



INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANT AFRICAN WOMEN INTO THE SWEDISH CLEANING SECTOR

An Exploration of the role of social networks, work
perceptions and its consequences

Clara Mary Nakubulwa

Essay :30hp

Program: Master's in strategic HRM and labor relations

Level: Masters

Semester: 2020

Supervisor: Maria Jose Zapata

Examiner: Stefan Tengblad

Abstract

Essay/Thesis: 30hp
Program and/or course: Master's in strategic HRM and labor relations
Level: Second Cycle
Semester/year: 2020
Supervisor: Maria Jose Zapata
Examiner: Stefan Tengblad
Keyword: xx

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to explore the integration of African immigrant women into the cleaning sector of Sweden

Theory: The theoretical framework for this research is based on Granovetter social embeddedness theory, social identity theory and intersectionality theory

Method: This is a qualitative research

Result: The results from this research show that Social networks play a big role in the integration of African immigrant women into the cleaning sector/labor market. The social networks consist of both weak ties and strong ties. The cleaning job has however created both positive and negative implications on the day to lives of the immigrant women. There are also a lot of perceptions around working in Sweden and the cleaning job

FOREWORD

This research is part of my master's in strategic human resource management and labor relations requirements. The intention of this research is to further explore the cleaning sector with a focus of Immigrant African women

I would like to extend appreciation to my Supervisor Maria Jose Zapata who has tirelessly guided and advised me through this entire process. The feedbacks from Maria helped a lot in the writing process.

I also want to acknowledge my fellow students for the constructive feedback given in the seminars which was also of great help

And a special thank you to my mother and to Mr. Katumba Brian for the endless encouragement and support.

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.1	Purpose, research questions.....	7
1.2	Background.....	8
2	LITRATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1	Integration of immigrants into the labour market.....	9
2.2	The cleaning job in Sweden.....	12
3	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	13
3.1	Rationale for the chosen theories.....	13
3.2	Social embeddedness theory.....	14
3.3	Social identity theory.....	14
4	METHODOLOGY.....	15
4.1	Research Design.....	15
4.2	Data Collection.....	15
4.3	Data Analysis.....	17
4.4	Ethical Considerations.....	19
5	RESULTS.....	20
5.1	Arrival in Sweden (the respondents).....	20
5.2	What role do social networks of African migrant women play in their integration into the labour market?.....	21
5.3	What perceptions do African immigrant women have on work in Sweden and the cleaning job? 25	
5.3.1	Societal perspective on cleaning as a job.....	26
5.3.2	Feeling of inferiority-identity change confirmation.....	27
5.4	<i>What are the implications of working in the cleaning sector?</i>	29
5.5	Positive consequences.....	31
6	DISCUSSION.....	32
6.1	The role played by social networks in integration of Immigrant African women into the labor market.....	32
6.2	The perceptions African immigrant women have on work in Sweden and the cleaning job? 35	
6.3	The implications for African immigrant women working in the cleaning sector?.....	37
7	CONCLUSION.....	38
7.1	Contributions.....	40
7.1.1	Theoretical contribution.....	40
7.2	Knowledge transfer.....	40

7.3	Recommendations	40
7.4	Limitations.....	40
7.5	Future research.....	41
8	REFERENCE LIST	42
9	APPENDIX.....	47
9.1	INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	47

1 INTRODUCTION

This research explores the integration of African immigrant women into the Swedish cleaning sector. The research looks at the role of social networks in the integration of these African immigrant women into the labor market and specifically the cleaning sector. The research goes further ahead to explore the perceptions and the implications of the cleaning job in Sweden. This is done to answer the question of How do African immigrant women working in the Swedish cleaning sector experience their labour market integration.

Sweden is a special case because of its encouragement for female work participation. In Swedish debates domestic services are associated with gender class and ethnicity (Gavanas 2013). Sweden embraced multiculturalism from the 1970s and created policies with guidelines of equality, freedom of choice, and cooperation (Roth and Hertzberg 2010). For example, the Swedish integration policy of 2008 which focused on equal rights and opportunities for all regardless of the ethnicity (Löfström., 2009).

Multiculturalism in Sweden was created through manpower, that is to say immigrants coming in to only provide labour in Sweden. However, this later changed as immigrants begun coming in to reunite with family and as refugees (Roth and Hertzberg 2010)

Daly and Lewis argue that care has overtime been looked as a female role. Care was initially related to unpaid domestic personal services. This has changed overtime as women are now increasingly defined as paid workers to the point of affecting welfare policies on female labor (2000). Employment in low skilled occupations is most common within the care sector. Immigrants with low skills usually use care work as an entry into the labor market (Da roit and Weicht 2013)

Domestic workers and temporary cleaners have been found to be commonly migrating women. (Calleman 2011). Bevelander and Irastorza, (2017) express that Sweden is among the European countries that have received a lot of immigrants since 2014. Bevelander and Irastorza, (2017) further illustrate that several reforms have been introduced over time as a way of integrating all residents into the labor market including people that are not originally from Sweden.

Estévez-Abe and Hobson (2015) claim that the care work provided my migrants is reducing the gap in the care sector within most of the European countries. Globalization has also created an influx of immigrants in different parts of the world that seem to have more stability both economically and security wise. As a means of survival these immigrants must

acquire jobs in the host countries in order to provide for their basic needs and therefore being integrated into the labor market. Integration can have different meanings in different countries depending on the beliefs and values attached to the respective actors. However, in simple terms integration is the process through which immigrants are dissolved into the host society to fit in as a way of having equal opportunities with the native born (Omanovic et al 2020). Bradley and Healy (2008) illustrate four characteristic ways minority members theoretically fit into the labor market structures. First is through economic integration. Here the distribution of economic slots is balanced to incorporate the minorities. Second is through segmentation where the minorities are clustered into distinct occupations. Third through marginalization, here minorities are having limited access to jobs and therefore create their own jobs. Lastly is exclusion where despite their existence the minority suffer unemployment and underemployment and are forced into crime for survival.

1.1 Purpose, research questions

The purpose of this research is to examine how African immigrant women working in the Swedish cleaning sector experience their labor market integration in Sweden. This is done by studying the role played by social networks of these immigrant women in finding these cleaning jobs, how the job has affected their day to day life and their experiences at the cleaning jobs.

Research question

- How do African immigrant women working in the Swedish cleaning sector experience their labour market integration?

Sub questions:

- What role do social networks of African immigrant women play in their integration into the labour market?
- What perceptions do African immigrant women have on work in Sweden and the cleaning job?
- What are implications of working in the cleaning sector?

1.2 Background

According to Lodovici, the integration of immigrants is not a new topic as it is also becoming more and more relevant due to the huge number of immigrants moving to Europe in the last two decades. The immigrant's inflows consist of labour immigrants who have also become one of the causes of population growth in the European Union. Such immigrants however are prone to being employed in low quality jobs, undeclared work and jobs which they are too qualified for (2010).

Kanas et al (2011) elaborates that social networks are associated with labour market outcomes for immigrant's employment. The amount of social capital depends on the number of an individual's network and their willingness to offer help and resources. Immigrant Women that do paid domestic work rely on their social networks resources to learn more about their work. And much as these social networks are crucial, they can also be disadvantageous (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). It is from this knowledge that the research question emanates *What role do social networks of African immigrant women play in their integration into the labour market? And What are implications of working in the cleaning sector?*

The cleaning sector is considered highly feminist and has low representation and membership with Trade Unions thus making it hard to organise (Recio, and Godino, 2011). Women have been ignored for a while in both research and discourse. Women have therefore not been able to present their life situations and interests (Knocke ,1999). This research therefore provides a platform for which immigrant women specifically Africans can express themselves in regards their integration into the cleaning sector. The fact that this study looks into particular race of immigrants, it then provides a clear picture of the experiences of African women. This limits biases which can occur with a generalised study that involves immigrants from a wide range of different backgrounds

2 LITRATURE REVIEW

This chapter highlights the various previous research that has been carried out on how immigrants are integrated into the labour market of Sweden.

2.1 Integration of immigrants into the labour market

Previously, the Swedish labour market board was responsible for handling refugee and immigrant issues. This was because most immigrants moved to Sweden to provide labour and therefore there was a natural focus on labour integration of immigrants. However as more and more immigrants moved for other reasons the responsibility was moved to the Swedish immigration board. This board assigned immigrants to municipalities where integration was divided into two periods. One being the introductory period and the other being integration into the labour market. The municipalities employed refugee coordinators that linked immigrants to employment offices to help with job searches (Åslund, O., Edin, P.A. and Fredriksson, P., 2004).

According to Behtoui (2004) Numerous studies have been done on labour market outcomes for immigrants in Sweden. Ekberg (1997) made a study about labour market situation for young immigrants. The results showed that the labour market situation for second generation immigrants that move to Sweden as Adults is harsh in comparison to native borns. This was attributed to the difference in Swedish language skills, education attainment, gender and individual characteristics.

Nekby (2002) study about examining the convergence between natives and immigrants shows that even within immigrants the integration into the labour market is different. This is explained by the fact that it is sometimes complex to evaluate foreign degrees thus making it hard for some immigrants that even have a high education to get into the labour market. For some immigrants they have attained degrees that are irrelevant to the Swedish market therefore making those with relevant degrees more advantageous. Un employment risks also differ depending on the period of stay in Sweden. Immigrants that have stayed in Sweden for a long time develop Swedish specific social capital over time also, they face decreasing discrimination thus making them less likely to be unemployed in comparison to new entrants(Arai and Vilhelmsson, 2001).This is in relation to a study in USA about the employment status of immigrant women. According to Duleep and Sanders (1993), the hourly earnings of immigrant women increases with the increased stay in the USA and this is

because they continue to seek out new and the best opportunities around them through which they will be able to put their abilities to use.

A study made on the participation of women in the labour market and the role of social networks showed that women with extensive networks are more likely to be working for pay in comparison to those that have small networks. The results also revealed that for black women, knowing someone of a different race is advantageous in the labour market (Stoloff et al 1999). Bevelander and Scott (1996) explain that immigrants that come into Sweden with prior knowledge or acquaintances have better chances of economic success than those that come with no knowledge and no contact at all.

The labour market participation of immigrants in Sweden differs due to education gender and origin. These are also affected by the neighbourhood and city the immigrant stays. For example, immigrants coming from west Asia and middle east are slow into the labour market due to discrimination by employers. The quality of education is also key for employers and therefore those with low- or poor-quality education stand a less chance into the Swedish labour market. The study also shows that immigrants in big cities stand a bigger chance than those staying in distressed neighbourhoods (Hedberg and Tammaru, 2013.)

Rooth and Ekberg (2006) study shows that for many immigrants the new job in Sweden is of a lower status than that of their home country. However, after for such immigrants, it is possible to get better jobs in the future after they have become fluent in Swedish or attained a Swedish education thus making a U shaped or upward occupational mobility.

According to a longitudinal explorative study in Sweden the situation of a native born new to the labour market is the same as an immigrant entering the labour market. However, immigrants are more at a disadvantage because of the lack of language skills, experience and general knowledge of the labour market (Bevelander, 2005). Sweden has since the world war II received a sizeable number of immigrants. This was due to the high demand of foreign labour. In the 1950s immigrant women dominated and majority were employed as domestic workers. However, in the 1960s which is referred to as the great immigration decade, immigrants were recruited in other countries of Europe because of the growing industrial sector then. In the industrial sector still, women were working within the low skill manual jobs (Bevelander, 2005).

Sweden has however come to realisation of being the gender equality champion through having the biggest progress in empowering women both politically and economically (Towns, 2002)

However, this has detracted overtime as there is categorisation of women in terms of hierarchy that is the swede women and immigrant women (Towns,2002).

Through questioners, group discussions and observations data were collected to find out the relation of unemployment and sick leave among immigrants on a gender perspective. This study showed that immigrant women as compared to men have poor health which is attributed to moving to a new area and the feeling of inferiority in society and lack of exposure. This poor health then leads to sick leave and unemployment (Akhavan and Bildt, 2004). Poverty and unemployment are common within immigrant women. Early retirement and sick leave are also more common among immigrant women. This can be linked to trauma of being both woman and an immigrant. However, despite all of this some immigrant women learn the language get an education and are able to attain jobs (Akhavan and Bildt, 2004).

At the city level, labour segregation is among the challenges facing big cities in Sweden, as Gothenburg. The percentage of native borns with permanent employment is much bigger than that of foreign borns, this is more evident in areas which have a high percentage of immigrants like Bergsjön and South Angered that has immigrants that have long time unemployment (Kushi, and McManus, 2018)

An evaluation of the Swedish immigration policy reform that includes changes in the processes of integration of immigrants into the labour market shows that the policy caused losses for immigrants in the long run. This can be attributed to the fact that the policy shifted from labour market assimilation that is providing knowledge for the labour market to focusing on income support for immigrants (Edin and Åslund, O., 2001)

The labour market conditions at the time when the immigrants arrive also has a long-term impact on the employment and earnings of immigrants. Finding bad labour market on arrival affects earnings and employment for some years which is even worsened if one arrives and stays in a poor community. Such immigrants face high local unemployment thus decreasing their chances of getting into the labour market (Rooth et al 2003)

Daunfeldt, et al (2019) made an investigation on the kind of firms that hire non-western immigrants was made. It was discovered that firms having non-western managers hired more non-western immigrants than firms not having non-western managers.

2.2 The cleaning job in Sweden

According to Gavanas (2013), Domestic services in Sweden have traditionally been provided by the female family members or care providers that are paid. These domestic services and care are feminised and affiliated to social class. In 2007 tax reduction for domestic services was introduced and this created social inclusion and social exclusion. Gavanas (2013) explains that the 2007 tax reductions affected the demand and working conditions in the domestic service. In this case the high demand created competition between formal and informal sector where the former competes with formalised agreements hence social inclusion and the later compete with lower prices exposing them to poor working conditions hence social exclusion (Gavanas 2013).

The job of cleaning is tedious difficult and lacks the potential to give individuals self-fulfilment. The abuses of domestic workers illustrate the dangers of this job seeing that the majority of individuals in this job are women. Furthermore, this sector according to critics is in existence because of the economic inequalities that exist in society. This means a certain class, race that is less privileged in comparison to the rest of the population is prone to doing such work (Bowman and Cole ,2014).

The Swedish cleaning market is shaped on gender and nationality that is having the majority as women and foreign born. Under some circumstances the cleaning is considered descent work. This is in cases where the employment is complemented with a number of benefits that include good working conditions, social benefits and compensation (Cole and Bowman 2014).

Rooth et al (2006) made interviews with four different immigrant groups and found that most immigrants first job in Sweden is of lower status as compared to the one previously in the home country. Cleaning as a job doesn't not require broad knowledge of the Swedish language this makes cleaning one of the very few jobs that can integrate immigrants into the social and economic citizenship (Bowman and Cole ,2014).

The cleaning sector of Sweden comprises of both the formal sector and informal sector also known as *svart arbete* (Larsen n d) *Svart arbete* is a common happening in Sweden and almost half of the population considers both purchasing and supplying of such services as no offence (Larsen n d).Swedish companies also can register a few formal employees but also informally employ additional workers when there is demand (Singha nd).A study by Berndt et al(2017) shows that in Sweden, older people leaving with someone are more likely to use informal cleaners as compared to older people leaving alone, the study further shows older men being

more likely to use informal cleaners as compared to older women. When it comes to the formal sector. The general employment legislation regulates the home service companies in Sweden (Calleman 2011). Formal domestic workers have full benefits and protection of trade unions (Gavanas 2013). Formal employment is usually organised through informal recruitment for example through social networks. Registered companies find customers and recruit workers through social networks. (Gavanas 2013).

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter illustrates the different theories that will be used to relate the different findings of the research. These include Granovetter social embeddedness theory and social identity theory

3.1 Rationale for the chosen theories

The social embeddedness theory is a chosen theory for this study because it analyses social actors within a given context. In this case the social actors being African immigrant women and the context being the cleaning sector in Sweden. Therefore, being that a particular group of people is used for analyses within the same context, the use of this theory makes it more distinct to explore. The social embeddedness theory argues that decisions of economic entities are to a large extent based on the social networks in which these entities operate (Czernek-Marszałek, 2020). Individuals interact with others that possess various resources as a means of making their own life's better (Laud et al 2015). The two interviews made prior the actual research showed that the cleaning jobs were obtained from someone within the social networks and it was basically for the purpose of improving the quality of life in Sweden. This means that the relationships between people have the ability to influence their economic future. With that feedback it is therefore relevant to use the social embeddedness theory for the study.

The Social identity theory is also used in this study. The social identity theory describes how social identities impact on people's behaviors and attitudes as regards to both the inward group and outward group. (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Logically, these African women see themselves as an inward group and the rest as an outward group and thus behave according to the inward group expectations. The social identity theory has been used to explain socialization and conformity among peer groups and it is more influential when individuals have strong ties to a particular group (Hogg 2016). This then makes the social identity theory a relevant theory for use.

The social embeddedness theory and social identity theory relate to each other. This is because when individuals cluster together through the social networks that is weak ties and strong ties (social embeddedness) they then create an identity which the society defines them and as well as themselves and thus creating a social identity.

3.2 Social embeddedness theory

The social embeddedness theory was developed by Mark Granovetter. This was done as a way of expressing that individuals' actions reflect the social relations through which they operate. Granovetter (1982) social embeddedness theory presents that individuals are influenced by others with whom they have either strong ties or weak ties. The strong ties in this case are the people very close to an individual i.e. close friends and relatives, the weak ties are people that one does not often interact with and not very close to. As per this theory, the weak ties tend to link individuals of different groups as compared to the strong ties (Granovetter 1982).

Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) also build on Granovetter social embeddedness theory to further argue about social and economic determinants. In this, they present what they determined as bounded solidarity. Here individuals of a particular group find themselves affected by the same events in a specific place and time. This solidarity in the end then affects their behavior and conduct which also can include access to various privileging resources. According to Granovetter (1985), the economy can be viewed as networks of social interactions.

3.3 Social identity theory

The social identity theory was initially proposed by Tajfel and Turner. The theory explains the behaviours and cognitions of group processes (Trepte 2006)

Social identity theory consists of two parts. One is the psychological part which is affiliated to cognitive process fundamental to the social identity definition and the assumption that individuals aim for a positive social identity. The second part is the social structural which illustrates how people deal with a negative social identity (Scheepers and Ellemers, 2019)

This theory expresses that a person is aware that they belong to a certain social group. In this case a social group is a collection of individuals that have the same social identification and

consider themselves as being in the same social category. This group of people is considered the in group whereas the rest of the people in social comparison is considered the out group. (Stets and Burke 2000).

According to States and Burke (2000) the social identity theory is built on three cognitive processes that is social categorisation, social identification and social comparison.

Social categorisation. This is the process through which we classify people into particular social groups as a way of understanding our social world. This then creates clear differences and similarities among people of different groups. Individuals name others and themselves by recognising one another as occupants of positions or roles.

Social identification. Here individuals identify themselves as members of a group member and thus behave in a way member of that particular group behave.

Social comparison. In this process individuals compare themselves their own group with other groups in terms of social stand and prestige.

4 METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research design used, data collection methods and analysis and also presents the limitations of the methodology.

4.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design. According to Rubin H and Rubin I (2011) studies related to a specific group or culture usually have exploratory nature being that researchers quest for patterns phrases and terms that they have discovered. Marshall and Rossman (2011) also stress that qualitative research design is suitable for research that seeks for description and research that digs deep into complexities. An explorative research approach is used for this study. Explorative research can answer questions of all types thus making it flexible (Kimathi n d)

4.2 Data Collection

Data was collected using convenience sampling, purposeful sampling and snowballing sampling.

Convenience sampling is sampling based on availability, willingness and accessibility of members within the interest group as per the research (Etikan et al 2016). The first respondent was already known to the researcher. This respondent then kept recommending more people to contact. The respondents that were very willing to be part of the research and

availed time that was both convenient for them and the researcher were considered for the interviews.

Purposeful sampling. This sampling is done based on the qualities an individual possesses that are in line with the phenomenon of interest (Etikan et al 2016). In this case, respondents that are women, African origin and working in the cleaning sector were chosen.

Snowballing sampling. The respondents that were interviewed recommended other colleagues that possess the same qualities who then also recommended other colleagues to also take part in the research.

All respondents in this research work as cleaners in both small scale and very big established cleaning companies within Gothenburg that they preferred to keep anonymous.

Primary data

Data was primarily collected through interviews that were both online interviews and face to face interviews. A total of 15 interviews was made of which 2 were made during the initial stages of the research. This was done as way of getting a broader view of the research and be able to use the best tools in regards theories and relevant questions for the future interviews among others.

During data collection, the interview questions were changed according to the stories provided by the respondent in the event that the interviewer was interested in having a deeper understanding of a particular answer.

The interviews ranged between 40 mins to one hour and a half. In this case the face to face interviews took much more time than the online interviews.

Intensive interviews were used. Charmaz (2014) describes intensive interviews as one-sided conversation that seek to explore an individual's experiences with the research topic.

Intensive interviews are characterised of participants with first-hand experience, reliance on open ended questions, understanding of participants perspectives, views and accounts of their actions (Charmaz 2014)

In depth interviews were used as a way of getting rich data. Charmaz (2014) emphasizes that a study with rich and relevant data is useful for building core categories. These intensive interviews had semi structured open-ended questions to give a narrative approach.

The table below shows the nature of respondents

RESPONDENT (R)	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	EMPLOYEMNT FORM	YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN SWEDEN
1	Uganda	Formal	3
2	Nigeria	Formal	4
3	Uganda	Formal	3
4	Botswana	Formal	3
5	Botswana	Formal	5
6	Tanzania	Formal	6
7	Uganda	Formal	3
8	Gambia	Formal	3
9	Nigeria	Formal	3
10	Kenya	Formal	1
11	Nigeria	Informal	2
12	Ghana	Informal	2
13	Kenya	Formal	1
14	Uganda	Formal	6

4.3 Data Analysis

On completion of data collection data analysis was then made. All interviews were recorded during collection. The request by respondents for anonymity was observed and therefore all interviews and were named using false names.

A narrative data analysis was used for this research. Narrative analysis helps us understand human phenomena and actions that affect human beings. Furthermore, the analysis through which meaning is sought from stories, histories, folk tales and myths accumulated overtime (Hussain et al 2012).

The stories and narratives from the interviews enabled creation of themes. These themes from the transcripts were obtained through repetitive quotes from the different respondents.

The final themes were created from the meanings the researcher made from the different stories provided by the respondents. After each interview the researcher created themes and at the end of all interviews new conclusive themes were created for each research question. Due to unclear information from some online interviews, some respondents were contacted again to explain some unclear concepts in order to create proper themes.

Below are some of the themes that were created;

Sub question 1: Social networks

- Saloon
- SFI class
- Church
- Relatives
- Shops
- Social media

Sub question 2: Identity, perceptions

- Future employability
- Feelings of Inferiority
- Low confidence, handling machines
- Impact of education
- Offensive behavior
- Search for greener pastures
- Stigma associated with the job

Sub question 3: Consequences, implications

Positive impacts:

- improved status
- Pride

Negative impacts:

- Work home imbalance
- Failure of employment growth
- Mistreatment

There also some challenges faced with using this kind of analysis. First, meaning is not easily made from these stories, the researcher relays on the story tellers self-observation, the data is not precise and therefore hard to analyse (Rieseemann 2018)

4.4 Ethical Considerations

It is important for the researcher to pay attention to how the respondent reacts to the different questions to rule out discomfort of the respondent which will have an effect on the response (Charmaz 2014). Upon noticing that some questions are uncomfortable or sensitive for the respondent, another question was asked or rephrased to avoid biased responses and discomfort during the rest of the interview. All respondents were contact prior the interview and briefed on what the interview was about and what it was going to be used for. This also included making them aware that the interviews will be recorded. When making the questionnaire the questions were well thought of to avoid asking questions that could be humiliating or judgemental. Charmaz (2014) also states that the physical presentation of a researcher influences the answers of the respondents. Therefore, for the respondents that were met face to face the researcher ensured to dress in an appropriate way in order not to create bias. There was always a brief chat before getting into the questions as a way of bonding with respondents. All data collected form the interviews was anonymised and kept in a special folder with a password to avoid accessibility by intruders.

5 RESULTS

This chapter presents all data collected from the interviews beginning with a brief background of the respondents. The results are then presented following the order of the three research questions

5.1 Arrival in Sweden (the respondents)

Respondent 1. Originally from Uganda, moved to Sweden five years ago as a student on scholarship for two years and settled in Sweden after her education

Respondent 2. With a Nigerian background moved to Sweden after her husband who had already settled into Sweden had invited her to come live with him and has lived in Sweden for six years now

Respondent 3. Originally from Uganda. Also received a scholarship to Study in Sweden and decided to remain after her education. She has lived in Sweden for five years now

Respondent 4. From Botswana. She was invited to Europe by a boyfriend that then lived in Spain however they later moved to Sweden after he got a new job and has since then lived in Sweden for four years

Respondent 5. Also originally from Botswana however preferred not to speak of how she got to Sweden. “ *I honestly prefer not to talk about that*”. She said. The respondent has lived in Sweden for five and a half years

Respondent 6. The respondent is originally from Tanzania and at one point visited Sweden for a work conference then she met her now current husband that invited her to come stay with him in Sweden

Respondent 7. Originally from Uganda has lived in Sweden for four years. Moved to Sweden after being invited by her husband.

Respondent 8. Originally from Gambia. Moved to Sweden four years ago after acquiring a scholarship at the university of Gothenburg and remained after her education

Respondent 9. With a Nigerian background and lived in Sweden for five years after coming in to look for greener pastures on being informed by friends that there were better job opportunities.

Respondent 10. Originally from Kenya, was invited by the mother to come for a visit in Sweden and then met a man and then settled permanently in Sweden and has since then lived in Sweden for three years

Respondent 11. Originally from Nigeria, moved to Sweden to seek refuge due to the harassment of LGBT in Nigeria. Has lived in Sweden for four years.

Respondent 12. Originally from Ghana moved to Sweden two and half years ago on invitation by a relative

Respondent 13: Originally from Kenya, moved to Sweden after being given a course at the University of Gothenburg

Respondent 14. Originally from Uganda moved to Sweden to stay with her husband but had a sister already living in Sweden and owned a cleaning company. Has lived in Uganda for 5 and a half years

5.2 What role do social networks of African migrant women play in their integration into the labour market?

When speaking to respondents especially those that moved to Sweden to find their partners. They expressed that they were really depressed when they arrived. They had no friends and the husbands were always away to work thus leaving them very lonely. Respondent 7(R7) whose partner was always went out of the country for official duty explained that she had to think of a way out and therefore begun to go out more often looking for places where fellow Ugandans gather to at least feel at home, it is from these gatherings that she met people that gave her information regarding the cleaning jobs and their availability.

Later in the interview when asked about how she got her first job, R7 said that the continuous visits to the saloon created a strong bond between her and the Hairdresser who later learnt that R7 had no job and recommended her a job with a brother that owns a cleaning company where she works to date.

“actually, I got this job through the saloon lady you know she was also from Uganda. We spoke in our local language obitegela(you understand)...,anyway she hooked me up with her brother who employed me and am still working with him”

Respondent 4 who also moved to Europe after being invited by the husband spoke of being very lonely when the husband was away. Later on, she separated from her husband and the situation got worse as she had to survive on her own which meant looking for a job. She had always heard that there are cleaning jobs for black people. This is where her search for the jobs begun. Her first attempt was to apply online in different companies however this did not yield any fruits. She instead got herself a job at a hotel which happens to be her first job.

She had always been in communication with friends back at home and one of her friends informed her that she had a cousin that had lived in Sweden for a while and maybe they can hook up. She tried to get a hold of this person but with intentions of only being a friend however this ended up being the person that helped her get the cleaning job.

Moving on, another example of social network in play is Respondent 13. After moving to Sweden to study, she had to raise money for her own upkeep and rent this meant looking for a job to supplement the money she was receiving from back home. R13 therefore decided to begin her search for a job. This begun with an online search for various companies where she sent random applications which was never successful. However, after a group discussion at school she learned that there were jobs available in the cleaning sector. One of her colleagues who was already working recommended her for a job which she eventually got

Respondent 8 comes from a very Christian background and loves to sing in the church. When she moved to Sweden, she begun looking around for a church she could join and fellowship with fellow Christians. She identified a number of churches which welcomed her however, she says they were too Swedish for her, yet she was used to the African way of worship. She decided to instead to keep on Sundays. During a new year's night, she was moving randomly around the city with fellow students and saw a place that had a number of blacks that seemed to be in celebration. They decided to go and find out what was happening only to later learn that this was a church where people had gathered to celebrate new year's. They decided to join the celebration and, in the process, she overheard some people speaking her local language. She moved to where these people were and asked them if they are from Gambia which they agreed to. They had a brief conversation and she told them how she has been looking for a church incidentally one of these people was also in the church choir. Few months later in the church she discovered that the pastor's wife owned a cleaning company where she eventually asked for cleaning job which she got

Arriving in Sweden Respondent 5 knew how it was important to learn the Swedish language and therefore enrolled for Swedish class as soon as possible. She begun by having intensive classes that were running from morning to midday however it became to demanding for her and she opted for evening class. In the evening classes most attendants were people that were working and would join class after work. Among her classmates was one who was always dosing during class something which she kept wondering about. During a conversation with him during the breaks she asked about where he was working. He told her that he was working with a cleaning company. This was clear to the respondent why he was always tired in class. As time went on, they had conversations often and he convinced her to also apply for a cleaning job to earn some money which she agreed to despite not really being on a search for a job during that particular time.

Respondent 14 was always coming for short family Visits in Sweden and through these holidays she met her current husband. Few years later she was invited to come and live with her husband. By the time she returned to settle in Sweden her sister that has lived in Sweden for close to two decades had opened a cleaning company. The company was still small, and the sister needed employees so occasionally the respondent would do the cleaning jobs when they failed to get someone to do the job. This is a job she still does till today and also helps with the administrative work as well.

For the case of respondent 6, the Swedish food is something that was really disturbing. Her then husband is Swedish most of the food prepared home was Swedish food. Due to her urge to get a hold of her local food she tried to look around for African shops that would probably be having some African food. As soon as she identified one, she begun going there often. The owner of the shop opened a group on social media where he would communicate when the various foods have arrived. On this platform she discovered there were some fellow Tanzanians and begun getting friendly to them. A year later she separated with her husband and had to begin a new life which meant also getting herself a job. She then decided to ask some of these Tanzanian colleagues if they knew and it is from the feedback, she was given that she eventually landed a job

Another respondent 2 also managed to get a cleaning job in circumstances familiar with respondent 6. With a skill of baking, she was always making snacks and posted them on social media. After a while a friend suggested to her that she could make this a business venture since many Africans tend to want to have a taste of their local recipes. After some

time in business her clientele got bigger however was not so profitable. Her husband then suggested that it is wiser to find a job and then bake as a side business. She then kept asking her clients on her social handles if anyone knew of any available jobs. She given a number of suggestions most of which rotated around cleaning which is a job she had never thought she would end up doing. Nevertheless, she was helped through one of her clients to get hold of a job in one of the biggest cleaning companies in Sweden.

Respondent 1 after completing her master's degree, her visa was almost expiring, and she had no intentions of going back to Uganda. She learnt from other friends within Gothenburg that if she got job it would be easier for her to stay because the job would help her acquire a temporary work permit. Within this information she had to work tooth and nail to get the job. It is through these very friends that she managed to get a cleaning job eventually and was lucky to get a work permit one year later.

The case of Respondent 13 is similar to that of Respondent 1.

“well I got the job for survival....my visa was almost expiring but lucky enough I had an option of extending it however I needed to have a certain amount of money which I didn't have at the time...so the only option I had was to get a job so that I can begin saving money I applied for job randomly online asked few friends around who kept making recommendations until I got a job..”

For the case of respondent 9, on arrival to Sweden she was sent to stay at the camp. At the camp however they were given very little money and she decided to look around for a job. Some of the people at the camp were working already and they helped her to get a cleaning

Respondent 10 11 and 12 got to know about the cleaning jobs through family friends, random online search respectively

“My husband friend was also married to a black woman that was working in the cleaning sector they used to visit us a lot, so we became good friends..... she had lived in Gothenburg longer and so knew more about the city than me.... sooo..... by that time, I was just home doing nothing, and she suggested i join the cleaning company she was working with.....so she introduced me to their boss we made an appointment and eventually I was offered a job”

“I was helped by fellow Nigerians we make parties a lot you know we love to chop money hahahahha..... So, during those parties we interact try to know each other I told them I was struggling to get a job and they gave me leads.....in fact I ended up getting 2 job offers so I chose this one because it was offering slightly more money.....hahahha”

“ truthfully I was just making random searches online and luckily a week later I got feedback form one of the companies.....in fact I was shocked I was like who is this(laugh) because I couldn't even remember the names of the companies.....hahahahaha”

5.3 What perceptions do African immigrant women have on work in Sweden and the cleaning job?

For many of the respondents, coming to Sweden and being employed is a milestone in their lives. Many look at Europe as a land of great opportunities and were willing to settle in Sweden at whatever cost regardless of the quality of life they have to live or the jobs they are doing. One respondent explained that it is better for her to have a cleaning job in Sweden than a white-collar job in Nigeria

Respondent 11 on being asked to compare the job back home with the job in Sweden also expressed that the job back home in terms of title is better but nevertheless it was more stressing than the cleaning job in Sweden

Respondent 9 when asked what prompted her to move to Sweden. She acknowledged that she thought work in Europe was not so tiring since most of the work is done with machines and therefore looked for any opportunity to come to Europe. Her though was the work in Europe wouldn't t be very manual and tiring since there are machines to make work easier

Respondent 1 and 3 showed to have had very strong passion for their academics with the perception that if they worked hard enough and managed to get an Education abroad it would make their carriers better. Both respondents strongly believed that an education abroad would elevate their status back and also in the countries they move to. This is because they believed it is important for them to have an education and reduce on the load that comes with being an immigrant and not educated

The second respondent with the same perception when asked “How do you in comparison describe this job with the job back at home”

“since they completely different fields it might not be so easy to compare..... but all I know is if I had gone back home I would not be cleaning...Bahahaha.....with my Master’s degree that I acquired here I would be like a Semi god back home (laughs).....”

Questions like What do friends that are in different jobs think of your job? , How does the rest of your family feel about the job?, What are the possibilities of getting a promotion at the job?, What do you think might get in the way of those plans presented a number of perceptions respectively.

“most of my friends here are doing the same job but the few doing different jobs especially professional ones have shown support towards my job however some despise it still”

“My family back home think the job pays me a lot of money and because I have no family here, they think I don’t spend a lot”

“My mother thinks am just being lazy to get a professional job because she believes I can get a better job with my qualifications.....”

5.3.1 Societal perspective on cleaning as a job

Some respondents expressed that friends and family both in Sweden and back at home see their jobs as demeaning jobs or jobs with no future

Respondent 1 has interacted with a number of fellow Ugandans that she has met in church and some that she went to school with. Some that she studied with have returned to their home countries doing professional jobs. Others are friends that have lived in Sweden for a long while than her and are working with big companies. Many of her colleagues and family see her as unserious and having no ambition. This is because she is in the cleaning job despite having a master’s degree attained from Sweden.

This is also the same experience for Respondent 3 :

“my immediate family supports me in everything I do for sure but the distant relatives are the ones who think I have do be doing something better....my friends back home well some are okay with it but I would say the majority despise the job”

Some respondents however also expressed positive feedback from friends and family. Where it is possible family and friends have even enabled them find extra jobs and clients. This is what respondent 8 ,9 and 14 said respectively.

“my family has totally no problem...how can they even have a problem when I send them money when they need something...hahaha.....money is money regardless of how it is made.....my friends are also supportive actually I got my informal job through a friend”

“ am not sure how my family feels about the job but at least so far haven't got any negative feedback.....my friends are okay all informal jobs av got have been through friends”

“am working in a family business so my family has no choice hahahaha.....we all enjoy the benefits in one way or another. my friends are also very supportive sometimes they recommend the company to people that sometimes contact us and become clients”

5.3.2 Feeling of inferiority-identity change confirmation

Some of the respondents have a feeling of inferiority and this has affected how they see the different aspects surrounding their jobs and employability. According to them, being an immigrant means restricted progress or even no progress at all within work spheres. They have greatly attributed this to their skin colour and race and the thoughts the host society have towards them. For some, this inferiority has also been attributed to the low levels of education which makes them not fit in well with others at work. Also being that some of these black women come from third world countries, they are worried of working with advanced equipment at work.

Respondent 11 said she almost cancelled the job after she accepted it because she thought it would be completely new experience for her especially with handling machines. Even after leaving in Sweden for a while she was not confident that she had been exposed to enough and this posed a threat on her ability to deliver what she had agreed upon with her employer

Another respondent (12) also feels that her low education makes her stuck in a particular job and in the same position at the job. The feeling of having little education makes her restricted on what she has to do as she doesn't not imagine that she can get something better with the level of education she has. When asked about her future plans of employment this is what she had to say:

“with my education the truth is I don't think I can go beyond cleaning....the only progress I can anticipate is moving from informal to formal...hahaha.....but seriously I don't see myself progressing anytime soon because catching up with education would mean completing Swedish class then enrolling for school then completing school.....those are so many years and the bills don't wait and am getting old by the day.....(sighs)....”

Another respondent also said that it is Swedish people or people with European origin or white skin colour that are managers, and this makes her feel that there is no chance for her to even be promoted to managerial level. When asked about the possibility of a promotion at the job this was her response

“ one thing I have noticed is that most of our mangers in the company are white people so really there's no way I can even begin to think of a promotion because with my colour I don't expect muchactually try to google the staff of company XX right now you will see what am talking about.....this business of promotions we left it for the white man..”

The experience of respondent 5 also portrays feelings of inferiority. She is working for a cleaning company that is owned by an Arab. She says the boss always continuously shouting at her for even communications that can be delivered politely. Even when he was calling to ask to fill in for someone, she felt like he is commanding her. He made some jokes on several occasions that the respondent felt were very offensive. This is not how the boss behaved with other employees something that made her feel inferior. When asked to describe the challenges she faces at the job this is what she said

“for a long time my boss was bullying me making weird jokes”

Follow up question “*what kind of jokes*” response “*for example one day he asked me to fill in for someone but I was very tired from the previous day and was also feeling unwell and he said.....stop being lazy in Africa you work like slaves and laughed and wished me a quick*

recovery....at that point it came off like a joke but the next day I was thinking about it and felt so bad...from that point I began to remember incidents when he shouted at me for nothing and treated me in a demeaning way in comparison to other employees.....that is when it hit me that this guy could actually just have an issue with my origin”

For some of the black women interviewed their past experiences have had an impact on their employability in various ways. These past experiences are both from their former jobs within Sweden and other from former jobs back at home. These past experiences are shaping their decision making on future jobs and also having an impact on how they see their current jobs.

Take an example of respondent 1 after completing her education she began a small business in Uganda where she was earning some money. When she got a scholarship to study in Sweden she also decided to remain and find a job here as opposed to going back to the small business. This is because there is a lot of uncertainties back home as compared to Sweden therefore, she doesn't mind having to clean as she looks around for a professional job instead of going back to Uganda to run a business. Therefore, it is this hope that keeps her going.

5.4 What are the implications of working in the cleaning sector?

Women in the cleaning job presented both positive and negative consequences that arise because of the nature of their job and social status. Some of these concerns are from people known to them directly and some from clients they go to work.

When asked the question. *As a woman how has the job affected you?* The response was that in the African setting women are expected to do housework. Therefore, despite having a long day at work they have to come back home and still do everything that is expected of them as women in a home. This then becomes a challenge to them as they have a lot to handle.

Respondent 1, 14 and 8 also declared that it is very easy to lose ambition when you start earning some money. They said it is easy to be carried away and get comfortable with the job.

“when you spend a while looking for a job the moment you get one you tend to get comfortable..... before you know it 10yrs down the road you have not improved your life but stuck in the cleaning”

This statement resonated with one of the respondents who said she had been to school with a colleague. This colleague however chose to quit school and go work with a cleaning

company. They assumed by the time they are done with school their colleague would be far in life or at least with a better job but he is still cleaning, and it will even be harder to get a better job with no higher education.

Respondent 7 when asked about the working conditions she claimed that these have made her develop fear but also strengthened her.

“ most of our clients are the elderly....we do not have any training whatsoever on how to help them in case something happens.....i showed up for work one day and my client was laying naked on the floor.....I was so confused I didn't know what to do...I called an ambulance they tried to guide me on the first aid but I was so nervous and shaking... when I called in at office they only told me to calm down and wait for the ambulance.....since that day I always go to work worried but at the same time I think if it happened again I would have an idea what to do.....”

Respondent 6 said that one of the consequences that have come with the job is limited time with family. Most of the times she leaves home early morning when the kids are still asleep and when they are back from school, they have very little time together. She would however love to prepare her kids for school herself and spend more time with them. On top of that she has to work even on the weekends

“ I would really love to see my kids growing but now with the nature of this job it is hard..... I go to bed very early so that am early ...I leave home when they are still asleep.....on the weekends when they are home I work as well ...”

Miscommunication between the domestic workers and clients is another consequence experienced with the cleaning job. Respondent 5 almost lost her job because of miscommunication with a client due to language barrier. The respondent on reaching her clients home, the client asked her to escort her to the shop something which is not part of her work. Unfortunately, the client could not speak English and the respondent could not speak Swedish either. The respondent tried to explain to the client however the client instead made a report at office that the respondent is rude. The only thing that was saved was that what the client was asking for was not in her line of service, so she was able to save herself.

Another consequence raised is body pain. One of the respondents declared that the cleaning job has led to have back pain and pain in the legs.

“ I clean quiet a big area and because am working to two jobs I think it’s a little too much for my body to handle.....the first year was okay but lately am having immense pain.....I don’t know what will happen few years from now...hahahah

5.5 Positive consequences

Respondent 4 acknowledges that her life feels much better with an income of her own thus reducing or eliminating dependency. She no longer has to depend on anyone for survival since she earns her own money

“it feels good to have my own income as a woman and not have to depend entirely on my partner.....it’s a good feeling I guess for any sane woman.....ahahaha.... when there is a financial crisis, I can also contribute something and not leave all the pills to hubby, ... I don’t earn much but it’s better than nothing.....,it’s really good”

Below are various responses that the respondents presented as to how the cleaning jobs have impacted them positively

“ I can say it has improved my status as a woman...theres nothing as bad as a man approaching you and they ask what you are doing and you say nothing(laughs)..... at least I have something to say”

“this is funny but this job has improved my skills in home cleaning....hahaha....initially I was not a really detailed cleaner but now I have mastered the art of cleaning and identified the best cleaning soaps...hahha...so my home is always on point..... I would say I was lazy with cleaning at home before but now with all that experience my house is just a walk over”

“ I was person that loved to do my nails....but with this job its get a little uncomfortable to have those long fancy nails...it makes work hard for me handling equipment at all...so I really just had forget about those nails but now am used in fact I feel weird instead when I have them on when am on leave... ”

Some respondents also declared that if it was not for the cleaning jobs, maybe their stay in Sweden would be short lived. The cleaning jobs have been of great influence on their stay in Sweden. Below are some of the responses portraying this

“it is through the cleaning job that I managed to secure a work permit that has enabled me to stay in Sweden till this time.....

“ am a very slow personor rather used to be a very slow person..ahahhaa.....but because at work you have a set time to work I have to be fast and overtime I have learnt to be fast even when am cleaning my own home which I think is something I really appreciate about this job...(laughs).....”

“renewing a visa after school requires a lot of money....no matter how much you have been saving there is a chance you might not get it....so basically this job covered my visa renewal fee”

6 DISCUSSION

The discussion of results will be presented following the three research questions. This discussion uses the theoretical framework to analyse and contextualise the findings. Previous research in similar fields is also used to throw more light on the presented findings as well as incorporating the various themes developed from the interviews.

6.1 The role played by social networks in integration of Immigrant African women into the labor market

As illustrated in the results, social networks play a relevant role in enabling the integration of immigrants into the labour market. Take an example of Respondent 7, being new in the country with no friends whatsoever it was almost impossible for her to get a job as soon as she wished since because she did not have anyone to interact with. However, after visiting the saloon on several occasion she was able to create a network that linked her to the job.

These networks are consistent with Granovetter (1983) ideas of the social embeddedness of economic actions, such as seeking for a job and the labour market integration in a new country. Granovetter (1983) also adds that, with limited weak ties an individual has no access to information from other social systems and will be limited to information provided only by the few people known. This will eventually put them at a disadvantage in the labour market.

Granovetter (1982) shows that individuals purposeful actions are embedded in social networks and ongoing systems through which they operate. That is to say individuals make decisions based on the choices and actions of those in their social networks. This can be related to Respondent 5. She was not necessarily looking for a job but because someone in her social network a classmate was always tired during lessons, she got furious.

The classmate then informed her that he was working with a cleaning company comes to class after a long day hence sleeping in class. Her classmate then assured her that she could also join and earn some money. With that, it can be concluded that her actions were influenced by her social network and in this case a weak tie.

Throughout the world, social networks are put to use by community members, family friends, businesses among others and play a big role in immigrants lives as they also affect many aspects of the immigration process (Poros 2011). When African immigrants move into Sweden, they have the urge to work as a way of surviving to provide for their basic needs and pay bills. For some other African immigrants however finding a job is a way through which they can get more familiar with the host country. They then go ahead to look around for possibilities and many times looking in places where they believe they will meet people with similarities especially in terms of culture. It is from these places that they begin to build new social networks.

Social networks also play a big role in information diffusion among immigrants. Parau et al (2017) stress that social networks are an eminent tool for the diffusion of information in society. Based on the research findings, Immigrants working with different companies share information through their networks about the different working conditions they face, possible opportunities among others thus affecting the decision making. Some immigrants are forced to look for new jobs based on the information they have received from colleagues for example about work benefits and packages among others. It is also this same shared information that those looking for jobs use to identify possibilities, navigate through work and working conditions of colleagues in different companies. On being asked about future plans, one of the respondents said that she will be moving to a different cleaning company if she is granted a job since a friend already working their told her that they have a better employment package for employees

“ I have just applied for a job with company XXX because a friend working there seems to be doing really well and she has told me about the various packages and

privileges given to employees which I think are much more favourable than what we get here”

This also resonates with Lambiottea and Panzarasa (2009) who argues that social networks pave way for the creation and diffusion of knowledge and information. However, Lambiottea and Panzarasa (2009) also argue that random links or connections can create rapid communication of ideas within a network. This argument can also be linked back to Respondent 6 who acquired information about a job from a social media group. This platform can be determined as a random link because she did not know the people that are in the social media group despite being in the same network. In addition to sharing information about available jobs, social networks are a source of comfort for immigrant workers. According to Hurtado-de-Mendoza (2014), social networks give social support which in the end has positive impact on the health of immigrants. Women tend to feel lonely isolated and frustrated when they are far from their families. These social networks then become a place of comfort. This also relates to the psychological aspect of Social identity theory. De Massis (2012) demonstrates this in a study about the effects of social identities with the involvement of family members with non-family managers in a family firm. This study shows that such a firm creates multiple social identities that is one being the family members that consider themselves an inward group and non-family members as the outward group. The family members have a sense of trust among themselves and have the same norms for the firm. Therefore, many at times issues will be discussed as family then later involve nonfamily managers.

Social networks can be strong ties take an example of pre immigrant networks. Pre immigrant networks are those networks that one has with someone before moving to a host country ie family. When someone is invited by a family member or a partner the network has already begun. According to (Granovette 1982) Such strong networks link immigrants that are similar in origin. Taking the example of the immigrant that was employed by the sister who had a company in Sweden. We see that that these two are similar in many ways and come from the same country of origin. On the other hand, based on the findings, weak ties link immigrants that are different. For example, the immigrant that got to know about the job from a colleague at SFI. They began as strangers and come from different origins but are linked together through a weak tie. This ties back Granovette (1982) assumption that weak ties link different people as compared to strong ties and that the economy is a network of social interactions. This argument is also depicted in the USA. Mattingly (1999) writes about domestic workers

in San Diego and declares that immigrant workers use their social networks to find jobs through referrals from strong ties that is friends and relatives. Social networks have a significant role for job seekers and in Europe more than a third of the immigrants have obtained jobs through friends and relatives (Pellizzari, 2010)

These findings are in line with Poros (2011) who argues that Social networks play a significant role in the lives of immigrants as they provide links and connections for employment. Previous literature also shows that these social networks are not only used by immigrants when they move to Europe but also in their home countries. A study done to examine the role of social networks on migrants in Ghana shows that people who move from rural areas to urban areas of Ghana use their social networks to find jobs (Awumbila 2017). However some research also shows that some immigrants get jobs through direct contact with employers. A study on job search methods for immigrants in UK shows that some immigrants approach employers directly especially those that can speak English (Frijters 2005).

6.2 The perceptions African immigrant women have on work in Sweden and the cleaning job?

Interviewer: Describe the challenges you find with the job?

Respondent: ".....hmmm... u know my immediate manger is Swedish and so are most of my colleagues.....so being an African makes me feelshould I say weird.... So my major challenge apart from the client issues...I can say it is blending in.....it's not like they segregate me or anything...but I just feel like am not part of the team in one way or another..."

Interviewer: Could there be any reason you feel this way

Respondent: I think it is because before I worked with a company with many black people...to be honest I didn't know them, but I never had the feeling I have now"

Feelings of inferiority. From this response, it is clear that the respondent categorises themselves as a different being despite not being looked at that by colleagues. The social identity theory assumes that individuals portray solidarity with in their own groups and discrimination against the out group as part of social identity processes (Trepte 2006) .Many interactions are made in areas where there are shared norms and believes and culture and

therefore creating an ingroup and an outgroup being those who do not fit into this context (Gazi 2014). As much as there is no direct attack made on the respondent, they feel inferior when at work with colleagues of a different ethnic groups or rather natives.

Because Africans look at themselves as a different separate group, they are always looking out for each other as they are of the same appearance regardless of the origin. Supposedly this also makes it easy for them to share information about work possibilities. When they approach each other, it feels like one of their own despite coming from different countries. To illustrate this further, on asking for an interview two respondents agreed to have the interview because of the African nature of the researcher saying they know how hard it is for someone with black skin to get access and information and therefore were willing to help out the researcher with all needed information. Granovetter (1982) also illustrates about this trust. Granovetter (1982) argues that trust is a component of social relations and further illustrates that thieves are able to defraud a business because they trust each other.

In relation to trust, Colussi (2015) also illustrates that immigrants cluster in the same local labour markets and as the network employment rates rise the firms with same origin immigrants also rises. Tian and Lin (2016) argue that employers cannot get information about job seekers and vice versa, therefore this information is transferred through social networks. This means that individuals keep referring to people known to them and people they can trust thus the clustering. This also

The impact of education. Guo and Andersson, (2006) illustrate that. Immigrants in Sweden especially those from third world countries experience devaluation of prior education and work. The immigrant's education is seen as incompatible inferior and thus invalid. However, for the immigrant women with low education the cleaning job is like an escape from the jobs that require a lot of skills knowledge, and Swedish language. Many look at the entire process of going back to attain an education like a rather very tiring and time-wasting process.

Future employability. The immigrant women with high education on the other hand use the cleaning job as a steppingstone into the labour market. Many of these women believe that a CV is more attractive to an employer if it at least shows that you have worked in Sweden before regardless of what work it was. They believe that if one has not worked in Sweden before an employer can assume that you are not able to work in the Swedish environment and are not familiar with it. This perception resonates with Knocke argument that high education

can increase chances of entering the labour market however it doesn't guarantee finding a job that suits the level of education (2000).

Search for greener pastures. From the results some immigrant women moved to Sweden because they believed they would have a better life and earn more money regardless of their high education and good work back home. A report by UN (2019) showed that many immigrants from Africa that move to Europe were in school or having an education or with a good job but claimed they are not earning enough.

6.3 The implications for African immigrant women working in the cleaning sector?

Working in the cleaning sector has come with a number of both positive and negative consequences for African immigrant women.

Mistreatment. The findings suggest that as much as these social networks are doing a great job in integrating immigrants into the labour market, they are also becoming a hell. When immigrants are employed by people known to them, there is sometimes exploitation in play. This is because the employers feel as if they have done a favour to provide this job especially if they are aware of the desperation an immigrant had for attaining a job. When an employer is aware that an individual is desperate to work, they sometimes treat them in an unfair manner. The other form of mistreatment comes from the employers and is relation to wages. Behtoui (2008) illustrates that immigrants lack the social networks which can provide have access to information and influence. Employers therefore use this as an opportunity to cheat the immigrants and also mishandle them because they are not fully informed of their rights.

Work home imbalance. There is also a challenge in balancing home and work, as seen in the findings women that have families and children face a challenge of balancing the two. After a long day work is it challenging for them to do house chores and responsibilities back at home. In circumstances where these immigrant women are not well, they are also forced to work regardless because they want to earn that extra money. This push to work even when is also because they fear to be misunderstood by the employers as lazy.

Feeling of Pride. There are also a number of positive implications for the African women in the cleaning sector. One of the respondents declared that it is a good feeling for her as a woman to also be able to contribute financially to the family from her salary at the cleaning jobs. The women are also able to take care of their loved ones back at home and buy a few items for themselves that they need as women.

Failure for employment growth. Immigrants get comfortable and, in the end, get stuck in the cleaning job. This is for both those with an education and those without an education. When they start to earn some money and are able to survive.

7 CONCLUSION

This section provides a summary of the entire research project by answering the main research question. This part also illustrates the research contribution, future research recommendations and limitations

How do African immigrant women working in the cleaning sector experience their labour market integration?

In meeting the purpose of this study, the results revealed that African immigrant women have quite a number of experiences in the cleaning sector that are similar. The study revealed that these African immigrant women get into the cleaning jobs through social networks. These include church, school, saloons, shops, online groups, friends and relatives among others. Economic actors are embedded in a web of social relationships (Tian and Lin 2016). Granovetter describes these social relationships as ties and categories them as weak ties and strong ties and thus creating the social embeddedness theory (1973). Weak ties are key in the continuous formulation and shaping of systems however they consist of low levels of trust and may not provide sufficient information in shaping of systems. This then also requires the interface of strong ties which have high level of embeddedness and low level of knowledge redundancy to also play a role in reshaping of systems (Rindfleisch and Moorman 2001). Social networks not only enable African immigrant women to enter the labour market but also help them get information on the different situations surrounding the cleaning job. This provides them with a bigger picture of the job and widens their knowledge thus enabling them to keep advancing within the sector.

The cleaning job also comes with a number of perceptions from the African immigrant women. The immigrant women believe that the cleaning job acts as a steppingstone into the Swedish labour market. This perception is more common among immigrants that have attained an education but have no work experience of their professions within Sweden. Even well-educated women from Africa have low employment as compared to native born women (Aldén, and Hammarstedt 2014). This therefore forces these women into the cleaning job.

The immigrant women believe this experience despite being outside their professions is an extra bonus for employers in the future

The perceptions of the immigrant African women also display social identity. They perceive themselves as an inferior group. This is also built from way back home before they relocate to Sweden. There is a strong believe that in Europe the best an immigrant can do is to work in the care and cleaning sector. The immigrant African women socially identify themselves they create a collective social identity within themselves. Ashforth and Mael argue that an individual's social identity can be derived from age, work group, education. It is however argued that an individual can associate themselves with an organisation but not associate with its values and attitudes (1989). This is evident in the fact that the educated women look at this job as a stepping stone and look for every opportunity to get away into other jobs where as the women with lower education are comfortable with the job and do not consider looking for other jobs. This therefore implies that as much as the educated women associate themselves with fellows in the cleaning sector but do not with their attitudes.

The cleaning job has also come with a number of implications that are both positive and negative and these have impacted their day to day lives. The life of these immigrant women has been improved and they are able to survive in Sweden because of the money earned from the cleaning jobs. This therefore creates a sense of pride for these women. Despite the positive implications, the immigrant women also face stigma associated with the job, offensive behaviour from employers and colleagues at work, some of the requirements of the job create lack of confidence as the immigrants are afraid if they will be able to deliver as required.

7.1 Contributions

7.1.1 Theoretical contribution

Previous research has focused generally on immigrants or immigrant women, in particular, when analysing labour market. This research however has been more specific with the nature of the immigrants in this case female immigrants from East and Western Africa. This research has therefore provided a theoretical insight on labour market informed by African culture and perceptions.

7.2 Knowledge transfer

Despite having a small sample, this research shows the different experiences of immigrants in the labour market. This can also be used to explore other working sectors that have a lot of immigrants to try and understand how the social identity affects the sectors. The experiences of these immigrant women are an eye opener for how jobs change the life of women especially those who are culturally bound in terms of work. The social embeddedness theory contributes to understanding why immigrants

7.3 Recommendations

As seen in the results, some immigrant women are highly educated but believe the only way they can get into the labour market is to get some work experience in Sweden. This calls for policy makers and human resource managers to be more flexible with people that have no work experience in Sweden but have all the required qualifications. As the research also portrays the role of social networks, it is recommendable that employer's vet for employees on merit other than recommendation otherwise the natives will be placed in given jobs or sectors and immigrants will also be clustered in specific jobs and sectors.

Another recommendation is for the immigrant women especially those that come for further studies. It is important they engage more with native fellow students than trying to look for other migrant students to be close to. This is because they always have a lot of information on jobs and different ideas on entering the labour market.

7.4 Limitations

This research is limited to a very particular group of people working in a specific sector. Therefore, this makes the research scope small and hence restricting the amount of data.

The biggest limitation in this research was the impact of Corona virus. For purposes of safety the researcher had to carry out some interviews online. This was many times obstructed by poor network and failure for respondents to provide detailed information. This required the researcher to keep calling back the respondents in order to clarify unclear details.

Some respondents were not so comfortable discussing how they got their jobs something which was core to the research. Other respondents were not willing to share their education backgrounds and how they got into Sweden.

Another limitation was continued postponed or cancellation of interviews by respondents which was very disorganising for the researcher that had a time plan for the various obligations of the research.

7.5 Future research

Immigration is such a wide aspect especially with the growing globalisation. There are many concerns in various countries in the world about immigrants taking jobs of native born.

An issue that raised during this research is the integration of immigrants that have no one known to them in the host country and those that have relatives and friends already living in the host country. This could be a good research topic of analysis. The circumstances for these two categories of immigrants seem to be entirely different in terms of integration into the labour market

8 REFERENCE LIST

- Akhavan, S. and Bildt, C., 2004. *Working conditions, health and sick leave among immigrant women*. Arbetslivsinstitutet.alliances: a strength-of-ties perspective. *Journal of Marketing* 65 (2): 1-18.
- Aldén, L. and Hammarstedt, M., 2014. *Integration of immigrants on the Swedish labour market: recent trends and explanations*. Linnaeus University.
- Arai, M. and Vilhelmsson, R., 2001. *Immigrants' and Natives' Unemployment-risk: Productivity Differentials or Discrimination?* (No. 169).
- Ashforth, B.E. and Mael, F., 1989. Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of management review*, 14(1), pp.20-39.
- Åslund, O., Edin, P.A. and Fredriksson, P., 2000. Settlement policies and the economic success of immigrants.
- Awumbila, M., Teye, J.K. and Yaro, J.A., 2017. Social networks, migration trajectories and livelihood strategies of migrant domestic and construction workers in Accra, Ghana. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 52(7), pp.982-996.
- Behtoui A 2004. "Unequal Opportunities for Young People with Immigrant Background in the Swedish Labour Market", *Labour*, 18: 633-60.
- Behtoui, A., 2008. Informal recruitment methods and disadvantages of immigrants in the Swedish labour market. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 34(3), pp.411-430.
- Bevelander, P. and Irastorza, N., 2017. The Labour-Market Participation of Highly Skilled Immigrants in Sweden: An Overview.
- Bevelander, P. and Scott, K., 1996. The employment and income performance of immigrants in Sweden, 1970-1990. *Finnish Yearbook of Population Research*, pp.157-172.
- Bevelander, P., 2005. The employment status of immigrant women: The case of Sweden 1. *International Migration Review*, 39(1), pp.173-202.
- Bowman, J.R. and Cole, A.M., 2014. Cleaning the 'People's Home': The Politics of the Domestic Service Market in Sweden. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(2), pp.187-201.

- Bradley, H. and Healy, G., 2008. *Ethnicity and gender at work: inequalities, careers and employment relations*. Springer.
- Bucken-Knapp, G., Omanović, V. and Spehar, A., 2020. The Voices of Refugees as a Method. In *Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration* (pp. 43-62). Palgrave Pivot, Cham.
- Calleman, C., 2011. Domestic services in a “land of equality”: The case of Sweden. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), pp.121-140.
- Charmaz, K., 2014. *Constructing grounded theory*. sage.
- Colussi, T., 2015. Migrant networks and job search outcomes: Evidence from displaced workers.
- Czernek-Marszałek, K., 2020. Social embeddedness and its benefits for cooperation in a tourism destination. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 15, p.100401.
- Da Roit, B. and Weicht, B., 2013. Migrant care work and care, migration and employment regimes: A fuzzy-set analysis. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 23(5), pp.469-486.
- Daly, M. and Lewis, J., 2000. The concept of social care and the analysis of contemporary welfare states. *The British journal of sociology*, 51(2), pp.281-298.
- Daunfeldt, S.O., Johansson, D. and Seerar Westerberg, H., 2019. Which firms provide jobs for unemployed non-Western immigrants?. *The Service Industries Journal*, 39(9-10), pp.762-778.
- De Massis, A., 2012. Article Commentary: Family Involvement and Procedural Justice Climate among Nonfamily Managers: The Effects of Affect, Social Identities, Trust, and Risk of Non-Reciprocity. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 36(6), pp.1227-1234.
- Edin, P.A., Fredriksson, P. and Åslund, O., 2004. Settlement policies and the economic success of immigrants. *Journal of population Economics*, 17(1), pp.133-155.
- Edin, PA and Åslund, O., 2001. *Immigrants in the labor market of the 1990s* (pp. 101-41). Institute for Labor Market Policy Evaluation (IFAU).
- Estévez-Abe, M. and Hobson, B., 2015. Outsourcing domestic (care) work: The politics, policies, and political economy. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 22(2), pp.133-146.

- Etikan, I., Musa, S.A. and Alkassim, R.S., 2016. Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American journal of theoretical and applied statistics*, 5(1), pp.1-4.
- Frijters, P., Shields, M.A. and Price, S.W., 2005. Job search methods and their success: a comparison of immigrants and natives in the UK. *The Economic Journal*, 115(507), pp.F359-F376.
- Gavanas, A., 2013, January. Migrant domestic workers, social network strategies and informal markets for domestic services in Sweden. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 36, pp. 54-64). Pergamon.
- Granovetter, M., 1982. Alienation reconsidered: The strength of weak ties.
- Hedberg, C. and Tammaru, T., 2013. 'Neighbourhood effects' and 'city effects': the entry of newly arrived immigrants into the labour market. *Urban Studies*, 50(6), pp.1165-1182.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., 1994. Regulating the unregulated?: Domestic workers' social networks. *Social problems*, 41(1), pp.50-64.
- Hurtado-de-Mendoza, A., Gonzales, F.A., Serrano, A. and Kaltman, S., 2014. Social isolation and perceived barriers to establishing social networks among Latina immigrants. *American journal of community psychology*, 53(1-2), pp.73-82.
- Hussain, A., Trudel, P., Patrick, T. and Rossi, A., 2012. Reflections on a novel coach education program: A narrative analysis. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 7(2), pp.227-240.
- Kanas, A., Van Tubergen, F. and Van der Lippe, T., 2011. The role of social contacts in the employment status of immigrants: A panel study of immigrants in Germany. *International Sociology*, 26(1), pp.95-122.
- Knocke, W., 1999. The labour market for immigrant women in Sweden: Marginalised women in low-valued jobs. In *Migrants, ethnic minorities and the labour market* (pp. 108-131). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Knocke, W., 2000. Integration or segregation? Immigrant populations facing the labour market in Sweden. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 21(3), pp.361-380.

- Kushi, S. and McMANUS, I.P., 2018. Gendered costs of austerity: The effects of welfare regime and government policies on employment across the OECD, 2000–13. *International Labour Review*, 157(4), pp.557-587.
- Larsen, L., n.d. *Cleaning (In) The Swedish Black Market*.
- Laud, G., Karpen, I.O., Mulye, R. and Rahman, K., 2015. The role of embeddedness for resource integration: Complementing SD logic research through a social capital perspective. *Marketing Theory*, 15(4), pp.509-543.
- Lemaître, G., 2007. The Integration of Immigrants into the Labour Market.
- Lodovici, M., 2010. Making a success of integrating immigrants in the labour market. *labour*, 18, p.19.
- Löfström, Å., 2009. Gender equality, economic growth and employment. *Swedish Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality*.
- Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B., 2011. Qualitative research genres. *Designing qualitative research*, pp.17-37.
- Mattingly, D.J., 1999. Job search, social networks, and local labor-market dynamics: The case of paid household work in San Diego, California. *Urban Geography*, 20(1), pp.46-74.
- Nekby L. (2002) How Long Does it Take to Integrate?: Employment Convergence of Immigrants and Natives in Sweden, Stockholm: Fief
- Parau, P., Lemnaru, C., Dinsoreanu, M. and Potolea, R., 2017. Opinion leader detection. In *Sentiment Analysis in Social Networks* (pp. 157-170). Morgan Kaufmann.
- Pellizzari, M., 2010. Do friends and relatives really help in getting a good job?. *ILR Review*, 63(3), pp.494-510.
- Poros, M., 2011. Migrant social networks: Vehicles for migration, integration, and development. *Migration Policy Institute*, 30.
- Poros, M., 2011. Migrant social networks: Vehicles for migration, integration, and development. *Migration Policy Institute*, 30.
- Portes, A. and Sensenbrenner, J., 1993. Embeddedness and immigration: Notes on the social determinants of economic action. *American journal of sociology*, 98(6), pp.1320-1350.

Recio, A. and Godino, A., 2011. Invisible workers quality of employment in the cleaning sector in Spain.

Rindfleisch, A. and C. Moorman (2001) The acquisition and utilization of information in new product

Rooth, D.O. and Ekberg, J., 2006. Occupational mobility for immigrants in Sweden. *International Migration*, 44(2), pp.57-77.

Rooth, D.O. and Ekberg, J., 2006. Occupational mobility for immigrants in Sweden. *International Migration*, 44(2), pp.57-77.

Rooth, DO and Åslund, O., 2003. *When and where does it matter?: The significance of the labor market situation for immigrants' incomes*. Institute for Labor Market Policy Evaluation.

Roth, H.I. and Hertzberg, F., 2010. Tolerance and cultural diversity in Sweden. *San Domenico di Fiesole: European University Institute*.

Rubin, H.J. and Rubin, I.S., 2011. *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. sage.

Sánchez-Domínguez, M. and Fahlén, S., 2018. Changing sector? Social mobility among female migrants in care and cleaning sector in Spain and Sweden. *Migration Studies*, 6(3), pp.367-399.

Scheepers, D. and Ellemers, N., 2019. Social identity theory. In *Social Psychology in Action* (pp. 129-143). Springer, Cham.

Singha, L., n.d. *Work, Labour And Cleaning*.

Stets, J.E. and Burke, P.J., 2000. Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social psychology quarterly*, pp.224-237.

Stoloff J. A., Glanville J. L. and Bienenstock E. J. (1999) 'Women's Participation in the Labor Force: The Role of Social Networks', *Social Networks* 21: 91–108

Tian, F.F. and Lin, N., 2016. Weak ties, strong ties, and job mobility in urban China: 1978–2008. *Social Networks*, 44, pp.117-129.

Towns, A., 2002. Paradoxes of (in) equality: Something is rotten in the gender equal state of Sweden. *Cooperation and conflict*, 37(2), pp.157-179.

Trepte, S., 2006. Social identity theory. *Psychology of entertainment*, 255, p.271

9 APPENDIX

9.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

Demographic questions

1. How did you end up in Sweden?
2. When did you move to Sweden?
3. What prompted you to move to Sweden?
4. What did you do in your home country? (professional experience, etc)
5. At what level of education were you in your home country?
6. How was the process of moving to Sweden? (the beginning, learning the language, meeting friends, support or not from authorities, etc)

MECHANISMS TO FIND A JOB

1. How many jobs have you had in Sweden? Can you tell me about it

First job

2. What was your first job? How did you get it (this part is crucial for you)
3. How did you start looking for a job?
4. Which information was not clear as you looked for a job? how did you get clarity?
5. What people and networks you contacted? How did you know about them?
6. What about AF and authorities? Did you get any help or knew about support?

Other jobs

7. Have you had other jobs? How did your first job help you (if it did)?

PRACTICES AT WORK

8. For how long have you been working?
9. What exactly do you do in your work?

IMPACTS

10. How did you learn about the job you are doing? (Learning: what? Language, culture, competences, how a sector works...)
11. How does the rest of your family feel about the job? (Balance family & work?)
12. How do you in comparison describe this job with the job back at home? (What are you aiming with this question? Cultural exchange)

13. Before you begun to work what, were your expectations? (?)
14. Describe how being an immigrant played a role in settling for this job (good question!)
15. As a woman how has the job affected you?
16. How have you been affected by the job as an immigrant?
17. How would you compare the informal job and the formal job
18. What do friends that are in different jobs think of your job
19. What motivates you about your job
20. How do you describe your personality traits (strong and weak)
21. What do colleagues that are in different jobs think of your job, both formal and informal?
22. How has the job changed over time since you begun working and now?
23. What resources\benefits are required from employers; do you get these resources?
24. How would you describe your company, is it culturally diverse, does it employ mostly immigrants?
25. Describe the challenges you find with the job? how do you deal with the challenges?
26. Could you describe a particular incident that was challenging at work, were you helped by the employer?
27. How has this job impacted your life as a woman ans immigrant?
28. How do you deal with disagreements with colleagues at work?
29. Can you describe the working conditions?
30. What are the possibilities of getting a promotion at the job?
31. Have you experienced any form of discrimination at the job, if yes what happened?
32. From your experience is work balanced with your private life?
33. What are your future employment plans\preferences? would you want to change jobs?
34. What do you think might get in the way of those plans?
35. Is there something you would love to add that has not been mentioned?