this study, this theory facilitates an explanation of whether immigrants are denied or excluded from job markets due to differences in race, colour, ethnicity, gender and cultural background.

4.3 Theory of social capital

According to Coleman (1988:96), “persons actions are shaped, redirected, constrained by the social context, norms, interpersonal trust, social networks, and social organization”. These are important avenues to promote social-economic development for a well-functioning society.

Social capital refers to set of different structural entities that function together towards achieving a certain goal. These entities have “two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals found within the structure” (Coleman 1988:98). Social capital are available resources, individuals and groups get after registering membership in a social network (Carrillo Álvarez & Riera Romani 2017).

This concept of social capital was initiated in 1977 by an economist known as Glenn Loury who was passionate about individual development. He believed that families and communities are internal and external frameworks (resources) through which individuals can obtain social development (Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinosa & Spittel 2001:1263). This concept is concerned with ‘relations among persons’ and according to Coleman (1988) the theory of social capital can be understood when discussed under paradigms of relations. Structures such as families, communities, business trade unions, voluntary organizations, legal/ political systems, educational and health bodies, networks and relationships is what builds up individual social capital. Individuals can develop and maintain their human capital when working together as a group than in isolation (Porritt 2007). Meaning that social capital and human capital are interconnected and therefore Coleman points out that social capital leads to the creation of human capital (ibid). It’s through the connections established by individuals that make it easy for them to acquire resources and discover opportunities for development (Felício, Couto & Caiado 2009). This can be achieved only when individuals operate in extensive trust and trustworthiness for each other, shaped by norms, obligations and positive expectations that results into an efficient well-functioning entity (ibid.).

Social capital theory besides its role in the initiation and accumulation of other forms of capital, it’s of great impact in the explanation of diverse issues in migration studies. In this study, the theory of social capital explains the impact of social networks, personal relations and relations with natives towards the success of professional integration of immigrants. Studies indicate that immigrants who have good social relations and network of friends and natives have better

chances for labour market establishment. Through these social networks they can obtain knowledge, get enough information and support which enhances their likelihood to participate in the job market (Lorentsson 2015; Felício, Couto & Caiado 2009).

Individuals get access to quality and diverse resources through being member of a certain interpersonal network and social institution (Palloni et al. 2001). These authors add on and highlight that, for an individual to be able to mobilize resources, depends on the influence or power people within the network have , the size or structure of networks and the nature of relationships within networks determines how much potential resources one would have access to in the society .When immigrants build up their relationships with good and well known entities such as companies, associations, clubs, professional bodies and religious institutions for example churches in the new country, then they are most likely to get information concerning job opportunities and other potential grounds for investment (Palloni et al. 2001; Felício, Couto & Caiado 2009; Coleman 1988). Therefore, the study applies use of social capital theory with an interest of finding out how significant can social connections bring labour market establishment in Sweden.

Chapter Five

Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Research is a scientific investigation that intends to obtain new facts or knowledge on the unknown with intentions of adding value on the already existing knowledge (Kothari 2004). For any research to be conducted successful, certain methodological approaches must be adopted (Vanderstoep, Johnson & Vanderstoep 2008). This chapter presents descriptions of methodological frame works. The framework covers research design, research setting, sampling procedures and techniques, methods of data collection and analysis, determinants of data quality and ethical considerations.

5.2 Research Methodology and Design

This research is a cross sectional study which adopted a qualitative approach in designing, sampling, collecting and analyzing of data (Kothari 2004). According to Newman, Benz, and Ridenour (1998:16), qualitative research is an interpretive naturalistic approach. It enables “qualitative researchers to study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. This kind of research approach involves use of empirical materials such as case studies, individual experiences, life stories, interviews, observational, historical and virtual texts among others (ibid.).

Tkaczyk and Krzyżanowska (2013) highlights that, qualitative research uses non-numerical data and investigations are based on how people understand and interpret their social world. This qualitative study was undertaken on a topic regarding challenges for professional integration mainly focusing on experiences of non-EU skilled professional immigrants in Gothenburg. The topic was worth investigation by use of qualitative methods because it deepened the researcher’s understanding on why HSPIs are still experiencing outstanding challenges in the Swedish labour markets. Skilled professional immigrants from non-EU countries where able to share their experiences on difficulties associated to finding jobs within their areas of academic specialization. Research helps analyze several factors which force

people to behave in a different manner depending on the situation they are undergoing. The researcher found it appropriate to use a qualitative approach because participants were able to give detailed information on their experiences. Qualitative research looks at what Newman et al (1998:166) termed as “social construction of reality”. As a result, richer in-depth narrative results were obtained from participant’s point of view.

5.3 Research Setting

The research was conducted in Gothenburg Municipality located in Western part of Sweden. Gothenburg is a city strategically located between Oslo and Copenhagen. This is the second largest city of Sweden, with a population of a round 533,000 people (City of Gothenburg n.d.). In Gothenburg, 23 percent of the people are foreign born and with the largest group originating from countries such as, Iraq and Iran, followed by Finland, Bosnia and Hercegovina, the former Yugoslavia, Poland, Somalia, Turkey, China and Norway among others. With such characteristics of strong international ties, this was worth for a researcher to consider it for study.

5.4 Research participants

The participants considered in this research are skilled professional immigrants from non-EU countries. Skilled professionals from three continents such as Africa, Asia and Middle East made up the entire population of the study. The researcher’s target focused mainly on skilled professional immigrants who moved to Sweden with an academic qualification in fields like engineering, medicine, information technology (IT), accountancy, social work to mention a few. The study had a total population of 8 participants and out of this, 4 participants represented Africa, 2 represented Asia and 2 represented the Middle East. The participation was gender friendly because both men (5) and women (3) had an opportunity to be part of the study. To be legible for participation, the researcher set standards to base on in order to find participants who qualify for study. The researcher considered professional immigrants only if they: 1) Have a degree as a minimum academic qualification, 2) have come from Africa, Asia and Middle East, 3) Have stayed in Sweden for a minimum of two years and above, 4) Aged between 20 years plus. Skilled immigrants experiencing professional employment challenges and those who managed to find their position in the labour market but through struggle were considered. Using this selection criteria, the researcher can now understand challenges skilled professional immigrants experience while seeking for professional employment in Sweden. Their strategies

and recommendations to improve access to the labour market was drawn in the study. The distribution of participants is presented in the table below and for confidentiality purpose, Participants names are represented anonymously by use of pseudonyms names.

Table 1: Participant’s profiles

Intervi ewee	Gender	Country of origin	Previous qualification	Previous Work experience	Qualification in Sweden	Time spent in Sweden	Current job	Permit Status
G1	M	Uganda	BSc, veterinary medicine	Two years of work experience as livestock specialist	MSc, Public health and epidemiology	4 years	Newspaper distributor	Work permit
M2	M	India	BSc, Electrical engineering	Four years in technical industry	MSc, computer systems	5 years	software developed	Work permit
R3	M	Uganda	BA, social work & social admin	One year as assistant researcher	Master’s in social work & human rights	Two and half years	Newspaper distributor	Work permit
J4	M	Syria	BA, political science and social Administrati on	Worked for a government agency	Two master's, one in Environmental politics and second in European politics	29 years	Substitute teacher at ground school	Citizen
C5	F	Lebanon	BA, economics	Four years as an Accountant	N/A	6 years	Works as a driver	Work permit
P6	F	Botswana	BA, social work & social admin	Two of voluntary work	Master’s in social work & human rights	Two and half years	Job searching	Student permit
B7	M	Zimbabw e	BSc, Electrical engineering	Worked for an electricity	MSc, electrical power engineering	Two and half years	Works in the field of electronics	Work permit

				transmission distribution company & as a tutor			as an engineer	
S8	F	Pakistan	BSc, business accounting	Worked as a banker for one year	N/A	13 years	Newspaper distributor	Permanent Residence

5.5 Sampling procedures

The process of finding representative samples from the group to become the estimate and source of prediction on the outcome of the population is referred as sampling (Kothari 2004). This study utilized a non- probability sampling approach and the selection criteria was carried out depending on the availability of participants. The researcher chose people who met the criteria and were willing to share their experiences on voluntary basis and this was done basing on two non-probability sampling techniques of purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

5.5.1 Purposive Sampling

According to Coyne (2007) purposive sampling is a technique that entails a selection of key informants in the field who then be used to identify ‘information rich cases’ suitable for study. The researcher selects cases by considering key informants who possess general knowledge and experiences of the topic of study. As the research goes on, more participants with similar knowledge are deliberately sought with intentions of getting deeper insight on the phenomena (ibid.). On this note therefore, this study only targeted to interview individual skilled professional immigrants who came to Sweden with an academic qualification. The researcher chose purposive sampling method because of its significance in identification and selection of informants with well-informed ideas on the cases under investigation (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood 2015). Skilled professional immigrants from three continents of Africa, Asia and Middle East were purposively selected because according to previous studies, they seem to be the most vulnerable group of immigrants experiencing similar professional challenges within the Swedish labour market.

5.5.2 Snowball Sampling or Chain Sampling

This was another sampling technique adopted in this study. Snowball sampling is a technique which involves seeking information from key informants about details of other information rich cases. The chain of participants with special characteristics relevant to the study keeps on growing because the first set of identified individuals help in referring the researcher to other individuals with similar characteristics valuable to the study (Patton 2002, cited in Sur 2011). With snowball sampling, the identification of the sample starts with a few people thereafter, the chain grows as more people get mentioned over and over. Goodman (2011) highlights that in this case the sampling plan develops into a chain of sociometric relations within a given population.

According to Biernacki and Waldorf (1981), snowball sampling is highly recommended in qualitative research and it's important mainly to studies that focus on sensitive issues. These issues may concern private matters which may require knowledge of insiders. Snowballing was used in this study in way that the researcher begun by identifying two skilled professional immigrants who met the criteria and accepted to participate. These professionals were identified through a church meeting being attended by the researcher. Thereafter, the researcher asked them if they were willing to participate in the study. They further recommended and gave contacts of other participants whom they knew that met the criteria and the chain kept on growing to the maximum size needed for study.

5.6 Choice of methods of Data collection

Since qualitative study entails analysis of both verbal and non-verbal languages obtained from observations and interviews, several research tools can be of significant value when employed in collecting information (Newman et al.1998). To find out in-depth information regarding professional challenges in the labour market, this study employed use of two data sources i.e. primary and secondary data. The primary data information was obtained directly from participants through face- to- face interviews and secondary data involved use of extensive academic materials got from books, reports, journals, and statistical information (Kothari 2004). The researcher used the university database, Swedish government website as well as open materials from google sites was used respectively in this paper. The key purpose of using secondary data is to basically enable the researcher to get the background facts on the topic under study. The researcher was able to explore deeply on how different authors reacted and

came up with conclusions (Bryman 2012). Even though secondary data was seen helpful in the study, the researcher opted to use primary data got directly from field participants through interviews to come up with study findings.

5.6.1 Implementation of Interviews

An interview is a process by which a researcher conducts a one to one conversation with individuals for purposes of information gathering. The conversation enables interactions and exploration of issues between the researcher and a participant through questions and answers (Sreejesh, Mohapatra &Anusree 2014:47). In this study, to capture non-Eu skilled professional immigrant's narratives on their challenges to professional integration in Gothenburg (Sweden), the research employed use of in-depth face to face semi-structured interviews on 7 participants and 1 semi-structured telephone interview on a respondent who did not have time for face-to-face interviews. This participant had tight schedules at his new workplace and since he was referred to be a good case, opting for a telephone interview was important (Sreejesh et al. 2014). The researcher made sure that before conducting interviews, all participants were first contacted to discuss on various aspects regarding the letter of consent and purpose of the study. Participants who were willing to take part in the study after explanations, were given letters of consent to sign and then agreed on the time and date suitable for interviews with them depending on each individual participant (Sturges and Hanrahan 2004). Bryman (2012) asserts that, for the interviewers to understand the way research participants view their world, it is suitable to come up with an interview guide. In this study, an interview guide was formulated in line with the research questions. The researcher came up with an interview guide of approximately twelve questions (refer to appendix 3). Open ended questions were utilized for purposes of capturing detailed responses on labour market experiences. The interviews were conducted in a noise free environment preferably selected by participants and each interview lasted between thirty to forty-five minutes per individual respondent.

5.6.2 Processing of interviews

With permission from respondents, all interviews were tape-recorded using telephone recording device and thereafter, the recorded material was transcribed. During transcription, the researcher skipped certain words and reformulated sentences that sounded hard, to make it easy for the reader to understand. To ensure that there is confidentiality and privacy of participants all recorded materials were erased after transcription. The purpose of tape-

recording was to help the researcher not to forget important responses from participants necessary for analysis (Bryman 2012). Interview techniques of data collection is of importance because responses can be obtained directly from individual participants. This interview technique was flexible, and it allowed the researcher to ask probing questions that did not appear on the interview guide. By use of this technique, participant's attitudes and emotions was not affected by social pressure as it could have been in focus group discussions and therefore, good detailed and rich information was obtained (Sreejesh et al. 2014:50).

5.7 Data Analysis

5.7.1 Thematic Analysis

The study being qualitative in nature, thematic method of data analysis was preferably used. The analysis involved identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data by the researcher. Thematic method is preferred because of its flexibility. The focus is on searching for themes or patterns that commonly merge basing on the different knowledge positions (Braun & Clarke 2006: 6). Analysis done in this study was inspired following key analytical phases outlined by (Braun & Clarke 2006).

In the first place the researcher got familiarized with the data collected because according to Braun and Clarke, for one to have easier analysis, a researcher needs to first get used of the data collected with intensions of getting prior knowledge and depth content on data. Since the study used semi-structured interview method of data collection, the researcher begun by listening carefully to the recorded audios, transformed the spoken words into written form. After transcription there followed the process of coding. "Coding means categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data. Codes show how you select, separate and sort data to begin an analytic accounting of them" (Charmaz 2006:43). It involves getting concrete statements in the data which helps the researcher to make interpretations while making analysis.

Information was categorized, and themes were distinguished from patterns that merged on repeated accessions (Hay 2005). The process was done manually whereby the researcher made use of different colors to highlight concepts, and thereafter the codes were grouped to generate themes and subthemes relevant and linked to the purpose of the study (ibid). In this study, themes were developed basing on common phenomenon built from participants point of view

and concern regarding their employment trends in Gothenburg (Bryman 2012). The researcher made sure that everything is done in relation to the research questions. Themes identified was strictly based on the data collected for the study and not on the researcher's theoretical interest (Braun & Clarke 2006). From the findings, three themes and subthemes emerged, and this can be viewed in the table below.

Table 2: Themes and Subthemes

MAIN THEME	SUBTHEMES
Challenges in accessing the Labour Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Competence • The impact of Social connections • Devaluation of foreign credentials & work experience • Effects of national policies • Social cultural differences • Discrimination • Personal initiatives
Strategies to improve access to the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolling for Swedish language (SFI) • Building new and strengthening of existing connections • Upskilling and change of profession • Getting job training through involving in voluntary work/internship • Making follow ups on applications • Use of low skilled jobs as a channel for entering the system
Government reforms as suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

5.8 Data Quality in Qualitative Research

Wang and Strong (1996:6) defines data quality as “data that is fit for use by data consumers”. Data to be considered good or poor, depends on how data collected is in consistence with the theoretical claims, its credibility to participants and extent to which the findings can be transferable to other settings (May & Pope 2000; Bryman, 2012). According to Leung (2015) there are three central concepts valuable for assessing quality and accuracy of data in qualitative research and these are validity, reliability and generalizability.

5.8.1 Validity

According to Leung (2015:325) “validity in qualitative research means appropriateness of the tools, process and data”. Whereas Creswell and Miller (2000), explains that judgement of quality of data in qualitative research is established by looking at the views of all parties in the research i.e. from the researcher’s perspective, participants perspective and the perspective of readers or reviewers of the study. To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, the researcher applied use of the three lenses explained by Creswell and Miller to validate the study. First and foremost, from the researcher’s point of view: the researcher critically reviewed the choice of study by looking at how appropriate will the research questions, designs, methods of data collection and analysis meet the intended outcome of the research project. In this case, the researcher viewed the data repeatedly to establish if the themes, explanations, interpretation and conclusions are of sense and reflect exactly what is in the data hence validity of the study (Leung 2015; Creswell & Miller 2000; Bashir, Afzal & Azeem 2008). Secondly to establish validity and credibility, the researcher based on views from participants perspective to come up with well refined interpretations, discussions and conclusions. In qualitative research, the reality is constructed basing on how people perceive their social world (Creswell and Miller, 2000). This lens helped the researcher to check out the accuracy of the findings whether the final presentation of the study corresponds with participants views. In this process it is noted that the researcher can even get back to involve participants to check out whether the interpretations of results do represent their views (ibid.). Lastly to check whether the study is valid, the researcher adopted use of external individuals and other readers who were not part of the study to help establish validity of the project. This was done in such a way that the researcher identified a group of individuals who vigorously did a peer review and checked through if the results are plausible before coming up with final paper.

5.8.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to a situation whereby an investigator gets constant answers after carrying out several measurements with similar tools or instruments. In qualitative research, reliability is more concerned with consistency and accuracy of representation of results. However, variations of results are acceptable provided the results correctly reflect and are in consistency with the theoretical framework and methodologies of the study (Bernard & Bernard 2012; Golafshani 2003; Leung 2015). To ensure that there is accuracy of instruments and consistency of results, the researcher was able to repeatedly test and approve the research instruments before data was collected. The instruments used such as the interview guide was repeatedly tested by different people who helped to identify if the guide would answer the intended questions of the study. The researcher also utilized the opportunity of involving study participants in evaluating the interview guide. Participants were asked after each interview to tell if the wording and language used in the guide was understandable and easy to give answers that are relevant to the study.

5.8.3 Generalizability

According to Smith (2018) generalizability refers to an extent by which the research findings from a small population can be applied to a wider population of a different setting. A few studies that consider use of this concept, view it as a limitation or weakness of qualitative studies. However, this has been disapproved in Smith's writing where he notes that, qualitative researchers shouldn't post in their articles that generalizability is part of a study limitation. In qualitative research, achieving sound generalizability of findings is quite hard simply because researchers generate information basing on small sample size. The bigger the sample size the higher the chances of getting detailed information that can enable researchers to come up with broader conclusions. Smith (2018) further argues that, it's not a guarantee that all qualitative studies do establish generalizable results in their studies. Instead, the findings of their studies may be of benefiting insight that goes beyond generalizability. Smith recommends that, if the researchers realize their studies are lacking generalizability, it's better they find an alternative conversation that explains the unique strength of their research. They can do this as a matter of explaining how the research can be transferable and give impact in society.

Basing on the foregoing discussion of Smith, this research cannot give much insight on how the findings can apply to all non-EU skilled professional immigrants in other settings.

However, with a detailed description on experiences of Non-EU skilled professionals in Gothenburg, this study will be of benefit to future researchers and viewers to use the findings references when need to carry out future research in similar situations. Secondly, even though the situations of skilled professional immigrants in Gothenburg may differ from what other professionals in other settings experience in the job market, the findings reveal the commonalities of general challenges that may be applicable to the larger population of non-Eu skilled professional immigrants in accessing professional employment in Sweden.

5.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethics in social research is an issue of concern. Ethical considerations should not be ignored because they influence aspects of research. It is a responsibility of every researcher in society to understand main ethical issues in research. This will help them come up with better decisions that aims at not affecting both researchers and participants while doing research (Bryman 2012; Behi & Nolan 1995). Artal and Rubinfeld (2017) mention that Scientific integrity and compliance with codes of ethics is the fountain of good practice in research. This does not only bring less risks but also protection to researchers and people willing to take part in the study.

In Diener and Crandall (1978), cited in Bryman (2012), four areas of ethical principles are discussed and this was considered important for this research. Issues such as; informed consent, deception, no harm and risk to participants, invasion of privacy anonymity and confidentiality. Seeking to understand matters concerning peoples' private life, their experiences in a new country is something critical that requires special attention. Immigrants being the major participants in this study, their coming to Europe might have been due to sensitive humanitarian factors in their countries of origin. Asking them these research questions make them vulnerable and this affects the kind of answers they give. Secondly, this study talks about profession and employment, which may be a challenging topic to discuss with participants if there are no ethical principles to guide the study. Below are some of the appropriate ethical principles used to guide this study.

5.9.1 Informed Consent

According to Couchman and Dawson (1990), cited in Behi and Nolan (1995:713) "Informed consent is the right of every individual when participating in research". Even though it is difficult to define and claim for this right, Couchman and Dawson recommends researchers not

to deny individual participants a right to informed consent. In this study, the researcher was conscious on participant's right to informed consent. A letter of introduction and consent was drafted and read to participants only after permission was granted by the supervisor. All explanation about the purpose, nature and the intending outcome of the study was clearly discussed before the research commenced with participants. The researcher sought for participant's consent before interviews were conducted and to be honest, all necessary information regarding interview recording, data analysis process was stipulated in a clear and familiar language to all participants. This gave a base for participants to decide on whether to take part in the study voluntarily without coercion and if they felt not to continue with the study, participants were free to withdraw at any point without objection from a researcher.

5.9.2 Invasion of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

Any practice carried out that tries to violate participants privacy is considered an acceptable in research (Bryman 2012). This ethical principle is interlinked to the principle of informed consent. According to Bryman (2012:142) anything that violates principles of informed consent, may also invade the privacy of participants being studied. In Brown (1993) cited in Behi and Nolan (1995:712), "control of personal information is viewed as an expression of autonomy and as an individual's right to protect his or her social vulnerability and identity". In this research, data was recorded, stored, used and reported in a way that nobody can have access to the sources. In the information sheet, participants were notified that their privacy and confidentiality will be enshrined throughout the entire study. According to Bryman (2012) he points out that if participants' identities are not treated with proper care, they may fail to cooperate and participate with future researchers. The researcher ensured that participant's names were not shown anywhere in the data. Instead the researcher adopted use of what Bryman refers to as "pseudonyms" to represent participants names in the transcripts which is assign of good practice in research.

5.9.3 Harm and potential Risks to Participants

Behi and Nolan (1995:714) points out that researchers must ensure that the intention of the study is to be of "beneficence and non- maleficence". This applies that research is to be carried out with good intentions, by helping and improving on situations that seem to be challenging in society. To avoid causing any kind of harm to participants, the researcher ensured that the research remained peaceful, the researcher was very careful on the language and interview

questions used. Immigrants come from different background, they have different experiences and expectations within the job market. Harmful practices may have effect on their wellbeing (Bryman 2012). The study questions did not focus on giving job promises or bring reflections that could have emotional effects in the lives of participants instead much attention was on how the findings would facilitate a platform for causing change within the professional job situations.

5.10 Limitations to the study

Price and Murnan (2004) defines a limitation of a study as any form of hardship that cannot be controllable by a researcher and may have an influence on the research findings. On this note therefore, finding prior literature being published in English on the study topic was challenging to the researcher. Most of the studies undertaken in Sweden are published in Swedish language and with the researcher's limited competence in Swedish language, it became quite challenging to do literature reviews hence a platform for understanding the topic being studied was a bit hard.

Another challenge was an issue to do with language, despite that the researcher considered to interview professional immigrants coming from three different spheres i.e. Africa, Asia and Middle East, some participants found it hard to adequately give explanations in English because English is seen not to be their first language. This resulted to unstable responses because some participants were guessing on what to say in accordance to the questions.

Furthermore, one of the major shortcomings associated with this qualitative research is that it was a time-consuming project. This constraint was a problematic factor that affected the process to both the researcher and participants. It was difficult to schedule interview meetings with participants because some participants claimed not to have enough time to balance work and interviews. One interviewee couldn't make it for face to face interviews. He had just acquired new work position and for these reasons he declined to present himself in person. This entailed a researcher to schedule a telephone interview within the time fit for the participant. According to Sturges and Hanrahan (2004), a telephone interview is an important option for obtaining data from distant potential participants who are in accessible for face-to-face interviews. Even though it may be a better option, there loopholes in considering its usage. There is a tendency of obtaining insufficient data caused by contradictions in answering (ibid.)

Chapter Six

Findings and Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative findings from eight participants who took part in the study. It analyses and discusses the findings by linking them to theories which were earlier on discussed in chapter four. The findings presented answers the two research questions: one what are the experiences of non-EU skilled professional immigrants in accessing the labour market within their profession in Gothenburg, Sweden? and what strategies have the non-EU skilled professional immigrants used to improve their access to the labour market? This chapter begins with section one that presents the general overview of HSPIs experiences in the job market, then follows section two that analyses factors that HSPIs think inhibit access to the labour market. The third section provides analysis on the different strategies used by HSPIs to improve access to the job market. The next section analyses HSPIs' suggestions on government reforms. Lastly, the last section summarizes the findings of the study, draws conclusions of the study and then suggestions for future research.

6.2 Background information of participants

With reference to table 1 of chapter 5, eight highly skilled immigrants participated in this study. Of the participants, majority were males (5) as they constituted the biggest sample, while the females constituted the smallest sample of 3. Since the study targeted to focus on non-EU skilled professionals from Africa, Asia, and Middle East, the following countries were represented in the study: India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, Uganda, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The findings indicate that, most of the respondents lie between the age of 20 and 40 years, excluding one respondent who is above 40 years. This implies that most of the respondents (professional immigrants) who come from non-EU countries to either study or look for employment come when they are between 20 to 40 years of age. This supports Gustafsson, Innes, & Österberg (2017) who notes that, majority of the immigrants who come from middle and low-income countries, do migrate when they have reached their middle-aged phase.

The findings indicate that most of the participants had acquired master's degree except for two who had bachelor's degree. However, they all matched European Migration Network (EMN 2007; Iredale 2001) definition of what a highly skilled immigrant is. Their professions varied from social worker, political scientist, engineer, veterinarian to economists. The number of years each participant had been in Sweden varied from 2 to 29 years. Almost all respondents held valid work permits, others were still on study permits which permitted them to work, and others were on permanent residence or were Swedish citizens.

While explaining their previous work experience, they all gave varying responses. Several of them mentioned that they came from their home countries with at least more than two years of working experience within their professional field. Moreover, with satisfactory positions compared to the ones they have now in Sweden. However, according to the findings, participants seemed to agree that upon arrival in Sweden it proved difficult to get a professional job. Majority of the immigrants, resorted to 'black jobs' or jobs outside of their profession that do not need educational qualifications. According to their expressions, even getting the low status job did not prove to be easy for them. The experience varied from one profession to another because of regulations that are required by different professional bodies.

Looking at the findings, there are only two of 8 respondents, currently employed in their professional major. One who holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in electrical power engineering and the other holds a master's in computer systems. At the time of the interviews, the two participants had just obtained their carrier jobs, of which one had worked for five months and the other two months. Majority worked as newspaper distributors, drivers, substitute teachers, one respondent was unemployed.

The findings also indicated that even though respondents hold master's degrees and had spent more than 2 years in Sweden, it was still extremely difficult to compete for same positions with the native population who possess similar qualification. This is mainly caused by the devaluation of highly skilled professional's (HSPIs) credentials, work experience and lack of host country's language and other social-cultural skills as it will be discussed in the proceeding pages. According to their expressions, it was indicated that despite of them working in the low sector, the majority of HSPIs seemed not to be satisfied with their current job titles and this could be the reason they are affected psychologically.

Among the eight participants interviewed, the researcher was able to identify key influential factors in the job market. Strategies they used to improve their situation in the job market and a few suggestion areas for government intervention to improve labour market situations of HSPIs is highlighted in here. These were presented according to different themes that emerged during the data transcription. The themes that emerged are presented basing on the two research questions and this can be viewed as presented below.

6.3 Challenges in Accessing the Labour Market

Referring to chapter five, table 2 summarizes the themes that merged after the transcription of the findings and among them was that of the challenges in having access to the labour market. This theme comprises key subthemes such as language competence, impact of social connections, devaluation of academic qualifications and work experience, influence of national policies, discrimination, social cultural differences and personal initiatives.

6.3.1 Language Competence

Professional labour exclusion is a complex issue to discuss. It's caused by multiple factors and requires diverse strategies to act and meet the difficulties (Eimal Perez 2007:38). As the above theme stands, all the participants seemed to consent that language is one of the most important factors that attracts employer's attention to consider HSPIs for participation in the labour market of Sweden. When asked about what factors they think facilitate access to the professional labour market in Sweden, the first response that came out of each participant's mouth was language. In EMR (2013), it has been noted that while English could be used as a transition language in some workplaces, participant revealed that Swedish language remains a serious weapon most potential employers base on to deny professional immigrants job opportunities. Concerning this, participant R3 had this to say:

Your language, language, yes as I said English is understood by many Swedes but the language of practice that is preferred by clients that you will work for is basically Swedish, so they believe that it is important in order for you to get practice in Sweden you must be able to speak Swedish language.

The availability of an avenue to access job market was found significant for only a few professionals who according to the discussion with them, had at least acquired some knowledge in Swedish language. For example, participant J4 who has been living in Sweden for the last

29 years, testified that after him being able to learn Swedish, on several occasions, he has been considered for job opportunities though not within his academic career. However, lack of knowledge in Swedish language has been noted as the most leading factor to inhibit access to the labor market in Sweden by majority of the respondents. According to the results, respondents noted that Swedish language is the mostly practiced language by the majority in Sweden and therefore a requirement preferred by most employers. The employers believe that for one to get a professional job in Sweden, it is important to know and be able to speak Swedish with service users. When hearing their views on this matter, one participant said, “a professional job in Sweden is a no-go area if you do not understand the Swedish language for most of them not all of them... language is important... I can say it's a crucial marketing weapon for one to get a breakthrough in the labor market.” (Participant G1)

By the fact that majority of professionals who come to Sweden, come when equipped more with the English language, their potentials to look out for opportunities in line with their academic qualifications is limited. Insufficiency of language skills as revealed in this study agrees with the findings of studies conducted by Faris Ahmed (2016), Lorentsson (2015), Al-Atassi & Alebiary (2017), Duvander(2001) who reported that insufficiency in the host country’s language and lack of academic undertakings in the host country has a limitation on social and economic participation of immigrant professionals in the labour market. In addition, the findings demonstrate the writings of Törngren and Holbrow (2017) who in their comparative study on highly skilled immigrants in Sweden and Japan, stated that language hinders employer’s ability to attract and retain skilled foreign workers.

Language has influence on communication, one saying goes ‘information is power’ with information or access to information one can do anything they dream of on this planet. The empirical findings of this study clearly shows that because of language barrier, HSPIs find it very challenging to navigate through and access information and other services available that would be of influence on channeling them to participate in the job market. Respondents reported that having good access to sources of information to some extent can be helpful in linking them to job markets. Participants listed the following; the employment agency in Sweden (Arbetsförmedlingen) website, LinkedIn, local newspapers, attending of Workshops on job matching, all online resources, and social media platforms as important channels to getting job information. However, when looking at the current situation of HSPIs, evidences show that with incompetence in Swedish language, these sources have not been helpful. They

reported that since we are living in a world where everything happens online, in most cases the Swedish online sites, job adverts are presented in Swedish language which is a limit to them. With incompetence in Swedish language, HSPIs can neither read job adverts, write letters of resume and nor communicate in interviews. In fact, many immigrants mentioned that they cannot be in position to interpret Swedish information both on job networks and other sources. This puts them in a state of not being considered by employers. The majority of employing agencies would not want to risk employing individuals who are incapable of using Swedish language, instead they prefer recruiting individuals whom they think can understand instructions, communicate workplace safety concerns with employers, fellow workmates and the service users(clients).

Furthermore, language is important for understanding of instructions without it, sometimes one can remain jobless. Participant S8 mentioned that getting jobs even in cleaning sector seems to be difficult because they need someone who can read and understand cleaning detergents. This was also evident in Faris Ahmed's (2016:77) study which highlighted that fluency in Swedish language helps foreign-born to not only understand safety concerns and instructions but also improves genuine interactions with employers, respective workers and customers. One can say that immigrant's chances to build and sustain social networks with the natives can be affected too because of language barrier. Participant G1 emphasizes that because of Swedish language incompetence, it becomes difficult to have an interaction with the surrounding community more especially for student immigrants who might have come to Sweden for the first time. He said:

It is hard for someone who drops in Sweden and expect to get a job immediately. So, you may not understand anything in Swedish and this becomes very difficult to communicate. I mean if you cannot read the language, then you will not also understand what they are talking about, but it is also a source of getting information about the job. In fact, most of us can't even afford to read job adverts can you imagine I was denied cleaning job because I can't read Swedish...
(Participant G1)

Besides, the findings of this study further demonstrate that the effect of language varies depending on a profession. Participant G1, R3 and P6 who come from English-speaking countries reported that language effect is highly dependent on a type of profession and for their case, they were affected most to get jobs within their field because they could not speak

Swedish language. Participant R3 and participant P6 who hold similar profession in social work shared similar views on the effect of language. They explained that some professions are sensitive employers prefer hiring people who have good knowledge on how the system operates and the skills of the language. Moreover, professionals such as social workers, who work and interact closely with clients may be required to first have knowledge of Swedish before they can be offered a job. Participant C6 argues that when it comes to language, everyone has their different experiences. Professionals who work with in the field of IT may not feel a pinch of language effect because they are expected to spend much of their time operating computers using command of computer language unlike social workers who involve in communicating with clients. Participant GI with a veterinary background also claimed that much as his course entails dealing with animals and for him to practice within his veterinary field in Sweden, he is expected to be having the proficiency in Swedish language. In so doing, this can enable him to interact with clients (owners of animals). He continued and said this has affected his chances to even be considered for practicum in animal clinics. Most employers could not let him work in their companies if he cannot fluently speak Swedish. Participant R3 had this to say:

Me getting a job in my field is challenging when I don't know how to speak Swedish language. There are several reasons why it is that way because most social workers are most likely to find themselves working with youths, working with maybe people who dropped out of school without having attained higher level of education maybe elderly who cannot speak English that is why it is a must that someone has to speak Swedish language to be able to work as a social worker in Sweden.

Similarly, Participant B7 in his field of expertise as an electric power engineer, explained that electric power engineering is something that has a high connotation on the national security. Due to sensitivity of his profession, he believes is the reason he took long to qualify for work in an electric power sector in Sweden. Additionally, respondent B7 mentioned that employers have trust in employing natives whom they believe can speak and use technical power terms in Swedish. Moreover, B7 reported that there has been a gap in teaching such terms at SFI. For they never teach engineering technical terms instead they teach them how to make dialogue with people. This was difficult for a foreigner like him to quickly adopt and work in companies that deal in electric power. Whereas when we look at how language is important, this seems not to be applying in other professions like engineering in information technology (IT). A respondent qualified in computer systems shared quite a different experience on language. He argued that language proficiency in his field is not of significance because IT has its own

language of command. He mentions, “I mean if you can speak it then it is good, but it did not add up anything for me getting a job that I am doing currently... so I just play with my IT language to accomplish my tasks”.

Consequently, language insufficiency has a limit on HSPIs’ career development. This corresponds with the findings of Törngren and Holbrow (2017:76) where interviewees reported concerns of not advancing in their careers due to language barrier. In this study, prospects of wanting to upgrade within Swedish institutions becomes challenging this is because the lengthy periods needed to first learn the language would be an opportune time, they would use to upgrade and look for jobs. They do not know when to come out of this state because by the time of interviews many of them claimed they had enrolled for Swedish language training but not yet perfect with the language. Besides, participants claim that what hinders them from having proficiency in the language, is that majority of them lack who to practice with Swedish. Several of them mentioned that they came as students and they have not yet built any strong relationships with the native population. This agrees with other studies conducted by Faris Ahmed (2016), Al-Atassi and Alebiary (2017), Lemaître (2007), OECD (2014), and EMR (2013).

Viewing the aspect of language from the perspective of Human capital theory, one can argue that lack of enough skills in the new country’s language is the reason why interviewed professional take long to find jobs in Sweden. Mossaad (2014) using the lenses of human capital theory, points out that individual characteristics particularly knowledge in language is among the factors that constitutes up to individual’s human capital. This is because according to Rogova (2014:34) a strong pillar to integration is highly dependent on immigrant’s “linguistic skills” of the host country. Without knowledge of language one may not easily be in position to socially and economically participate in the new country’s domains including job markets. One could argue that the reason why HSPIs in this study end up in low skilled jobs that neither matches their qualification nor bring satisfaction to their earnings, is because they lack the new country’s capital of language to be able to transfer their foreign skills. As Faris Ahmed (2016) mentions that immigrants end up in jobs that ranges from bus/taxi driving to house cleaning and this is because these jobs require no need of Swedish language proficiency. These are the exact jobs that nearly all professional immigrants who participated in this study mentioned expect the two interviewees who admitted having recently acquired their job positions in their fields of study.

6.3.2 The Impact of Social Connections/Networks

It is evident from the findings that connections are important when accessing the labor market in Sweden. All the interviewed professionals confirmed that one of the best channels to employment, is through having good social networks. These connections can be social or professional networks. Just as Faris Ahmed (2016:61) states, “The role of social networks should not be underestimated because human beings usually belong to one group or the other. Having social networks boosts the value of an individual thereby helping him or her on getting a job through one of his /her social contacts”.

The social capital theory believes that the impact of social networks, personal relations and relations with natives is important towards the successful professional integration of immigrants. Responses show that having social contacts especially with native-born and other professionals who are familiar with the system may play an important role for immigrants' establishment in the labour market. As mentioned earlier in chapter four, Palloni et al. (2001) indicates that individuals get access to quality and diverse resources through being member of a certain interpersonal network and social institution. Participants in this study confirmed that if individuals are connected to institutions such as churches, employment offices and other civil society organizations, the chances of being linked to job centers are high. In most cases, through these networks, they are likely to get information about new opportunities and referees to recommend them for the job. As one gets to do voluntary work within such settings, they get to know more people of value who will help them enter the system. However, because of language insufficiency, HSPIs believe it will take then long to even be integrated in such institutions. According to the finding, a majority of highly skilled immigrants come to Sweden without social networks and this means they start creating social relations from scratch. The findings further correspond with Hensvik and Nordström (2013) who points out that having frequent contact with other people, information on new job openings can be obtained. This seems challenging for HSPIs, because majority of them revealed that they lacked social networks and, in most cases, even the very low status jobs one gets in Sweden, is got through networks which is still a challenge to participants. This is in accordance to previous studies such as Duvander (2001), Faris Ahmed (2016), and Al-Atassi & Alebiary (2017). In these studies, it was indicated that immigrants who had good social relations and network particularly with natives had better chances for labor market establishment. The research findings suggest that of significant for newly arrived immigrants to network, both on social and personal levels

and by doing so, they can easily find access to the labor market. These people in networks can provide HSPIs with information regarding jobs, serve as referees and in the long run link them to available jobs in the market. In regarding this, one said:

Connections affect you in a way that most jobs in Sweden need referees or need somebody who already knows you and who can talk something about you to the employer so if you have somebody who knows a job somewhere, they can refer you to that person... So, if you have a connection, the connection is very important it can be friends, it can be a profession, it can be teachers who teach you, it can be any member of the community who has trust and can be believed by most employers. So, they mostly act as referees but also mediators in the field. If you have a connection, the connection is very important and it's how I got my newspaper job. (participant G1)

The study also indicated that HSPIs seemed to have understood the impact of creating social and professional networks. This is evident from the fact that majority of them are now having efforts of building new and strengthening of networks as a way of meeting labour market challenges. However, most participants who took part in this study mentioned that they fail to get established in the job market simply because it is never easy for them to create relationships with the native population. This is evident from the study conducted by Törngren and Holbrow (2017) where interviewees mentioned that they found it challenging to build social connections with native Swedes and according to Al-Atassi and Alebiary (2017), the reason for poor network establishment between natives and immigrants is due to differences in social-cultural norms. In response to this, one participant explained:

I can say it's quite challenging you know I even get shy to speak this ... I spent two years in social work class, but I tell you I never got an opportunity for a tight relationship with native Swedes in class, yet we met daily. They are too reserved maybe it is their culture because even if you meet on streets, they behave differently. I become worried on how I can build my network with them. I also think my time in Sweden is short for I believe if I stayed here for more five years the better, I will have friends. (participant R3)

Coleman (1998) argues out that social capital and human capital are interconnected because social capital leads to the creation of human capital. It is therefore through the connections established by immigrants that can make it easy for them to acquire resources and discover opportunities for development (Felício, Couto & Caiado 2009). By having these social and professional networks, the professional integration of the highly skilled immigrants would be much easier however, this is still noticed as a big challenge in this study. The findings also

correspond with Petersen, Saporta and Seidel (2000) who reported that out of 60.4 percent of people who apply for jobs, about 80 percent of them manage to get this offers through personal and professional networks. Whereas in Hensvik and Nordström (2013) it revealed that 60 to 70 percent of employers consider use of informal channels to find their workers.

6.3.3 Devaluation of HSPIs' Foreign Qualifications and Work Experience

If you have never learnt of anything in Sweden like a masters or any work experience, then it becomes hard to compete for the labor market. Experience within Sweden is very vital, for it quickens the entire process of job searching. A person can be able to compete for employment within because they believe in their education and job experience compared to others, they don't you know. So, they will always trust the education of their own people even if other citizens are better... Better the devil you know than the angel you haven't met (laughs). (Participant M2)

The interview with HSPIs indicated that devaluation of foreign academic qualification and work experience has proved to be an avenue for professional labour exclusion. When looking at the social demographic information of participants, it is evident that all immigrants interviewed came to Sweden when they had already invested into what Popovic (2012) and Mossaad (2014) described as an individual human capital cultivated mainly through education and work experience. Education in combination with work experience is the key to unlocking success in the job market. From the theoretical proposition, human-capital theory indicates that individuals who possess knowledge, skills and qualifications, acquired through academic trainings and experiences, have greater chances to be considered for employment (Irastorza & Bevelander, 2017:7). Popovic (2012) further uses the lenses of human capital theory and explains that when an individual invests in good quality education, the returns in the labor market will always be rewarding. According to the researcher's interviews, this position seems not to be applying for highly skilled immigrants. For they invested their time, money and energy in getting the academic training and experience that they needed to have for easier access to the labor market. Unfortunately, even though immigrants usually have high hopes when coming to Sweden, these hopes have not been realized because their foreign educational training has never been considered significant. Cited by majority of the respondents, lack of recognition of foreign education and passed work experience is noted as the major inhibiting factors for labor market participation within ones' qualifications in Sweden. One respondent noted that "the challenge I face is that in Sweden my diploma that I got from my country's

University is not fully recognized...so they require me to do again some courses, do some exams here so that I can be at the same level with Swedes". (Participant C5)

Similarly, participant G1 and S8 explained non-recognition of their documents and work experience as a major challenge. In most cases if they cannot recognize their documents in the first attempt, they get disappointed and demoralized to look out for professional jobs. For them to survive with their families, they opt to stay long in low status jobs which they think can enable them earn for the family. Participant S8 has tried for all the time spent in Sweden to look for a professional job, but she has never succeeded. She mentioned:

Do you know why I have worked with newspaper distribution for the last 12 years now? I am just you know disappointed and since I lacked experience here, I stopped going on with looking for a professional job. When I had just come, I think I applied a thousand times but with no good results. I feel I don't want to waste much time I better distribute papers and get what to feed my children on. (Participant S8)

As for G1, he explained that the non-recognition of his veterinary documents and work experience is a devaluation of his professional status. He claims, "I was a livestock specialist at home when I reached here, I feel am nobody because my veterinary papers are not valued".

According to the results, the majority of HSPIs seemed to have acknowledged the importance of attaining education in Sweden, the majority endeavored to invest in the country's education with hopes of improving their chances of employment. However, the study findings pointed out that immigrant's engagement into the host country education has no automatic influence on their participation in the job market. In most cases, immigrants who try to upgrade within the Swedish education system still find it challenging to have access to jobs. Some studies indicate that the time invested in accumulating the country's trainings both in language and education, delays chances of acquiring better employment opportunities. Most likely, the time HSPIs will need to invest in trainings, would be the time valuable enough to look for career opportunities (Lamba 2003). This is evident when participant P6 and G1 opposed the importance of having a Swedish qualification. They said the master's obtained from Sweden has added no value on their employment chances. Participant P6 feels her being over qualified affects her chances and it could be the reason why she cannot be considered by employment agencies for low sector jobs. The same applies to G1 who studied master's in Public health here in Sweden but then he has not got any job opportunity in public health. Participant P6 said:

I have obtained my master's here in Sweden and honestly speaking before coming to Sweden I thought that wow this was going to Market me in Sweden probably maybe before I even graduate, I would have secured a job but no that didn't happen. I feel like my education walks against me in Sweden sometimes because you find that now in some government agencies such as Arbetsförmedlingen they cannot help you with certain forms needed by employers and employers think am overqualified for even cleaning jobs.

The above discussion, therefore, does not consent with what human capital theory claims that good quality education in return produces good or rewarding results in the labor market. These findings correspond with Lorentsson (2015) as well as Lemaître (2007) who explained that the devaluation of educational qualification and work experience of HSIPs is an obstacle to finding professional jobs in Sweden. These results further collaborate with the study of Guo and Andersson (2005) in their comparative study, it was indicated that due to devaluation and non-recognition of academic and work experience, professional immigrants in both Canada and Sweden experienced challenges in finding professional jobs. This is still an ongoing experience that has not yet been improved even after having put in place integration initiatives for immigrants.

Furthermore, the findings of the study indicate that HSPIs are faced with what Faris Ahmed (2016:71) highlighted as “institutional or structural barriers” to professional integration. Many immigrants who were interviewed mentioned that their education and work experience has never been recognized by the Swedish system. The system does not value their foreign attained skills simply because their qualifications are perceived as of low standard compared to Swedish standard. This agrees with what is stated in EMR (2013) report that, the validation and acceptance of education and skills is quite a difficult and complex issue for majority of immigrants when they get to a new country. The research findings indicated that the assessment procedures and recognition of some qualifications is quite complicated and expensive in terms of time for immigrants particularly those with highly regulated professions such as veterinary medicine. In response to this, participant M3 said:

In most cases when you come here you are required to take maybe another extra course because when they compare your education from your home country they normally say it does not equate with the Swedish standards and that its of low quality so maybe to back up your academic documents you may need to do an extra course

to be able to compete and find a job in Sweden. I feel the long period I must take to complement my course will not allow me to see a bright future soon.

As noted from the above citation, the lengthy periods HSPIs take to validate their academic documents and take up complementary courses to equate with Swedish standards is quite worrying. One participant said for him to be licensed to practice his veterinary course, he is expected to have accumulated 120 credits to fit Swedish standard. All this requires time to be able to learn Swedish language before enrolling for such complementary courses. Usually the lengthy processes one needs to follow before being allowed to practice in Sweden limits the capability of almost all professionals to have a positive mind of searching for jobs. In fact, most of the participants gave this as a sound reason as to why they end up involving themselves in doing low skilled job outside their profession. The job that can only help them meet their basic needs as they prepare for the future. Lorentsson (2015) stated that the demotivation and frustration immigrants get from this kind of treat, forces majority of them to end up in participating in low skilled sectors moreover with less payments. Brandi (2001) and Fosslund (2013) mentions this as an act of brain waste whereas, Guo and Andersson (2005) views devaluation as a waste of human capital. In Faris Ahmed (2016) findings, it is revealed that when immigrants take long to practice in their field, they lose professional knowledge which later subjects them not to compete in the job market. Regarding this, Participant S8 highlighted that the reasons as to why she got discouraged and gave up on searching for professional employment is due to devaluation of her education and passed experience. Frustrations faced her to work with a newspaper distribution company for twelve years, yet in her home country she used to serve in a good position with a public institution. This is evident signs to “brain waste” she said:

Yes, you try to do all this they will tell you another thing and then you just get discouraged and probably you give up. So, I know many people who got discouraged and they give up like me, the beginning was quite tough I mean you have your qualifications you have been working in good position then you come here, and they tell you know you are not applicable. So, you must start all over and not many people have that kind of resilience to fight and keep fighting. (Participant S8)

One participant mentioned that she is not confident enough to compete in her field now due to the lengthy period she has taken without practicing her accounting profession. This is loss of professional knowledge according to Faris Ahmed (2016). Employers consider that HSPIs to

get a job, they should have attained experience in Sweden through trainings and internships or else because of their background, they will be viewed as people who are incompetent moreover with less knowledge to practice.

6.3.4 Effects of National policies (Visa status, Social security number and Validation of Documents)

From the discussion with participants, other aspects that appeared in the findings was an issue to do with the stringent government policies. Results reveal that restrictive national policies such as need to have a valid working permit, social security number and validation of foreign documents have possible effect on labour market outcomes of HSPIs in Sweden. One can conclude that, this could be the reasons as to why majority of the highly skilled foreign immigrants get frustrated and end up leaving Sweden or else remain in Sweden but resorts to participate in unskilled employment. This theme matches with the findings of previous studies. For example, in Lorentsson (2015) stringent regulations was noted to be one of the hindering factors to professional integration. The participants agreed that for one to be allowed to work in Sweden is highly dependent on the kind of visa one has. An individual has to either be on a student visa which allows one to work in Sweden (though this one has its own limitations which reduces the chances of employment for an individual) or a work permit or simply permanent residency /citizenship. Based on their report, the lengthy period immigrants take to have their academic papers certified, restrictions imposed on certain occupations and kind of work permit one should have, serve as disincentive for professional foreign-born to excel in the job market. Moreover, this has created unemployment gap between foreign born professionals and the native-born professionals. This confirms with what EEPO (2016) and EMN (2013) reports, which explains that the obstacles to employment success of immigrants in the EU countries is due to the lengthy processes it takes to acquire country's required documents. Immigrants in most cases are expected to have national administrative documents such as work permits and practicing license. However, according to them, they think these are administrative burdens that in one way have negatively impacted on their employability in the system.

Regarding work permit, three participants mentioned that having a valid work permit is of great impact towards job acquisition. By regulations, all job seekers are expected to present valid work permits to employers. One respondent (G1) mentioned that:

Yes, by regulations everybody that lives in EU or particularly Sweden for you to get the job as a non-EU immigrant you need to show your employer a work permit. But besides, all employers will like to see your status before you are considered for a job.

In most cases immigrants begin with temporal work permits and when they are granted temporal permits that requires renewals, there is a possibility of this weakening their status or positions in the job market. Employers won't be in position to provide long term job contracts due to fear of uncertainties of their residence (EEPO 2016). In fact, most employers would not wish to assist their employees to process these documents due to implications of the outcome. They will rather prefer employing candidates whose residence status are undoubted (ibid). On the other note, according to the findings participants believed that it's due to these tight policies that Sweden keeps on losing important groups of professionals even after Sweden has spent on their academic careers through Swedish scholarship provisions. Students come learn and live for their countries of origin with the skills they think would have been beneficial for the country's (Sweden) development. About residence permit, one respondent said, "I would say that the permit plays a big role [...] Some employers would see that you have all the qualities they want in you and that you are fit for the job but when your permit expires in a few months' time then you will miss out that job". (participant M2)

Residence permit has been a challenging factor to majority of participants who came to Sweden on student's visa. One participant further mentioned that even if one is offered a job on student's permit the limitations attached to number of hours to work is a challenge, but then Participant M2 said it depends on the employer's knowledge on the policy. This means that there is need to empower employers with knowledge about how permits are issued if they need to see change in the job market. Participant M2 mentions:

If you look at the student permit as well there is also permission to get a job after studies so employers who are well-versed with this policy, they do not mind whether you hold a student's permit or not.

Due to lack of permanent residence some professionals find it challenging to even be considered for international jobs with Swedish companies that have external outlets as Participant B7 mentioned "I was denied this external job opportunity because I did not have a permanent permit yet". All participants confirm that the laws in Sweden are so tight and before a person with foreign background can secure a permanent residence, they are expected to have

lived in Sweden for number of years. This hinders their chances to qualify and be considered to work with companies that have jobs abroad.

Additionally, social security numbers were noted to be one of the factors that influences job acquisition, Participant explained that a personal number is important and is a key prerequisite to enter the job market and it's the only way one can fully function in the Swedish Society. While explaining the importance of having a national social security number, participants mentioned that one cannot be in position to get a work permit without a personal number in other words all aspects in the Swedish system are interconnected. With a personal number one can, be able to look for a job. It's hard to locate for certain jobs without having a personal number. Interviewees believe these digits are like individual's identification here in Sweden and it's the only way a person can be recognized in and by the system. One participant stated:

The ten digits in Sweden are important in fact I was denied a job by certain company. Some employers fear or do not even employ or offer job opportunities to immigrants who are not fully incorporated in the Swedish system and in so doing having a personal number is the way to be recognized in the system. (Participant C5)

Similarly results confirmed that government policy on validation and complementation of foreign documents has caused HSPIs to be frustrated, more so to those with professions that require validation and licensing. One participant stressed out that regulations on certain professions such as health, engineering and security, is a hindrance to job acquisition. Participant G1 explained that besides non-recognition of his veterinary documents and work experience. He also faced a challenge of employers wanting copies of practicing license issued by Swedish board before offering him a job. All these are country's conditions that professional immigrants believe limit their possibilities of acquiring jobs in their profession. Policies governing foreign credential recognition and the procedures one takes to obtain working license, are viewed as "structural barriers" that limits HSPIs attempt to pursue good quality employment (Lamba 2003:56).

For professions that are highly regulated for example the medical professions, my veterinary profession you know it is hard to get a job immediately. ...asking for certified documents is not a pleasant thing for a person like me you know. I feel some of these policies are suppressing. I find it very hard on my side that before them offering me a job they want me to present practicing license. (participant G1)

6.3.5 Social Cultural Differences and Mindset

It is quite evident from the findings that cultural differences and mindset plays a huge role in limiting one's access to the job market in Sweden. So, to be able to access the job market in Sweden, there is possibility that one needs to adjust to learn, change and adapt by what the new society offers. From the perspective of human capital theory, it is assumed that having the knowledge of the social cultural, economic and political situation of a host country improves one's chances of participation in that country. The theme corresponds with what EEPO (2016) says, that hindrance to the labour market integration are associated to lack of knowledge on the new country's social-cultural norms. Immigrants who come from different social-cultural and religious settings always find it hard to adapt by the new country's practices. This can be a hindrance because when immigrants are not aware of how the society's labor market functions then it becomes a barrier to their recruitment. Concerning this, participants confirmed that their limited knowledge about Swedish society, cultural norms and the way the system operates is an obstacle for them to acquire job positions that match their academic fields. The participants seemed to bring up the issue of cultural differences, two participants mentioned that expectations recruiting agencies have towards candidates during interviews plays a big role in determining their chances to be given jobs. Sometimes they cannot tell what is expected of them in the interview panel and concerning this one participant noted:

I think even the expectations when you go for example for an interview, would determine one's chances things like culture the way you would talk, the way you would sit when you are in an interview the way you would respond I mean there is a lot of other things[...] not only the language but if you do not know how the system works you may get a job and lose it because maybe you would shout at work which you are not supposed to do maybe you will be too quiet so I think there are also other reasons to do with culture. (participant R3)

One other participant stated, "they have their norms, they judge you according to the Swedish standards and then sadly we do not fit in because we come from different background". (Participant J4)

All interviewed Professionals said they miss out opportunities because they think Swedes believe and are more comfortable employing their own citizen who have similar kind of value system, norms, ideas and beliefs. They assume these are part of the Swedish standards most

employers follow to make their decisions on who fits for the available job position. As for participant P6 she said:

I won't necessarily say that we are incompetent but it is the society here that does not really care about whether we are educated or not they do not appreciate our background... they have their norms you know they have standards they follow and they judge you basing on that. So, it is just not really knowing everything it's beyond that. I mean it is who they are, so I mean we must appreciate that for we come from different background.

Important to note, participants highlighted out that immigrants lack what is referred to as 'social intelligence' to be able to fit in the Swedish society. Respect for cultural norms and beliefs are important in because this is what builds up an individual's human capital in the new country. Faris Ahmed (2016) explains that foreigners may have all the academic qualifications but without having knowledge on the social-cultural norms of Sweden, is equally challenging especially if one needed to get established in the job market. When explaining social intelligence, some participants emphasized that, their failure to create room for adjustments, adapt and appreciate how things are done in the new society, is the reason for their failure to fit in the job market. Most immigrants who come, come when they already have their foreign cultural practices that they feel cannot easily be changed. One assumes that these are inhibiting grounds for failure to excel in and be accepted in the job market. On this point Participants for instance B7 who originates from Africa mentioned that adjusting to a new country's practices becomes difficult particularly to some of them who had got used of different working culture from a different setting. What applies in their home countries may not be the case in Sweden. For example, he mentioned that it becomes challenging to start following up on job applications by phone calls because this practice was not applying in his country back home. In Sweden this looks different, making a phone call to a company is the way employers track out individual applicants who are serious for the job. In relation to the above, the study of Lorentsson (2015) points out that participants felt not accepted in Swedish society because of their dress code. Those from Muslim background felt that they missed out jobs because of dressing up in headscarf while going for interviews. In agreement with this current study, Participant S8 stated:

We must be able to fit in the new society for example I am from a Muslim background, I love my dress code, maybe am too much of religion. I feel the way I appear for a job interview, the way I dress, may have costed my chances to get a job. Sweden is not a Muslim

country they expect us to feel free with the opposed sex bosses....
If I fail to compromise with my religion, if I fail to change my
dress code and attitude... yeah, I may fail to work with any
organization here.

6.3.6 Discrimination

Immigrants experience several welfare challenges when they reach in a new country among them is exclusion from employment. One other theme that emerged from the study was the that of discrimination. The findings show that nearly all immigrants accept two, always felt discriminated upon while trying to get a job in Sweden. Participants shared different views on how their different ethnic background influences their position in the job market. Chapter four of this study shows how disparate treatment theory can be used to explain how and why employers discriminate people in the job market. When it comes to job hiring, change of job positions and salary increments it is asserted that some people are still treated differently than others due to racial, colour, ethnicity and gender differences (Gold, 1985). From the interviews with HSPIs, it emerged that the disparities in their employment and earning exist because of continuous discriminatory practices that are still nurtured by recruiting agencies. Studies such as Törngren and Holbrow (2017), Lemaître (2007) and Faris Ahmed (2016) it is indicated that there exists differential treatment among individuals in most work places. This also corresponds with the findings of Törngren and Holbrow (2017), in their comparative study on experiences of highly skilled migrants in Sweden and Japan, their findings showed that immigrants in both countries shared feelings of prejudice and discrimination in job market. In this study, this has been noted as a barrier to professional integration of HSPIs. In studies such as Al-Atassi and Alebiary (2017), results indicate that even though discrimination exist, it is never easy for people to prove to the public that this is a common practice in the labour market. In agreement with Al-Atassi and Alebiary, the respondents of this study found it a bit tricky to extensively share their thoughts about these discriminatory practices because they believed it as being a hidden practice. The occurrence of discriminatory practices cannot easily be identified and acknowledged. On this note, participant M2 mentioned:

This has been a common experience since time immemorial. I would say it is something they hide they will never tell you a direct information why you wouldn't be considered for a job... I do not have direct example to elaborate on this, but it is common prejudice they cover up because they fear the national and international laws this means that you will not directly feel sense of discrimination.

Another study conducted by Rydgren (2004) on mechanisms of exclusion in the Swedish labor market, the findings further indicated that immigrants are discriminated against basing on their ethnic background. The most disadvantaged group to feel this kind of treatment are non-EU immigrants from Africa and the Middle East. To confirm with Rydgren's assertion, in this study participant affirmed that differences in skin color, names, gender and social-cultural norms are some of the major attributes that participants believe employers base on to give job offers. In agreement with Carlsson and Rooth (2007), people with foreign sounding names are not called back for job interviews and their assumption is that Swedish employers are more interested in employing their own people. This has caused some immigrants try to adopt new ways of looking for jobs. The strategies they use, involve changing of names in their curriculum vitae from original to Swedish sounding names. Moreover, participants admitted that this strategy works for some immigrants but to a lesser extent. Normally when they appear for interviews employers will still base on their appearance to doubt on their national background. Interviewee G1 noted that besides the need for Swedish language and qualification, acts of name preferences play a big role in causing labour market failures he noted:

I feel mere name alone can also make one fail to get a job within Sweden even if that person would be speaking the same language [...] but once they hear your name that can also ring a bell that you are an immigrant. This affected and still affects me whenever I apply for a job.

In this research, it is further evident that when it comes to the issue of language and culture differences, immigrants feel there is some sort of exclusion in the job market. A few immigrants reported that they could possess all the necessary qualities but simply because they lacked the language skill, and some coming from stringent cultures which restrict them from doing certain things, they were subjected to being excluded from competing in the job market. In most cases, preference of Swedish language is used as a pretext by most employers. In my opinion therefore, both cultural differences and language skills incompetence being mentioned in this study as one of the challenging factors to professional employment, can be used to justify with what Perez (2007) explained that it is common for discriminating attitudes to be disguised under the pretext of language and cultural differences in the labour market.

Furthermore, results also revealed that there are variations in the way groups of HSPIs are treated in the job market, some immigrants from Africa mentioned that due to ethnic differences, they are intentionally discriminated upon especially when it comes to task allocation. When they get employed even within the low sectors such as in cleaning jobs, they are assigned much harder tasks compared to their counterparts from Asia and the Middle East. Basing on this claim, one can affirm that the distinction that exist in the labour market, to some extent is dependent on race and color of the skin. For example, a participant noted:

I have worked with a cleaning company before and we were under the same contract with some ladies, but these ladies were of a different color skin from mine. They were given easier tasks to do it was a cleaning company often what they give them to do was to clean tables because the boss said they are fragile. (Participant P6)

The findings further indicated that discrimination has some links to do with gender. Participant C5 who works as a night driver mentions an issue to do with gender bias in the labour market. She said even in low skilled sector, some employers are not willing to recruit someone they think will not manage to balance family and work. Her being a married woman with a child, she believes this could be enough reason hindering her from getting better employment. In fact, since her work involves working in the night shift, and her being on her first maternity leave, she anticipates that this could lead to her loss of employment. She remarked that:

I have seen this almost affecting my job for my employer has already mentioned something that I won't be able to get back to my former job and what I think is that I have been on my maternity leave. I now have a baby and yet my job entails me to work in the night shift having a young baby may cost my employment...this puts me in fear of remaining unemployed and may be join the struggle of those looking for employment although not in a professional line. (participant C5)

Discrimination has been proved to have had effect on HSPIs' personal development. Having stayed in Sweden for a long time, some participants believe they have learnt the system and that they can apply for funds to start up business initiatives. They believed in doing so, they would be managing to overcome some of the employment challenges. However, a few professionals feel this is impossible. According to them, getting and maintaining customers is proved to be difficult because of ethnic differences. In fact, participant J4 who has stayed in

Sweden for over 20 years started a company, but it collapsed within a short period because of lack of customers willing to consume his products. He mentions:

I lost it... I mean my cleaning company collapsed in six months because I could hardly get clients. The black population is small, and they cannot even afford to hire external cleaners. I tried to build networks with the white population but failed you know what I mean. (Participant J4)

Finally, in the context of systematic disparate treatment, it is stated that traditional organization and firms have discriminative bias powered by their stingy institutional rules and policies. This encourages exclusion of certain minority groups from participating in the labour market. The findings revealed that Swedish national policies on work permits, social security numbers and validation of foreign qualifications serve as prohibiting grounds for professional labour participation and that these are fields that most employers base on to deny professionals job opportunities (Green 2003). What has been discussed above shows that sometimes immigrants may thrive to acquire the new country's requirements but then if they do not observe any change, the differences and shortfalls they face could be attributed to discrimination and for them to be able to fit in Swedish society, they needed to adopt to what is known as acculturation Lemaître (2007).

6.3.7 Personal initiative

When asked about factors that facilitate access to professional labour market, what was commonly mentioned was issues related to personal initiatives such as the ability to obtain a driving permit, having the ability to write a good CV and individual commitment to look out for jobs. This is in line with the study of Al-Atassi and Alebiary's (2017:39), whereby it was found out that employment of participants was significantly linked to "personal attributes". According to Al-Atassi and Alebiary, good personality traits such as persistency, personal motivation and good attitude are essential factors to employment. Their results show that employers are more attracted to individuals who demonstrate seriousness for work. In support of the above assertion, participants in the current study acknowledges the importance of being committed and having good skills in writing appealing CVs to employers. They believe that one having such attributes would be of advantage however, this is never easy particularly for them who cannot speak Swedish.

Participants believed that if they possessed one of the attributes mentioned above, it would add value on their professional job connections. Most of them who do not own driving permits find it challenging to even be considered for low skilled jobs. They stressed that most job specifications for jobs that are advertised requires one to have driving permit before they can qualify to send in their application. Some of the participants like J4 believed having a driving skill and possessing a driving license is not being luxurious for it is part of the requirements one needed to have to prepare for opportunities to come.

Participant M2 who now works in his field mention that this was the mostly needed requirements during his job search. He said usually immigrants from developing countries who come on student's permit find it costly to afford a driving license in Sweden, hence a hindrance for job searching. He demonstrated this by saying: "First when I had just come from Africa as a student, I didn't have a driving license. I applied for many jobs but in almost all jobs they needed a driving permit I did not have the money for I was a student."

On a different note, though participant C5 admits that she got a job because of her having a driving license, she asserts that, the need for permit varies depending on the type of job and employer. If the job is in logistics and transport sector automatically one will need to have a driving license. She responded:

In the job that I am doing now, my employers were impressed to offer me this job because I had a driving license. So, it is necessary and very important more so if you are to opt for low skilled jobs of driving to earn a living, almost everywhere you go they ask for a driving license. (Participant C5)

6.4 Strategies to improve Access to the Labor Market

The second research questions to this study was to find out the strategies HSPIs use to improve their access to the job market in Sweden. From the interview, the findings show that both groups of HSPIs have different strategies they think if adopted, can improve their access to the job market. Responses given by the interviewees varied depending on their stories and conditions in the job market. One of the major themes that appeared common was; enrolling for SFI to learn the language, building new and strengthening of old connections, upskilling and change of profession, voluntary work/ internship in Sweden, use of law skilled jobs as a channel for entering the system and making follow ups on applications.

6.4.1 Enrolling for SFI to learn Swedish Language

As noted in chapter 3, a strategy can be an act of action one uses to achieve a desired goal. The above subtheme indicate that professional immigrants manage their labour market circumstances by use of diverse strategies to improve their access to the job market. Human capital theory suggests that once individuals invests time gaining additional skills and trainings in language, there is a possibility for this to improve employment chances. Several aspects have been highlighted regarding this and among them the results reveal language competence being an important aspect in the job market, HSPIs acknowledged the need for having trainings in Swedish and in doing so, majority have entirely resorted to enroll for Swedish language training (SFI) as a way of mitigating language difficulties. They believe if this factor is not worked upon, could serve as long term obstacle in the job market. Therefore, by them enrolling for Swedish language course, will enable them to get equipped with what the system requires and thereafter their ability to enter the system is simplified. One participant (C5) said: “This is normal for me to be at SFI to study the language because as I decided to come to this country you know to get into the system, having the weapon of language is very important”.

Professionals who still have a dream of wanting to work within their field mentioned that when they engage in learning the language, there is a possibility for them to utilize the skills acquired in broader way. They reported that through language skills, they will be in a good position to write better job application resume impressive enough to recruiting companies. Moreover, with language, participants get to know how to prepare for interviews and their general communication skills can be improved hence presenting better chances for job market access. Furthermore, HSPIs believed that if utilized this strategy, they see chances of joining Swedish institutions for courses that they think will market their potentials in Sweden. These findings perfectly match with what Van Ngo and Este (2006) who wrote that, professional immigrants demonstrate use of adaptive strategies of learning the new countries language with a purpose of learning how to write better resumes, prepare for interviews and build on networks. For example, one participant reflected and said:

I can say I have not yet got my dream professional job in Sweden through learning the language as I am in SFI now, I will get to know more of what the system and Swedish policies says on veterinary practice I can get empowered by the language and I can utilize the skills to continue writing a good curriculum vitae impressive enough to the employers. (Participant G1)

Interestingly, a few participants confirmed that through enrolling for Swedish language classes they were enabled to get their current professional jobs. They were equipped with skills that enabled them to prepare for interviews hence a merit for job openings. Participant M2 noted: “Swedish classes are important because this can prepare someone for that moment of interviews. This will enable them to communicate in Swedish language for about 5 minutes in an interview room with the employers.... This was a big bonus for me getting my job you know”.

Participant P6 believed that Swedish is very important and the only way she can get a job is through improving on her Swedish. She said; “As an individual I need to learn Swedish and yeah, I need to perfect my Swedish for I can’t change my color hahaha I am not willing to change my name, so I need to learn Swedish because language is very important”.

6.4.2 Building of new and strengthening of existing social networks

I am now interested in working towards making friends here in Sweden. My target is to have friends not from my continent you know they are in the same situation like me. I want to get those one who already know the system, those with rich information about companies and jobs in Sweden I know I can get them through my church congregation. (Participant R3)

The results indicate that currently HSPIs are not only trying to build more networks but rather strengthening of the already existing relationships. Their intention is to have a wider coverage of social networks that will be of influence in changing their labour market situations. According to Van Ngo and Este (2006), use of strategic networks helped professional immigrants get re-established in their professional fields in the job market. In their conclusions, it was revealed that professional immigrants were able to improve on their social connections by building networking opportunities with the native born and other persons of influence than just staying in a circle of relatives and friends. This was also revealed in Duvander (2001) where the findings showed that immigrants who got exposed to Swedish native had better chances in the job market than those who were more exposed to their ethnic networks. Segendorf (2005) in his research analysis it’s revealed that non-EU immigrants used both formal, informal and direct search strategies to get jobs. Use of friends and relatives to acquire jobs is said to be part of the informal methods. In this study, participants mentioned that their target is to have a network that consists of professionals and other people coming from different ethnic

background. Many of the interviewees mentioned that joining a group, or an association is helpful. They believe it is hard and they cannot just find jobs randomly around the city and on the streets, they still needed to be part of a certain group. This is evident from the fact that many of them have joined local churches and different associations with hopes of finding groups of meaningful professionals who will be of great influence in the job market.

They believed that to have a relationship with people who already know the system, will help them get better information about companies and the existing jobs in the market. Several of them have joined associations and churches of which they believe is a better way to go in building networks. In fact, one participant a computer system engineer M2, confirmed that he got his current professional job through group connections. He shared his experience on how they formulated a group Facebook page with fellow professionals and the purpose of this page was to share information and websites on job alerts. To confirm the validity of this strategy, M2's response was:

Yeah, I don't regret having joined a Facebook page of twenty professionals. I with my friends after our master's course opened this Facebook page with an aim of information sharing on job alerts and how to get to good websites you know not all sites are good. I tried several of them and they almost conned me yeah that is how I got to know about my job.

6.4.3 Upskilling and change of profession

Upskilling and changing of profession was reflected as one of the strategies HSPIs think when adopted, can improve their chances to acquire jobs within their professional field in Sweden.

Upskilling do open doors because if there is even an opening for promotions and if I am there, I will prevail myself for that job and apply. If like you have not done any upgrading there is nothing you can bring onboard. How are you going to make a difference? nothing hahaha you have nothing to talk about really so that is very important. (participant J4)

As mentioned earlier in the literature, the reason professional immigrants are never considered for jobs, is that employers trust more in their (Swedish) educational system than any other country's education. According to Van Ngo and Este (2006) obtaining additional education in the new country is of significance. In Van Ngo and Este's findings, immigrants were able to get rid of mistrust employers have on their foreign academic documents by upgrading within

the established educational system of their host country. In this current study, results show that HSPIs have viewed this as an opportunity for them to think beyond and enroll for new courses within Swedish institutions. Immigrant professionals believed that when they make use of this strategy, they will not only get access to their professional jobs but also their chances to be promoted is high, more especially for those who are already working with their profession.

It's quite evident from the findings that a few HSPIs have started thinking of changing profession from previous undertakings into other fields with hopes of attaining better outcome in the job arena of Sweden. Furthermore, S8 believes that upgrading is a significant strategy. She has opted to enroll for more courses with intentions of accumulating skills necessary for future professional opportunities. When immigrants complement their professional fields with other skill such as computer studies and driving courses, this stands a chance of improving their position in the job market. Other participants for example C5 believed that there are courses that are on high demand in the market. Fields like social work and teaching courses were mentioned, for they assume these courses are worth more so for those professional immigrants interested in working within the social work field of Sweden. Participant C5 noted:

I do not want to be rigid, I do not want to tie myself on my degree of economics because it has earned me nothing here. I have worked with non-governmental organization. I like helping people and helping children, so I am now planning to enroll into a new course. I will try teaching or social work course.

6.4.4 Voluntary work/ internship in Sweden

According to the interview findings, the aspect of volunteering and internship was cited as one of the key strategies good for combating integration challenges in the job market. When it come to this strategy, participant M2 had this to say:

What I know about here is that when you get involved in any summer job is a way to go for you won't just jump into a job, you need that contact with the actual market in form of a summer job inform of a master thesis or an internship with Swedish company. It was not easy for me, but I tell you my first summer job earned me credit besides other factors. (Participant M2)

Al-Atassi and Alebiary (2017) mentioned that the key requirement and facilitator for employability of HSPIs is by having a job training with an organization. Job training can be done in form of internships and getting involved in doing summer jobs. Getting involved in job

coaching opportunities in important. Interviewed professionals for example B7 and M2 who are already working in their field mentioned that, having done an internship with Swedish companies was fundamental for it enabled them to find a foothold in the labour markets of Sweden hence a confirmation with what was stated in the findings of Al-Atassi and Alebiary (2017) that one of the requirements to professional employment in Sweden is through job trainings and internships with companies. The assumption behind this assertion is that when HSPIs get engaged in volunteering work and get their academic projects done with companies in Sweden, their chances are high to be retained for employment. According to Al-Atassi and Alebiary (2017) employers get attracted more to individuals who might have done some job training in Sweden. Basing on HSPIs' stories, they think doing voluntary work and internships will help them broaden their "experience and knowledge of the working conditions and cultures in Sweden, practice and improve on the language skills, builds professional network and have an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and capabilities to the employers" (Al-Atassi & Alebiary 2017:39). This is evident from the finding that a power engineer participant was able to obtain his current job because of the academic thesis he did with a company in Gothenburg. Interviewee B7 narrated that his own initiative to look for where he could write his final academic thesis improved his chances. For he got connected with many professionals who not only helped him improve his skills on CV writing but also became his references. In his words, respondent B7 said:

As am immigrant who came on student's visa, I wanted to remain in Sweden after studies. I worked hard to see that I find a place in a good company to do my final academic thesis. Though it wasn't easy, at the end it added value for it became a tangible reference put under my work experience in fact this helped me to connect with other professionals within my field for they helped me work and improve on my CV and in such a way I got my current job.

6.4.5 Making Follow ups on Applications

According to the narrations with participants, this strategy seemed significant and if properly used, can cause impact in having access to the job market. The majority of the HSPIs mentioned that the credibility of making follow ups is that it creates avenue for getting feedback from companies. The feedback they get, provides them with an opportunity of knowing how to adjust their skills in writing good curriculum vitae. According to one respondent M2 a computer system engineer, currently working in his profession emphasized on how important this strategy can influence employment. When interviewee M2 applied this strategy on companies,

it earned him credit. Each time he sent in his applications, he followed it up with a phone call. His intention was not to demand for a job but rather get feedback on how best he could improve on his CV in order to meet the market standards. This is in line with what Van Ngo and Este (2006) and Segendorf (2005) highlighted, that for professional immigrants to be able to overcome professional challenges in the job market, they need to adopt use strategies that go beyond just relaying on the academic and work experience. Regarding follow up one *interviewee said*:

It's good to follow up with your application because what I did normally when I got rejections with companies, I would call in a polite way to ask why my application has not been considered and ask how I can best improve my CV and application on any other job. You know the responses were good, it worked, and it helped me evaluate myself and thereafter I improved on my job search skills. (Participant M2)

In Segendorf (2005) immigrants who spent many hours applying for different jobs, immigrants who applied use of making phone calls to employers and walking in directly to hand deliver their CVs and letters of resume, had better chances to get employment than those who did not. In this current study, HSPIs who achieved better results upon use of this strategy encourage other HSPIs who have not got professional jobs to try out this strategy. For they testify that the responses they received from companies were genuine and as a result, it improved on their CV writing capacity, which later earned them their current job positions.

Besides just getting feedback, Participants J4, P6 and B7 explained the need for follow ups. It creates an avenue for those who are looking for jobs to get updates on upcoming jobs and the general over view of the organization. They also believe that companies can use this as a mechanism for observing and tracking of individual's commitment and interest for the job. When they are to make considerations on who to offer the job, one who at one time gave calls stands a chance to be offered an opportunity. Participant J4 declared that:

I tell you it takes as if it is a fulltime job yeah. It's the Swedish way of doing things these people need initiatives and personal commitment. Yeah seriously you look out for a job, you make applications, and you call up and find out about the interviews and what they prefer in such a way you can by luck be considered for a job.

6.4.6 Use of low skilled jobs as a channel for entering the system

Still on strategies, all participants acknowledged the importance of beginning with low skilled employment as a way of entering the system. A few participants like B7 and M2 explained that this strategy depends on personal preferences. Immigrants who come on student's visa but with intentions of remaining in Sweden after studies, B7 asserts that this is the best strategy to use. For it can be used as a channel for securing a permanent residence. According to S8 and J4, one needs to be flexible and willing to adjust towards jobs that requires no professional experiences. Jobs such as newspaper sorting and distribution, cleaning and driving pays less but in the long run, one can obtain a permanent residence. This creates an opportunity for those immigrants being given residence to have time to build on networks and look for professional jobs in the end. Respondent S8 came to Sweden well qualified but then she decided to settle for a low paying job. In fact, she does not regret having worked for twelve years as a night newspaper distributor. Both her and the husband were able to obtain citizenship through newspaper job and this has increased their hope for better opportunities in the years to come. Similarly, M2 mentioned that before his current professional job he begun by working in restaurant immediately after his course. Respondent J4 through a job of taxi driving, he got permanency permit which granted him citizenship. Through these jobs, HSPIs get to enter the system and secondly, they get to know more people who later boosts on their networks.

Respondents M2 and R3 also mentioned that this strategy depends on personal decision. They declared that immigrants who come as students would prefer going back to their home countries after studies but then the employment situation back home is not appealing. Referring to their colleagues, they said when they get back home, they end up working in good offices, with better professional titles but in most cases the salaries paid are low compared to what they would have earned while working in a low skilled sector in Sweden. Therefore, they said their preferences to take on low skilled jobs is significant for it's like a stepping-stone for one to get to another level of employment. One respondent said:

Yes, I have good academic documents, but this cannot market me in Sweden. I can equally be employed in a good institution home, but I can't there think of that. The payments there are just peanut I would rather remain in Sweden and work as a cleaner but with good pay. Believe me, I can use this platform to climb the ladders into a better office. (Participant R3)

6.5 Suggestions for potential Government reforms

According to Rogova (2014:55), policies that aim at reducing conflict and promoting equality in society is a foundation for good and successful integration. While conducting interviews, a theme on government reforms raised. Participants explained that as individuals, they can't do much to improve their situation in the job market. Besides them applying individual strategies, they believed government has a role to play in influencing change. The theme presents suggestions on what HSPIs think if put right by government their position of professional integration in the labour market will improve. The government, through its employment agency (Arbetsförmedlingen), has a lot to put in place "when it comes to aiding Swedes and immigrants, whether highly professionals or not" (Al-Atassi & Alebiary 2017:42).

When participants were asked to give opinions and recommendations, what appeared most was the suggestions and recommendation on government reforms. The findings reveal that HSPIs have hopes of seeing change brought in by government in the job market. Their stories show that much as they are trying to implement certain strategies to improve the situation, if the government does not put reforms on certain policies their struggle will yield nothing. HSPIs have strong believes that when the system incorporates the aspect of diversity, reforms on the recognition process of foreign qualifications, document validation, licensing process on certain professions and acceptance of English to be second working language, they believe all these will bring substantial change to their employability in Sweden. Respondent G1 qualified in a veterinary field noted that if the government tries to improve on its policies the shortage of workers in the health sector in Sweden will be managed. The strictness on acquiring practicing license for some qualifications seemed to have had long term effect on some professionals. Interviewee M2 also mentioned that both employers and Migrationsverket have varying interpretations of residence permits. This has caused implications on job opportunities. Moreover, M2 suggested that when the government come up with better interpretation methods, the conflicting ideas on residence/work permit interpretation between actors in the job market will be resolved. Participant M2 reported:

When you look at the way employers interpret the permit is not exactly the way Migrationsverket does. Sometimes they interpret it wrongly, some interpret it correctly. So maybe sometimes the employers should be told by policy makers about the different types of permit. Through this, some of them may understand and have a waiting heart.

As for language, R3 suggested the state to streamline on its policies concerning language as a means of communication. He feels that Swedish policies should be flexible enough to consider English language as a second working language in Sweden. For he believes this will not only improve on employability of non-EU immigrants but also EU citizens who come to live in Sweden and cannot use Swedish as a means of communication. Whereas respondent C5 and P6 suggested that the government should have an open and flexible system that accepts qualifications and experiences immigrants carry from countries of origin. Participants emphasized that Sweden as a country should focus at viewing them as people who are resourceful not as a burden to the country. Through their qualification and expertise Sweden will have different ways and style of Working.

They further noted that, when immigrants are given chance to prove their capabilities, this can be a good ground for assessing them on whether they are fit for a job other than just not considering them at all. Interviewee P6 mentions: “For me I insist the government needs to consider us they should at least give me a chance to prove my qualification.” In the findings of Al-Atassi and Alebiary (2017), highly educated immigrants suggested government to put reforms on how employment agencies should handle employment matters of immigrants. In this study, participants highlighted the need for diversity management. Suggestions shared by respondents J4 and P6 corresponds with the results of Al-Atassi and Alebiary (2017). There suggestions rotated on the need for diversity management within Swedish systems. They feel there is a lot that professional immigrants can contribute in the system if they are integrated. They suggest employers to be accommodating, be more open minded and ready to let in people with different backgrounds in their companies. They believe the idea of diversity management is important. When people with different perspective, from different background work together, it’s enriching to the receiving country’s development. Participant P6 notes: “The way a woman thinks is different from the way a man thinks. This is different from somebody else from Africa, India or Syria thinks. We have different unique skills which may be good for Sweden.”

Respondent J4 noted that if this kind of practice is perfected, the relationship between Sweden and other countries will also be strengthened because these very immigrants will act as a mouthpiece for Sweden when it comes to linking Sweden to other international markets. He believes when they let in people from outside the EU in the system, it is of an advantage to Sweden simply because when these people (immigrants) get back to their home countries and

may be take up on top leadership positions such as Presidential and ministerial positions they can be of a merit on advocating for Sweden in many aspects. Participant J4 highlights: “I mean if they let us into the system, we can be a mouthpiece for Sweden. This can create an outlet, or it broadens Swedish market internationally.”

Overall on reforms, the finding shows that even though Swedish government through its programs has tried to help immigrants, participants believe this has not been so effective. The reason for this, is that there are still law indicators of change in the labour market especially for non-EU professional immigrants. Participants asserted that if the outcome of governments’ programs were 100 percent effective, then issues on challenges with job searching would cease to be registered in the job market. This concern raised after a complain that employment institution such as Arbetsförmedlingen, has not been so helpful, especially when it comes to job matching. This corresponds with the findings of Lorentsson (2015) where immigrants were evaluated upon on the relevancy of Swedish employment agency and the responses given were more of critiques on failure to provide enough assistance. Therefore, professionals believe that if government strengthens on its strategies by ensuring that the capacity of Arbetsförmedlingen is well equipped with enough human resource (handläggare) who not only have experience, but passion for work and qualification of HSPIs. They assume if this is catered and taken good care of, some of the employment gaps will be covered. They suggest that Arbetsförmedlingen should review on how certain percentage of jobs are divided among HSPIs. They urged government through its employment agencies to facilitate regular meetings between case managers (handläggare) and HSPIs. In doing this, professional immigrant seeking for jobs will manage to share their views and experiences in the job market. This kind of participatory approach will provide a strong base to find better solutions for the challenges in the labour market. HSPIs also suggests government to put in place a well-established tracking mechanism to track on the progress of skilled professional students who come to study but fail to get jobs.

6.6 Summary of Findings

Overall, the findings of this study show that non-EU highly skilled immigrants do face several challenges when it comes to professional integration in Sweden. These challenges range from issues of incompetence in Swedish language, devaluation of foreign academic qualification and work experience, limited social networks, tight national policies, social cultural differences, discrimination and issues to do with personal initiatives. Language and devaluation of foreign

qualifications and work experience was mentioned as the most pressing factor. The research also found out ways on how immigrants can improve their access to the labor market. Factors that leads to improves access to the job market include; enrolling for SFI, making follow ups on job applications, building new and maintaining old networks, upskilling and change of course, working in low skilled sector as a way of tapping into the system, voluntary work and internships were mentioned as strategies to bring change in job market. A few suggestions for what the Swedish government can implement to register change in professional labour market was highlighted. Aspect of diversity, reforms on the recognition process of foreign qualifications, document validation, licensing process on certain professions and acceptance of English to be second working language was mentioned as important avenues to bring change by government in the job market of Sweden.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Suggestions for further Studies

7.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to analyze skilled professional non-EU immigrant's narratives about their difficulties in finding a job in their profession in Gothenburg, Sweden and with a view to improving their access to the job market. The research was interested in finding answers to two main questions. Firstly, *what are the experiences of non-EU skilled professional Immigrants in accessing the labor market within their profession in Gothenburg, Sweden?* Literature showed that immigrants whether non-EU or EU face serious challenges when it comes to accessing the labor market within their profession in Sweden. The findings from this study show that professional non-EU immigrants from Africa, Asia and Middle East experience more difficulties than Non-EU immigrants from other countries in finding jobs related to their professional fields. The challenges are mainly due to social-cultural differences, Swedish language insufficiency, limited social networks, devaluation of qualifications and work experience, stringent national policies and discrimination among others. The findings of this study seemed to match with the earlier literature. What the eight participants narrated indicate that without having the host country's specific skills, it may take long for HSPIs to find a foothold within their profession in Sweden. In accordance with the results, it's revealed that majority of the employers consider selection of immigrants basing on their capabilities of executing country's skills. Institutional forces such as national government policies plus other social characteristics of migrants determine their workplace experiences. In most cases, immigrants are isolated from taking part in the professional labour market because of failure to have these attributes (Harvey 2012:664).

Given the extensive foreign work experience of HSPIs, results revealed that employers and the country's policies don't recognize their qualifications and skills, HSPIs perceive this as being in a restrictive environment that does not value foreign experiences. In most cases before them getting a chance to find a foothold to the labour market, they are expected to go through what is highlighted as "familiarization" and "institutionalization" (Harvey 2012:665). This implies that for HSPIs to have their professional skills transferred, they need to first be well-acquainted with the country's

skills of education, Swedish language, work experience obtained through job trainings and internships, adoption of new cultural practices and having good networks. All these were highlighted as important avenues to unlock job opportunities in the Swedish labour market. Immigrants find it costly to invest time and money venturing on what they had already acquired in their home countries and because of this, they become reluctant to look out for professional jobs (Lorentsson 2015:48). According to the results, it was quite evident that since HSIPs met a few requirements and lacked on most important attributes that subjected them for low status jobs besides professional employment.

This study has demonstrated the degree to which Swedish language preference determines job participation of HSIPs. Language has been stated as one of the most striking factors that determine a successful professional integration. Results reveal that language is important, but the level of language importance varies from one profession to another. For example, in professions like Information Technology (IT) language is less required compared to social work profession where language is highly valued. Why this variation exists is because social workers work and communicate directly to service users (clients) unlike IT professionals who spend most of the time executing their daily work by use of computer programs. Language has influence on communication, the findings confirm that since the majority of the HSIPs can neither read nor write Swedish, it becomes hard for them to find and interpret information about jobs. They further revealed that mostly if the program is done in Swedish language, it is challenging for them to enroll for complementary courses in Swedish institutions and due to this, they think their participation in the labour market will take time. They further revealed that articulating issues in Swedish is a challenge for them, more especially when they are called upon for interviews and this makes them end up not being considered for employment by most employers. Results reveal that employers in Sweden are so much attracted to consider Swedish language speakers for job opportunities than those with knowledge of other languages such as English. Respondents acknowledged the need to learn Swedish, however many of the responses revealed that their network with people who are familiar with Swedish is quite minimal and since they can't practice, their process of learning the language is delayed.

The study has also shown that HSIPs fail to compete in the job market because of devaluation of their qualifications and work experience. These factors are being perceived as one of the top limiting factors. In human capital theory, it is indicated that individuals invest time in education with aims of finding a better future in the job market. However, because of underestimation of foreign trainings, the findings indicate that highly skilled immigrants have failed to realize many of their

expectations in Sweden. Most employers consider their foreign papers as of low quality. Another thing is that even though most of these immigrants had years of working experience from their home countries, this could not guarantee them to qualify for professional jobs in Sweden. In most cases, their foreign experiences were not considered simply because these experiences were not acquired in Sweden. Many of the employers considered this as invalid foreign experiences. All the immigrants except for two, had acquired an education in Sweden. One can say that this could be of impact in at least boosting their chances however, for as long as they do not understand Swedish language, it is still difficult for them to professionally integrate. The findings show that the Swedish national policies are a bit tight, the terms and conditions one has to fulfill before transferring their skills in Sweden is a hindering factor. The assessment procedures HSPIs take to have their qualifications recognized and be granted working licenses is quite expensive in terms of time particularly for those participants with highly regulated professions. They believe all these are 'administrative burdens' that will hinder them for a long time to find jobs that suit their qualifications. Therefore, according to the findings, one can conclude that unless one invested more in the country's other skills, sometimes having only an education does not automatically lead to economic empowerment in the job market.

Additionally, when it comes to social connections, the findings reveal that successful professional integration, is highly dependent on the quality and amount of social contacts HSPIs have. In agreement with previous studies, this study shows that professional immigrants miss out to be established in the labour market due to limited social networks. The discussion reveals that majority of the participants had their networks dominated by people of similar ethnic background. This affected their possibilities of getting connected to jobs. HSPIs do not only lack work related connections but also their relationship with the native population is still minimal, one could note this as a challenge more so if they cannot find someone to recommend and refer them to employment companies.

When it comes to discrimination, the research findings reveal that respondents could not really pinpoint the issue of discrimination, majority viewed it as a hidden practice where they just felt it existed but were not sure on how to justify the practice. It was just a mere feeling that some felt because of their difference in skin color, difference in names, gender and look was the reason why they have not only had limited access, but also treated differently in the job market of Sweden. The study shows that having a Swedish sounding name seems to improve chances to participate in the job market. Immigrants who did not have Swedish sounding names, on several occasion missed out

to be called for job interviews. Also the preference of qualifications and work experience obtained in Sweden by employers to some extent justifies that discrimination still exists in the job markets of Sweden and because of this, many of the HSPIs are compelled to work in low skilled sectors moreover in jobs which they are overqualified (Lorentsson 2015).

The second question the study intended to answer was *What Strategies have the non-EU skilled professional immigrants used to improve their access to the labor market?* The respondents themselves shared some insights on how they think they can improve access to the professional job market, and according to the findings, most of the non-EU skilled professional immigrants confront challenging labour market situations by improving on the quality of their social and professional networks. A few evidences show that some of them have started building their social networks through churches in communities and other associations. Participants believe through churches and associations they can embrace huge diversity of nationalities who will then simplify their job seeking process. Many of them mentioned that they have and are still investing time and resources in learning the Swedish language. They confirm that this is a necessity when one needs to work in Sweden or else one needs to be lucky enough to be hired by an international company which is also quite challenging. The findings also suggested that voluntary work and internship programs with Swedish companies, follow ups on job applications, upskilling and starting with low sector jobs are important strategies to use to improve access to the labor market.

Lastly, the study highlighted on the impact of stringent government policies on employment. This compelled HSPIs to make some suggestion for government involvement as being very important in bringing change in the market situation. They believe that the government through its reformed programs can be of substantial impact in causing labour market transformation. From the findings, issues such as foreign document recognition and validation, processing of license on certain profession and acceptance of English to be the second working language were highlighted as one of the most important aspects government needed to address for better economic integration of HSPIs in Sweden. The need for diversity management was mentioned by most of the participants. They appeal that a system that values diversity and accepts people with different ideologies to fully have access to participation in the job market, it's enriching for the host country's development.

Overall, the study has contributed to the greater understanding of the challenges highly skilled professional immigrants face in accessing job opportunities that matches their qualifications in Sweden, as well as insight on how HSPIs themselves can influence change in the labour market.

The findings highlighted that the host country's specific skills play a big role towards labour market improvement of immigrants. According to the study, immigrants who participated in the study did not exhibit all the qualities of the country's specific capital. Therefore, these could be the reasons they face challenges in accessing their professional jobs in Sweden. It is therefore of no doubt that if the immigrants want to get professional jobs in Sweden, they need to have all the qualities of 'human and social capital'. One can say that as professional immigrants try to learn the language, improve on networks, complement on their qualifications, acquire work experience and adapt by the cultural practices in Sweden, for the mean time they might have to settle for low status jobs.

7.1 Suggestion for future research

This study was only limited to eight interviews where the interviewees provided insight on their current situation within the job markets of Gothenburg. This seems to be a small sample size to generate broader information. The findings generated by HSPIs in Gothenburg commune may not be the same as what other HSPIs of other settings of Sweden go through. Therefore, this study suggests future researchers to consider use of more participants from other communes/cities besides Gothenburg to carry out a comparative qualitative study on the labour market situations of HSPIs.

This study considered use of purposive and snowball sampling techniques on selection of participants. One participant referring a researcher to another participant may bring some biasness in the study because most of the people in the area where the study was conducted seemed to be related in one way. Participants were not randomly selected therefore, this study suggests future research to consider change of methods i.e., the selection of participants can be purposive but based on random selection criteria.

Lastly, since the study only focused on HSPIs' experiences in the job market, it will be interesting for future research to find out what challenges employers or employing agencies experience with employing immigrant workers from outside European Union.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Information sheet



Who am I?

My name is Joyce Awori. I am a master's student pursuing a master's degree in social work and Human Rights at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

What am I doing? (Purpose)

I am undergoing my Final thesis and in doing so, I am conducting an Academic research study to understand the experiences of Non-EU professional skilled immigrants in accessing the labour market in Gothenburg, Sweden. The study will further provide insight into the factors that facilitate and or inhibit integration in to the professional labour market. Your participation in this study and your views will provide insight in this context.

Selection criteria

All the participants in this study have been selected purposively. The selection criteria are: that participants must be non-EU professionals with professional working skills but find it hard to get jobs that match their qualifications attained from their home countries, should have a degree as a minimum academic qualification, must have originated from Africa, Asia and Middle East, have stayed in Sweden for at least two years and above, and aged 20 years plus.

Participation

Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you have a right to withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences whatsoever. If you accept to participate in the study, I will ask you questions regarding your experiences with seeking professional work in Sweden, challenges, copying strategies extra. Your general insights about how to improve access to the labor market for non-EU professionals are also of interest. Data will be collected in an interview that will take approximately 1hr and will be audio recorded only with your consent.

Confidentiality

All the information you provide will be kept confidential and used only for this study. The information will only be discussed with the academic supervisor and thereafter the recorded tape will be deleted. Your personal details such as name and contact information will not appear anywhere in the final report. All participants in this study will remain anonymous.

Questions

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Researcher; Joyce Awori via awori_j@yahoo.com

Supervisor; Ulf Borelius via ulf.borelius@socwork.gu.se

Appendix 2: Consent form



Topic: Challenges of professional integration: Experiences of non-EU Highly Skilled professional immigrants in Gothenburg, Sweden.

[To be read to—or read by—and signed on behalf of the respondent]

I have read and understood the study information sheet provided.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that taking part in the study will included being interviewed and audio recorded.

I understand that participation in the study is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time without any consequences and I agree to take part in the study.

I understand that my personal details such as name and views I provide will not be revealed to people outside the research study.

I understand that my words may be quoted in the report (Master thesis) but my name will not be used.

I hereby agree to participate in the study.

Name of participant: Date:

Appendix 3: Interview guide



Interview guide for non-EU skilled professional Immigrants Topic: Challenges of professional integration: Experiences of non-EU Highly Skilled professional immigrants in Gothenburg, Sweden

Study purpose:

The purpose of this study is to analyze skilled Professional non-EU Immigrant's narratives about their difficulties in finding a job in their profession in Gothenburg, Sweden and with a view to improving their access to the job market.

Research questions:

- 3) What are the experiences of non-EU skilled professional Immigrants in accessing the labour market within their profession in Gothenburg, Sweden?
- 4) What Strategies have the non-EU skilled professional Immigrants used to improve their access to the labour market?

Socio-demographic information

- Could you please tell me something about yourself? i.e. Where you come from, age, academic level, professional major and your current occupation?
- Can you share with me how long you have been staying in Sweden, on which visa status and if you have ever sought for a professional job?

Experiences of non-EU professional Immigrants in accessing the labour market within their qualified field.

- What has been your experience with finding a professional job/work in your area of qualification in Gothenburg, Sweden?
- Have you had any difficulties in finding a professional job that matches your attained skills or in accessing the labor market in Gothenburg, Sweden in general?
- What factors do you think facilitate access to the professional labor market in Sweden?
- What factors do you think inhibit access to the labor market in Sweden?
- Have you attained any qualification skills in Sweden? if so, how does that affect your employment chances in Sweden?
- What are your sources of information for accessing jobs in Sweden? and how helpful are these sources in accessing the labor market in Sweden?

Strategies used by non-EU professional Immigrants to improve their access to the labor market

- What are the different strategies you use to increase your possibilities and opportunities for professional employment?
- If you cannot find skilled jobs, what options are available to you?
- In your own opinion, what needs to be done to improve access to the labor market for/of professional non-EU migrants in Gothenburg, Sweden?
- What would you generally recommend improving access to the labor market?
- Is there anything else you feel you want to add on as far as this subject is concerned?

I appreciate you so much for your time and participation in this study

