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AND WORK SCIENCE

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Perceptions of Non-European Skilled-immigrants on
their Professional Career Sacrifices in Sweden

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Abstract

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- Purpose:** Purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of high-skilled non-European immigrants about their professional career sacrifices after migrating to Sweden. Focus group of this thesis are the non-European immigrants who are academically or professionally qualified, and who have had a professional career before migrating to Sweden, but those who are unemployed at the moment or those who engaged with low-skilled jobs. Moreover, the focus group only includes individuals who moved as the dependents, due to family reunification purpose.
- Theory:** Stigma Theory of Goffman comprehends the social disapproval and discrediting for different subsets of the society. Therefore, this theory was applied as the underlying theory of this master thesis.
- Method:** Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with high-skilled non-European immigrants who have been working as engineers, managers, finance and banking professionals etc., and who are currently unemployed or working in warehouses, restaurants, foods delivery sector etc. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods were used to contact the respondents, and the collected data were analysed through thematic coding, with the help of stigma theory.
- Result:** Results revealed that the informants are dual self-stigmatized. In one hand, they are not receiving expected employment opportunities due to the stereotypes of the employers regarding the immigrants. On the other hand, they are again affected from the public stigma of their home countries about the low-skilled workers. Thus, the informants are struggling with both these stigmatizations. However, they deploy different de-stigmatization strategies to break through the dual stigmatization, while sacrificing their present and living with nostalgic memories for a hope of a better future.

Foreword

Firstly, I would like to express appreciation and gratitude to my husband, and my family, who were there with me, and motivating me in all the ups and downs of my life. Secondly, I am so humbled to thank University of Gothenburg for giving me this opportunity to take part in this master's programme, and to Adlerbertska Scholarship Foundation and Adlerbertska Grant Foundation and the Swedish Council for Higher Education, for offering me the Axel Adler scholarship and funding my entire master's programme. Thirdly, my honour and great appreciation goes to all the teachers who helped me to get in to this stage. A special appreciation to my thesis supervisor Vedran Omanović for the immense support and guidance given me towards successfully completing this master's thesis. And also, a sincere appreciation to both Ola Bergström and Bertil Rolandsson for giving proper direction to make this success. Finally, a special and big thank goes to all my research participants, for sharing their life stories with me and helping me to grow my sample with their networks.

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List of Abbreviations

ACCA- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

CIMA- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

CBF- Certificate in Banking & Finance

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis focusses on the non-European skilled immigrants who moved to Sweden as dependents, due to family reunification purposes. Hereby, the author signifies ‘skilled immigrants’ as for those who are academically or professionally qualified in their countries, and who have had a professional career before migrating to Sweden. Further, this study is about such skilled immigrants who are struggling to find suitable jobs for their qualifications and work experiences, while either being unemployed or engaging in blue-collar jobs in Sweden at the moment (those who sacrificed their careers after migrating to Sweden). The author thereby attempts to identify such non-European professional immigrants’ perceptions about their professional career sacrifices, through this study.

As such, the first chapter of this master thesis is structured with an overview on international immigration, the immigration status in Europe and EU, and then further narrowed down to the immigration status in Sweden. Some of the evidences from previous studies are also presented on the basis of immigrant career sacrifices and the under-employment status in Sweden. Also, the chapter will elaborate the background of the research problem, rationale of the study, the aims, objectives and the research questions, and the significance of this study for the social work.

1.1 Overview of the Study

1.1.1 Immigration

Human beings are continuously seeking changes that bring them up with better living conditions. It creates shifts/movements of people across different organizations, or perhaps through different countries. Such movements of human beings beyond their national territories are called ‘international migration’ (International Organization for Migration, 2022).

As supposed by the neo-classical theory, humans migrate from low-income to high-income areas seeking higher living standards and greater opportunities (Castles & Miller, 2009). Individuals who seek migration as a better option to achieve their expected living standards and other benefits engage in evaluating the overall economic and growth prospects in their

respective home country and other countries abroad. In that way, such individuals generate reference points from those countries and keep themselves informed to achieve their migrating dreams (Czaika, 2015).

Approximately 3.2% of the world's population (around 232 million individuals) as of 2013 were residing outside of their home countries, and the world bank expected this to be increased up to 5% within one generation (Rica et al., 2013). However, international migration was booming more rapidly than the expected level, and it has been further increased up to 281 million as of 2020. As a proportion, this was 3.6% of the world's population (International Organization for Migration, 2021). As further stated by the international organization for migration, this was three times increase than the migration estimations made back in 1970.

According to Bijl & Verweij, (2012), Europe is identified as a 'preferred destination' for majority of the immigrants. Irrespective of the nature of immigration (whether asylum seekers, job seekers or students), many immigrants are highly attracted by the economic affluence, political stability and the appealing demographic principles of the European region. As a result, many of the EU member states experienced a mounting migration in the recent history. As of 2010, third-country migrants were accounted for approximately 20 million (nearly 4%) of the entire population of EU. (Bijl & Verweij, 2012). Further, 5.3% of the total EU population as of 1st January 2021 were from non-European countries (Eurostat, 2022).

Sweden has already been a 'country of immigration' meanwhile in the 1930s. (Rydgren, 2004). Having agreed with that, Gross & Boyd, (2022) has also elaborated in their book that Sweden, which was previously identified as a country of emigration has then become the country of immigration during both 20th and 21st centuries. As such, the authors describe with statistics that 24% of the population in Sweden as of 2018 consists of either foreign-born people or people born in Sweden to foreign-born parents. Further, the authors have emphasised the influence such a considerable population percentage brought on Sweden's major language (Swedish) in the main cities of the country (Gross & Boyd, 2022). The authors further argue that consequently, English is now becoming as a popular communication language specially in the major cities.

Immigrants make up a large share of Sweden's population. According to 2019 statistics, Sweden is the twelfth among OECD countries in terms of the immigrant population (OECD Org., 2020). According to mid-2021 statistics, the total population in Sweden was accounted for 10,261,767, where 19.7% out of it was born in the countries outside Sweden (Indexmundi, n.d.). During the last decade, Sweden experienced a huge migration from the asylum seekers, as the country had the 'most generous asylum laws' (Emilsson, 2018) among the other EU member states. As a result, the immigration to Sweden upsurged in many years, with a remarkable number of 163,000 in 2016. (Statista, 2022). Afterwards, Sweden then started shrinking its asylum laws, resulting a declined immigration in the following years. (The Statistical Authority, n.d.). As such, the majority of recent immigrants have moved for study, work or family re-unification purposes. As per the statistics of the Swedish Migrations Agency, more than 95,000 first-time resident permits have been issued during the year 2021, whereas, the permits issued on the grounds of family ties/ family reunification exceeded 24,000. (Migrationsverket, 2021).

1.1.2 Immigrant Integration

According to Eliassi (2017) cited evidence from Dahlstedt & Neergaard, (2015) & Eliassi, (2013), immigrants in Sweden repeatedly become the focus of controversies regarding their education, labour market integration, and housing. As further stated by Eliassi (2017), riots in the cities, Islamic extremism, and radicalization of the Muslim immigrants have all been emphasised in the media as probable threats to Sweden's social cohesion and its democracy. As such, the inability of immigrants in integrating into the Swedish society has been a usual subject in political and media arguments about immigration.

Integration has a broader meaning and is widely used to describe the adaptation to different scenarios. This section provides an idea about such different perspectives of integration with the support of previous studies. However, even though integration has different angles, this study will only be considering those touching the labour market integration, since this study focusses about the perceptions of 'professional career sacrifices'.

The term 'integration' refers to the flow of learning and adapting to a new culture, obtaining rights and responsibilities, work and social engagement, networking with the host society's

persons, and the sense of belongingness to the host society (Awori, 2019). Integration has been used in broadly divergent meanings. However, it mainly deals with the resettlement of refugees and other types of immigrants. According to Ager & Strang (2008), the immigrant integration process consists of four key factors. Such factors are; obtaining access to employment/ education/ accommodation and health and other benefits, country's policies and practices regarding rights and obtaining citizenship, and other structural issues such as language barriers and cultural mismatches when adopting to the host environment. Swedish integration policies consist of four distinct features when compared with that of other countries in Western Europe. The first characteristic is, the participation for the integration programme is being entirely voluntary. As such, immigrants can take part in the integration programmes according to their wishes. Secondly, the contents of the integration programme are focused on receiving employment for immigrants. Thirdly, the authority for the implementation of such programmes is decentralized, where the respective municipalities hold a majority of the responsibilities. Finally, the integration process helps the immigrants to obtain permanent residents/citizenships in a more flexible manner than in most other countries. Further, as part of its integration program, the Swedish government assists immigrants in converting their respective foreign qualifications into Swedish equivalents in order to better prepare them for the labour market (Ahmed, 2016)

As stated by Bijl & Verweij (2012), integration is crucial not only as a way of preserving social cohesiveness, but also as a way of preserving economic power; if migrants are not integrated into host societies, particularly into the labour market, then Europe risks losing its economic dominance. Since immigration is an ongoing process, integration also becomes never ending (Awori, 2019).

Sweden's immigration policy has never been static, and it has changed multiple times over the past years. Sweden's immigration policy has been more liberal until the first world war. However, the policy started changing drastically afterward from liberal to stringier, by introducing several restrictions for obtaining work permits (Gerdes & Wadensjö, 2013). As a result, for anyone desiring to work in Sweden, obtaining a work permit became mandatory and made it difficult to obtain. However, as many refugees from the neighbouring countries landed to Sweden during the second world war, the work permit requirement for the Nordic citizens was eliminated by the end of second world war. The giant leap taken by the Swedish

economy followed by the second world war has created an excess labour demand, which again loosen up the restrictions for work visa. Since then, the restrictions for work and obtaining visa for immigrants were tightened and loosened time to time, due to several reasons. (Gerdes & Wadensjö, 2013). Beside of these restrictions against the inflow of immigration, Swedish government introduced several integration programmes for the immigrants who were already residing in the country at that time. According to Wiesbrock, (2011); as cited in Dingu-Kyrklund, (2007), Sweden is known as one of the very first countries that identified the necessity of immigrant integration. As an example, the first programme of ‘Swedish for Immigrants’ (SFI) was introduced back in 1965. Further, according to Wiesbrock (2011), the Swedish government officially made its move from immigration to an integration policy in 1996. The focus of that policy is to provide equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities to everyone, beside of their cultural background. According to the measuring scales of the Migration policy group, Sweden has a better rank among other EU countries in terms of immigrant integration policies. The group further highlights that Sweden does not have tight restrictions over immigrant integration and the country’s integration policies are more focussed on the labour market.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, even though the term ‘integration’ has a deeper perspective, in terms of different spheres, such as accommodation, integration to the society, culture and to the labour market, the focus of this study would only be the immigrant integration with the labour market in Sweden, since the research question works inline only with the labour market integration.

1.2 Problem Background

According to the studies conducted by Bevelander (1999) and Rydgren (2004), as cited in Lindgren (2002), those who arrived to Sweden in the 1950s and 1960s have been able to enter into the labour market successfully, irrespective of their immigrant backgrounds. Further, the author states that those immigrants have received equal economic and other living standards as the native Swedes who had the similar type of qualifications. one of the major reasons for such easy access to the labour market was the labour shortage occurred in Sweden that time. Moreover, the author highlights that the immigrants who moved to Sweden after 1970’s face many challenges and difficulties when entering the Swedish labour market, mainly due to the

lack of recognition of their secondary and upper secondary qualifications in their home countries.

Afterwards, the immigrant unemployment rate started mounting. The economic recession that occurred during early and the mid 1990's has also impacted on this drastic rising in immigrant unemployment. With that, Sweden became one of the top countries with immigrant unemployment among the OECD countries by 1999. This work and skill gap among the immigrants and native Swedes is not yet properly addressed and it still creates blockades for immigrants to enter into the Swedish labour market.

Even though the above-mentioned Swedish immigrant integration policies are focussing on labour market and aim at providing equal opportunities for everyone, many researchers and authorities contradict with the equal opportunities and the fairness of the actual behaviour of the Swedish labour market. OECD, (2014) pinpoints the unfavourable things happen in the integration of Swedish labour market. Further, the report reprehends Sweden for being the second among OECD countries, which under-employs skilled immigrants. As further supposed by Rydgen (2004), three types of immigrant exclusion conditions are there in the labour market, and these are called statistical discrimination (created by the stereotypical attitudes), network effects, and due to the institutional discrimination, where several key players in the labour market acts as gatekeepers in the Swedish labour market, who effectively discriminate migrants. Such discrimination happens in two ways in the Swedish labour market. In one hand, the labour market does not provide opportunities for immigrants by considering their group-specific attributes, beside of the knowledge and capabilities of the individuals. On the other hand, employers merely advertise the job vacancies, but they actually recruit employees through their personal networks Rydgen (2004).

The Swedish government has introduced variety of programs as well as rules and regulations in order to mitigate the gap between immigrant unemployment and underemployment. Section 01 of the chapter 2 of Swedish discrimination law, for example, outlaws the discrimination based on ethnicity (Discrimination Act, 2008). Furthermore, according to employment protection act (Lag om anställningsskydd: LAS), public organizations must hire the person who best meets the required criteria (Employment Protection Act, 1982). However, while looking at the labour market, whether these laws and regulations are being followed in the way they should be is debatable. As a result, it remains problematic for immigrants to

integrate into the labour market and to engage with jobs that matches their qualifications and experience.

Ayuk (2020), Awori (2019), Rydgren (2004) and Bevelander (1999) point out, one of the key reasons for skilled immigrants' inability to find suitable occupations is, because of the lack of recognition of their qualifications (obtained in other countries) by the Swedish labour market. Having considered that factor, the highly qualified immigrants who moved due to family reunification purpose (persons who migrated as the dependents with the spouse who moved for studies or with the spouse who straightaway received a job offer from Sweden) may face many challenges to find out a suitable job due to lack of recognition of their qualifications and due to the absence of a Swedish qualification.

Another factor highlighted by Rydgren (2004) is that, the immigrants struggle in finding out a suitable job, due to the deep-rooted stereotyped attitudes of the employers towards different countries and different ethnicities. As a result, the individual skills and talents are overshadowed by their particular ethnic behaviours, and the insights of the employers towards those specific ethnicities.

As a result of all these circumstances, Sweden is experiencing underemployment of skilled immigrants and unemployment of immigrants as a whole. According to 2021 statistics, unemployment rate of foreign- born individuals in Sweden is 19%, where the average unemployment rate of OECD countries is 10% (OECD Org., 2022). Having considered all these literature evidences and other statistics, these unemployment and underemployment is an alarming factor for both immigrants and for Sweden. Because, in one hand, the high skilled immigrants are wasting their knowledge, skills, abilities and time while on the other hand, Sweden is underutilizing the potential labour force.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

There is plethora of research done (such as Awori (2019), Rydgren (2004), Bevelander (1999), Bijl & Verweij (2012) etc.) regarding similar subjects for example, immigrants, immigrant integration, immigrant unemployment and under employment and refugee migration. However, a handful of research have been done regarding the hardship that the high skilled spouses who moved as dependents undergo in the Swedish labour market and the professional career sacrifices, they made after migrating to Sweden. Thus, it is much

worthwhile to study about those professional career sacrifices, the clashes between their expectations and reality in the Swedish labour market, and their perceptions regarding their professional career sacrifices etc. Further, the focus of this study will be non-European skilled immigrants. The reason for focusing merely on the non-Europeans is, as many researchers highlight, non-European migrants face many challenges when searching jobs than the Europeans. Further, many studies have revealed that non-Europeans immigrants engage in low-skilled jobs when compared with the other European immigrants. As evidenced by Ayuk (2020), non-European immigrants' work placements in the Swedish labour market are lower in comparison to their skills.

Immigration is classified in to two categories by the European politics called; internal and external immigration. Internal immigrants are EU immigrants who are granted certain privileges and rights within EU countries. For examples, such immigrants are getting the priority in hiring processes, become safeguarded in the firing processes and also, they get the political identity within the EU countries (McLaren, 2001). As further highlighted by Mahmood & Roger (2001), immigrants who moved from non-European nations face a risk of unemployment that is twice as high as that of native workers. Hence, this subset of non-European immigrants seems to be facing injustice and particularly vulnerable in Sweden and all over Europe. Therefore, it is worthwhile to conduct a study focussing on this specific immigrant group.

The previous studies related to immigrants and their respective employment statuses in the host countries have been carried out with the foundation of common theories such as integration, discrimination, segmented labour theory, human capital theory etc. However, this study is based on 'stigma theory'. This theory has been used to describe the previous studies regarding mentally-ill people and the different discriminatory activities against immigrants. However, this is a neglected theory in describing unemployment and under employment (career sacrifices) of high skilled immigrants. Stigma theory was introduced by Goffman in 2009 to describe the different treatments/recognitions in the society for particular group(s) of people. As such, the stigma theory is well-matched to describe the immigrant-related issues, mainly the discrimination in the labour market. Nevertheless, as of now, this theory has been used to describe mainly the mentally illness people and their job-related outcomes.

Therefore, this study brings another academic significance by bridging the literature gap of stigma theory.

It is expected this study will also be beneficial for the society in order to raise the awareness of respective authorities about the brain waste and the skills devaluation occurs in the Swedish labour market. Thereby, such authorities can take the necessary actions to increase the employability of high-skilled immigrants and eventually it will uplift the productivity of the labour market as well.

Hence, conducting research about this neglected area of the labour market is much needed, and this study will add value to the society as well as for the literature. As such, this study is both academically and practically significant.

1.4 Objectives and Research Questions

The study is carried out to identify the perceptions of non-European skilled immigrants regarding the professional career sacrifices they made after migrating to Sweden. Further, the perceptions are obtained from the skilled immigrants who moved with the intention of seeking higher living standards and better opportunities for their career advancements (not the asylum seekers). More specifically, the perceptions are of the specific subset of the skilled dependent spouses who moved due to family reunification purpose. In addition to the perceptions, this study further attempts to identify the different opinions and experiences of the focussed group regarding the equal opportunities provided by the Swedish labour market, their thoughts concerning whether the Swedish government's and other initiatives are working out efficiently and effectively, by the means they are expected to work out etc.

Moreover, this study is elaborating the perceptions of the focussed group with the theoretical foundation of stigma theory. Therefore, another aim of this study is to fill the literature gap of using stigma theory to describe the unemployment/underemployment related outcomes of high-skilled immigrants.

Research Questions

Primary Research Question

What are the perceptions of non-European immigrants regarding their professional career sacrifices when **integrating** to labour market in Sweden?

Secondary Research Questions

How do non-European immigrants perceive equal opportunities in the Swedish labour market?

What are the opinions of non-European immigrants regarding the government and other initiatives for immigrant integration in Sweden?

1.5 Outline of the Study

The study consists with six chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the study, a broader overview about the problem, the rationale for the importance of conducting this type of a research, how this research adds value to the society and for the academic side, and finally the chapter presents the research questions of the study. The second chapter consists of literature evidences from the similar type of previous studies. This chapter provides information about the different treatments of the labour market to natives, European immigrants and non-European immigrants, the challenges that non-European immigrants face when finding jobs, the consequences identified by the previous researchers when immigrants engaged with low-skilled jobs etc. chapter three of the study describes theory used by the author. Thereby, chapter contains an introduction to stigma theory, it's origin and evolution up to present, and some instances from previous studies that have been used stigma theory. This chapter will be then followed by chapter four, where the author describes the methodology used for the study. In there, detailed descriptions of research design, population and sampling and the data collection process is given. Chapter five will then contain the results of the study, which will be analysed through thematic coding method. finally, in chapter 6, the author will present the conclusions based on the data gathered through this study. Further, some recommendations for future researchers are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Link to Previous Studies

This chapter contains insights and evidences about the similar type of previous studies. Such insights and evidences are categorized in to five sub sections. Firstly, the author provides thoughts of previous researchers regarding the European and non-European immigrants, how the labour market in Sweden treats these two types of immigrants etc. afterwards, the second sub section provides insights from the previous studies about the employment status of the immigrants in the Swedish labour market and the challenges face by the immigrants when searching and finding jobs. Thirdly, it will discuss about the different job searching methods used by the immigrants to integrate with the labour market. Subsequently, the next sub section discourses some evidences from the previous studying which highlight about the high-skilled immigrants who engaged with low-skilled jobs. Finally, the author presents the consequences of being unemployed or underemployed. Such consequences have been identified by the previous researchers who conducted their studies in different contexts.

2.1 European and Non-European Immigrants

According to Menevis (2010) as cited in Kamali (2010)'s study regarding the racial discriminative activities happens in different European countries, it has expounded that several institutional exclusions take place in the labour market in Europe, which has an impact over different opportunities of immigrants in terms of their education, accommodation, finding out jobs and involvement in the society. Furthermore, the author claims that the ethnic networks of non-European immigrants help in the dissemination of information about job opportunities for the members of their same ethnic group. However, this study is providing a generalized overview in the European labour market, where Swedish labour market may also consist of more or less similar outcomes. Further, the study focusses about the different discrimination patterns against different ethnicities, where the author considers in her study as 'immigrants as a whole'. Therefore, it is fairly difficult to obtain an exact picture about the discriminatory practices happen against the non-Europeans, which are the focus of the current study.

According to Ayuk (2020), as cited from Diaz, (1993), after residing in the host country for a certain period, the immigrants get a chance to attain the respective functional resources, and to utilize the available resources within the host country, that can improve their status in terms of social, economic and cultural perspectives. Thereby, the expectation towards skilled immigrants is, that they may move from low-skilled and low-status jobs to well-paid skilled jobs. this explanation worth for the current study, so it can identify whether the non-European immigrants focussed in this study are also getting the benefits of such functional resources, and if so, their expectations towards skilled-jobs in future.

As noted by Manhica et al, (2015), as cited from Reich et al. (1973), discrimination takes place in the labour markets for different ethnic minorities and for women due to stereotypical attitudes about their skin colour, gender, ethnicity etc., beside of their qualifications and the productivity. As a result, the wages, working conditions and other career opportunities are not same as the natives. Manhica et al, (2015) cited evidence from McDowell et al. (2007) states that the immigrants are segmented in the labour markets on the basis of physical aspects such as skin colour, language etc., and due to the stereotypical attitudes of the employers regarding those immigrants' country of origin. The results of the study steered by Manhica et. al, (2015) concerning the African immigrants in Sweden has also agreed with the above literature evidences and have exposed that the employment status of such African immigrants in the Swedish labour market were lower. Thereby, the author revealed that the level of employability of the immigrants in Sweden is affected by their originated country. However, this study focusses on the African immigrants as a whole and does not designate their specific skill levels. Therefore, conducting a study focussing specifically on the high-skilled non-European immigrants, and the marginalization they experience the Swedish labour market is much significant.

2.2 Immigrant Integration to Swedish Labour Market

In Sweden, 'immigration' is classified in to two categories called, "labour immigration" and "refugee and kin reunification immigration" (Meneviş, 2010). According to studies, the causes of migration were brought to the forefront in Sweden as soon as it was recognized that they had an impact on society. The multiculturalist movement towards immigrant

integration in Sweden is thought to have begun around 1974. This program was founded on the principles of "equality," "freedom of choice," and "collaboration" (Crepaz, 2008; as cited in Menevis, 2010). Through 'Equality', it is attempted to provide the living conditions and standards for both immigrants and native Swedes in a similar manner. In accordance with the 'freedom of choice', citizenships including dual citizenship and other resident permits are granted for immigrants. 'Partnership' dimension of the above definition aims at encouraging the corporation between Swedes and immigrants. Even though the government introduces many programmes, the practicality of these programmes are till debatable, since still there are lot more immigrants who have not entered and integrated to the labour market in Sweden nowadays than that of earlier (Meneviş, 2010)

Knocke (2000) claims that the situation of the labour market in Sweden for immigrants outside the European countries is disastrous. The author further highlights that there are alarming signs of a continuous process of social exclusion and marginalization of the immigrants (including refugees) irrespective of the Swedish governmental policies. It creates high unemployment and inactive immigrants in the labour market. Marginalization and the racial discrimination of immigrants, disappointment created by the unsuccessful integration to labour market and the frustration for the inability to attain the job-related benefits keep a black mark on such immigrant inhabitants and on the society as a whole. The author further elaborates both public and private sector employers in the Swedish labour market restricts the opportunities for immigrants. As such, conducting a study focussing on the 'high-skilled' niche segment of the non-European immigrants is sensible in order to identify whether the above-mentioned restrictive policies and the purposive marginalization of the employers are the reasons behind for high-skilled immigrants being unemployed or under-employed.

However, immigrants with better levels of education and skills encounter fewer threats, and they develop the confidence, drive, and ability to compete in the labour market for well-paying professions, (Felicio et al, 2009). Popovic (2011) claims that if natives and immigrants have the same academic qualifications and talents, they are worth equal consideration for available job opportunities. However, employers frequently make the incompetence in Swedish language skills as a barrier for the immigrants to enter in to the labour market (Knocke 2010; as cited in Råberg & Liljegren, 1993). As highlighted by Wiesbrock, (2011), despite mastering the host country's language and other specific abilities, immigrants have

difficulty achieving more or less similar labour market outcomes as native-born citizens, even after living in the host country for a long time. Previous studies have revealed that some of the immigrant integration strategies of Sweden, such as the language programmes have not been able to deliver expected favourable results for the immigrants. It has been found that many of the immigrants feel it as challenging to practice Swedish language, even after learning it (Atassi & Alebiary 2017; as cited in Awori, 2019). Consequently, there is still a gap in the interactions between native Swedes and the immigrants. As such, the language programmes should also be adjusted in order to make more sense (Awori, 2019; cited evidence from Rogova 2014; Atassi & Alebiary 2017)

Hence, even though after acquiring the language skills and speaking fluent Swedish, still the immigrants do not get a much chances from the employers, as the language fluency is overridden by their 'peculiar non-Swedish name'. Therefore, nearly 2000 immigrants every year alter their native names in to Swedish names in order to attain higher chances in the labour market (Knocke 2010). According to Råberg & Liljegren, (1993); as cited in Knocke, (2010), one of the major barriers that restricts immigrants from equal opportunities is, the preference of employers towards the applicants with Swedish names. As a result, immigrants tend to change their ethnic identities (in terms of name, accent, skin colour, hair colour etc.) under the tight labour market conditions in order to get rid of being stigmatized. The study conducted by Ahmadyar, (2021) also explains that the immigrants and ethnic minorities in Sweden tend to change their names to avoid the discrimination when finding jobs. This study has been focussed on several Afghan immigrants who successfully found their jobs after changing the names. The study was conducted based on nine Afghan immigrants ranging from high-skilled to moderate skilled, who have changed their names in to Swedish-sounding names. The results of the study have revealed that almost all such immigrants have received employment opportunities and equal treatment as natives, after changing their names. The respondents of that study have further revealed that they could achieve their life goals after the name changes. Another study conducted by Brusel, (2012) has identified that immigrants with foreign names need to send job applications as twicer as those applicants with Swedish-sounding names, in order to at least receive a call back from the employers.

Likewise, immigrants, especially the non-European immigrants seemed to be marginalized in the Swedish labour market on the grounds of their personal particulars instead of their

knowledge, skills and competencies. This stereotypical attitude of the employers is the main reason for the high skilled non-European immigrants for sacrificing their professional careers after migrating to Sweden. Therefore, in all the hands, conducting the current study is much needed to raise the awareness of the responsible authorities to take necessary actions to stop this brain waste and to uplift the productivity, efficiency and the effectiveness of the labour market in Sweden.

2.3 Job Searching

Literature differentiates job searching methods in to three ways namely; formal methods, informal methods and direct methods (Behtoui, 2008). Formal methods are the process of applying through job advertisements in the internet or other printed media, or applying through employment agencies. Informal methods are where the people search jobs through their personal and social connections such as, friends, relations, or through making connections with employers or previous co-workers (Behtoui, 2008). Direct methods are where people build direct contacts with an organization (a potential employer), either by sending an unsolicited resume or by visiting the organization and meeting the potential employers in person (Forse, 2014; as cited in Behtoui, 2008). As further stated by Behtoui (2008), The absence of strong personal and social networks is one of the plausible reasons for minority groups for not finding suitable jobs for their qualifications. According to Segendorf (2005), as cited in Awori (2019) has identified that immigrants use all informal, formal and direct job search methods. Further, the study has recognised that applying through employment agencies and following up the applications by contacting the potential employers through phone calls are some of the most effective formal jobs searching strategies that the immigrants use.

Segendorf (2005) in his study regarding the job strategies and the wage effects on the immigrants in Sweden, has identified that the non-European immigrants who have successfully integrated with the labour market have mostly used informal job searching methods than the native Swedes. The study has further identified that such immigrants who found jobs through informal methods have undergone with a wage discount.

2.4 High-skilled Immigrants and Low-skilled Jobs

Benton et al, (2014) highlights that the fresh immigrants who moved to European countries often experience many challenges to obtain a secured employment in the European labour markets. As a result, most of the skilled immigrants undergo with prolonged periods of being inactive in the labour market, being unemployed, or engaged in low-skilled jobs for a longer period of time that underutilizes their skills, qualifications and potentials. Benton et al, (2014) refers this skill under-utilization as ‘brain waste’. The authors’ focus in this study is not limited to one particular country, and therefore it investigates multiple European countries. Furthermore, the study specifies only the fresh immigrants and the high-skilled immigrants. That means, the immigrants all over the world. However, the focus of the current study is limited to one specific niche group, that is the ‘high-skilled non-European immigrants in Sweden’.

According to a study conducted by Ayuk (2020), non-EU immigrants' work placements in the Swedish labour market are lower in comparison to their qualifications. Salmonsson & Mella (2013) & Sweetman (2004) state that the qualifications of immigrants have a lower value in the labour market when compared with the qualifications of native-born job applicants. This under-recognition of the immigrant qualifications is called as ‘human capital devaluation’. (Reitz, 2007). Moreover, as argued by Reitz (2007), this devaluation happens not only for the academic and professional qualifications of the immigrants, but also to their respective work experiences in their own countries.

Qualified immigrants frequently experience difficulties in having their home country qualifications recognized and acknowledged in the host country. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that foreign formal qualifications are typically regarded as inferior than domestic ones by employers (Wiesbrock, 2011). Thus, conducting a study in the Swedish context become vital in two hands. On one hand, Sweden was considered as a ‘country of immigration’ as mentioned in the chapter one. On the other hand, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Sweden is a most welcoming country for immigrants and the government conducts many integration programmes for immigrants, including helping them to convert their foreign credentials to Swedish equal qualifications. Therefore, it is important to study the professional career sacrifices of high-skilled non-European immigrants, beside of all these government initiatives.

The most common professions in Sweden which attract the bulk of skilled professional immigrants are computer or information technology specialists, engineers, and architects. According to historical data, over 20,000 work permits have been issued by the migrations agency, for above professions, during 2012-2015 (Awori, 2019; as cited in Sweden and migration, 2015). Apart from the above professions, most of the immigrants represent in the labour market through non-professional sectors such as in restaurants, cleaning, or as the supporters in the agriculture industry (such as berry pickers). These non-professional sectors in the labour market have not only become most attracting among immigrants, but also has become the starting points of the employment among all the categories of immigrants (students, refugees/ asylum seekers) who move to Sweden. (Awori, 2019; as cited in Migrationsverket 2012; Shklyan 2012; Faris Ahmed 2016). Therefore, the current study will dive deep in to the professional (high-skilled) immigrants who are currently engaged with those non-professional sectors and identify their perceptions regarding their professional career sacrifices.

Kamali (2009) has explored racial discrimination in several European situations. The author goes on to explain that there are institutional exclusions exists in the European labour market that affect immigrants in a variety of ways, including their schooling, job search, and housing, as well as their social integration. Furthermore, the author claims that non-European immigrants are more likely to be employed in low-status positions with lower pay. Moreover, the author emphasizes the importance of ethnic networks in disseminating information about job prospects among people of the same ethnicity.

In comparison to native Swedes, 50% of immigrants who arrived in Sweden in recent years have a greater educational background (Awori, 2019). That study author goes on to discuss non-EU immigrants' unemployment and underemployment using information from government agencies such as arbetsförmedlingen. Further, the study highlights that the immigrants (including high-skilled immigrants) are underrepresented in the labour market in Sweden. According to statistics, non-European immigrants' recorded unemployment cases climbed by 40,000 from 2008 to 2015, putting Sweden in top place for the biggest number of unemployed immigrants. According to Awori (2019), these employment gaps between immigrants and native Swedes make Sweden the worst professional labour integration country, when compared with other European countries.

As stated by Åslund & Roth (2005) in their study regarding the changes of the attitudes and the discrimination happens in the Swedish labour market, it is revealed that African immigrants in Sweden as a 'vulnerable group'. African immigrants consist a greater share of the population in Sweden and approximately, 7.7% of the migrant population in Sweden as of December, 2008 were born in Africa (Manhica et al, 2015). As further highlighted by Manhica et al, (2015), as cited in Åslund (2000), African and Asian immigrants experience many hardships such as less salaries, health concerns due to poor ergonomics and unhealthy jobs, long-term unemployment etc. However, this study recognizes the Asian and African immigrants as a whole, and it does not specifically recognize the situation of high-skilled and low-skilled employees of these ethnic groups. Therefore, the current study will be looking forward to contribute specifically to the high-skilled immigrant category of the non-European countries.

2.5 Consequences of under-employment/ unemployment

Underemployment distresses individuals from numerous walks of life, counting those with a difference of educational and work experiences, as well as those working in a variety of industries. Unemployment and underemployment look similar, but those are two separate concepts. Both unemployment and under-employment describes position of the individuals in the labour market, where in which, the unemployed individuals are completely jobless, but actively seeking for jobs. Underemployed people on the other hand are the individuals who have a job, where it underutilizes their knowledge, skills and abilities. Therefore, such people expect something else, which give them more opportunities and benefits. As such, underemployed individuals lie in the frontier of underemployment and employment (Campbell et al, 2013).

Many researchers have revealed that under-employment creates more negative and unfavourable work attitudes, job dissatisfaction, intention to move out from those jobs. Further, such individuals who experience under-employment also suffer from poor physical and psychological health. Moreover, the tension of being under-employed may also negatively impact over the family ties with the spouses, children or parents, and also it may

perhaps impact over the social interactions of those individuals with their friends and other networks. (Maynard & Feldman, 2011).

According to the study steered by Winefield et al, (1991), it has been identified that the young people who are under-employed suffer from the similar psychological problems as same as the unemployed people. As further pointed out by (Kim & Parkc, 2006), underemployment can create worse levels of psychological well-being and mental health.

Unemployment may lead towards unhealthy activities such as addiction/ increased consumption to alcohol and tobacco, and poor living standards (Dean & Wilson, 2009; as cited from Lee et al. 1991, Dooley et al. 1992, Grayson 1993). And also, it can negatively affect to the mental health of those people as well, such as, it will increase the stress, depression, anxiety, distress etc. further, unemployment may perhaps create serious diseases like cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders and premature mortality. (Dean & Wilson, 2009; cited evidence from Arber and Lahelma 1993, Hamilton et al. 1993, Bartley 1994, Hammarstrom 1994, Leana and Feldman 1995, Kraut and Walld 2003, O'Campo et al. 2004). Further, Dean & Wilson, (2009) have revealed in their study regarding the under-employed people in the Canadian context, that the tension of under-employed skilled-immigrants is rising when those people are incapable to accomplish their family responsibilities from the less income they receive through the low-skilled jobs, and due to the depletion of their savings, they made at their home countries.

Toikko & Pehkonen (2018), in their study 'Community Belongingness and Subjective Well-being among Unemployed People in a Finnish Community' has revealed that unemployed people have a minor rate of community belongingness and subjective well-being when compared with employed people. Likewise, the people who are unemployed tend to perceive themselves as not a part of the society. As such, they experience a minimum level of involvement in the society. According to the study conducted by Austin & Este (2001), under-employment may create two types of stresses. In one hand, those under-employed people feel helpless with the inability to defend themselves from the racism in their workplaces. On the other hand, the inability to meet the family responsibilities from the insufficient number of wages, even after working for continuous and long working hours, make them stressed.

Thus, the consequences of being unemployed/ under-employed have been studied by many scholars in different contexts. Some studies have focussed on young professionals, some have focussed on immigrants, etc. The current study will further investigate the consequences and the perceptions when the professional immigrants become unemployed or under-employed in a foreign country.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Approach

3.1 Chapter Introduction

Underlying theory of the study, the stigma theory is presented in this chapter. Author begins the chapter with a background of stigma. Afterwards, the author describes the origination of stigma theory and how the society perceive 'stigma' as of now. Afterwards, few examples are presented from the previous studies and the applicability of the theory in to the current study is discussed.

3.2 Stigma Theory of Goffman

In order to have psychological and physiological wellness, it needs to have **positive social contact**. Individuals who feel socially excluded or rejected are more prone to experience different behavioural, physical and emotional issues, displaying that humans have a basic urge for belongingness (Kurzban & Leary (2001), as cited evidence from Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Irrespective of people's greatest exertions to be accepted, social refusal is a common phenomenon in everyday life. In one hand, most of such refusals are the result of an individual's distinctive perceptions, inclinations, and intentions in relation to another. Other occurrences of social rejection, on the other hand, seem to be grounded on shared values or interests of individuals and groups. As a result of the given attributes by the society, or as a result of being a member of a certain group, certain people are systematically refused from particular social interactions by the means of stigmatization. However, the criterion for stigmatization may not be similar on all the social contexts. A particular **stigmatizing criterion in one social context may not be stigmatizing criteria in another**.

As per Goffman (2009), the term 'stigma' has been initiated by Greeks by the means of indicating cut or burnt signs in the bodies in order to recognize criminals, traitors, and slaves swiftly and to avoid them in public areas. According to Goffman's terms, stigma is a **'spoiled social identity'**. Nevertheless, as of today, **"stigma is not merely a physical mark but rather an attribute that results in widespread social disapproval—a discrediting social difference"**. (Bos, et al., 2013) (pp.1). As a result, in today's setting, the attitudes and beliefs of people,

that can direct discriminatory acts are also referred to as "stigma." (Krupa et al, 2009). As per most of the definitions, stigma entails with two phenomenons called **devaluation and recognition of difference** (Bos et al, 2013, as cited in Dovidio, Major, & Crocker, 2000). Moreover, stigma is not merely an individual-based thing, it occurs in the social setting and lies within the social interactions (Bos et al, 2013, as cited in Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Hebl & Dovidio, 2005). Following is an example for a stigmatization incident happened in Sweden, a couple of years ago.

A middle Eastern immigrant in Sweden received an unpleasant surprise when his local post office in his tiny village located in east of Gothenburg, Sweden, informing him that he had a package to be collected. Next to his surname on the address line in that notification, an employee of the post office has written as 'Blatte'. This is a term which generally used for degrading the dark-featured people in a society. This immigrant has complained it to the ombudsman. However, the immigrant was ready to disremember the incident, if the responsible person was ready to apologize. Unfortunately, with the absence of apologizing, the immigrant then filed a lawsuit in order to avoid the similar incidents happening to other ethnic minorities. Finally, the responsible post office announced their regret, and has taken necessary actions to prevent such things (Bursell, 2012, cited evidence from Sta^ohl, 2009). This is not merely discrimination, rather it is labelling individuals based on their group-specific characteristics. This incidence is a clear evidence for the public stigmatization occurs for immigrants, based on their ethnicity, race or religion.

Individuals are being stigmatized not merely either due to the adverse evaluation or because they hold a spoiled identity. But also, the stigmatization happens since they hold a particular characteristic, which is viewed by the society or a particular subgroup in the society as a basis for excluding or refusing other individuals (Kurzban & Leary, 2001). The attitudes and response of the society to stigmatized individuals based on negative and prejudiced thoughts is known as public stigma, whereas the consciousness of such stigmatized persons about the public stigma is identified as perceived stigma (Mehdiyar, 2019).

Self-Stigma

When people internalize such negative sentiments of the society, they experience a slew of negative and disagreeable outcomes, which make self-stigma. Self-stigma might then generate self-isolation, poor self-esteem, low self-efficacy, deprived health consequences, self-discrimination, poor quality of life etc. (Corrigan & Rao, 2012). Self-stigma has been mostly used for the studies about mental illness people. Stuart (2004) & Krupa et al., (2009) indicates that there is a high propensity for those self-stigmatized/ mentally-ill individuals to be unemployed or engaged with low-skilled jobs which do not match with their respective qualifications.

As per Krupa et al, 2009's study regarding the mental-illness employment, it has been revealed that stigma is a major barrier for whole social inclusion and the involvement and contribution in the society. Moreover, it indicates that stigma makes the mentally-ill people unemployed, underemployed or precariously employed (with low job security and poor career advancement chances). Some other studies have found that Stigma is associated with poor mental and physical health, deprivation, loss of social status, poverty, and social isolation (Bates & Stickley, 2013, as cited in Crisp 2004, Elliot & Masters 2009, Jackson et al. 2009).

Another study led by Mak & Cheung (2010), in Hong Kong setting, has recognised that self-stigma tends the immigrants to remark themselves as the concealable minorities. Moreover, the same study discloses that self-stigma not only reduces the mental health of such individuals, but also it restricts such people from seeking out necessary professional help, thinking such service providers will shun these immigrants after revealing their minority status. Self-stigma can also weaken the empowerment (Oexle et al, 2018). Likewise, self-stigma makes the vulnerable individuals to feel themselves as 'outcast' and as a result of that, these individuals may feel that they are not a part of this this host society because their qualifications and work experiences are not acknowledged. According to Stack, 1982, as cited in Feldman, 1996 pinpoints, sometimes these feelings of the self-stigmatization may be life-threatening, specifically when they realize that they are not acknowledged by the host society and they become a burden over their families.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, **having a foreign name is one of the biggest criteria for immigrant stigmatization in the Swedish labour market.** The immigrants then internalize this

common scenario and convert it to self- stigma. As a result, as many studies evidenced in chapter two, immigrants tend to change their foreign names in to Swedish-sounding names. Bursell (2012) has termed this as a strategy of de-stigmatization. Bursell (2012) has revealed on his study that this name changing de-stigmatizing strategy has facilitated the middle-Eastern immigrants in Sweden to avoid the stigmatization they had before, and they have experienced huge rises in their earnings, after the name changes.

As mentioned above, some of the previous researchers have used stigmatization to conduct their immigrant- related and other ethnic minority-related studies. And also, some studies have been conducted regarding the strategies such vulnerable groups used to de-stigmatize their situations.

Since the previous studies mentioned in chapter two evidence that the immigrants are not receiving the available opportunities, mainly due to the social disapproval, author decided that Goffman's stigma theory and its' derived concept of 'self-stigma' to be used to elaborate the individual-related outcomes as a result of their professional career sacrifices of this study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Research Design

Having considered the differences between quantitative and qualitative studies (Saunders , et al., 2009), author decided the current study to be a qualitative study, since the study is using non-numerical and unstandardized data. Thus, this study enables the non-European skilled-immigrants in order to describe their life stories and perceptions about sacrificing their professional careers after migrating to Sweden. Thus, the study will be using non-numerical (Tkaczyk & Krzyżanowska, 2013) and standardized data (Saunders , et al., 2009). In order to collect the required primary data, author conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews with the professional non-European immigrants who are currently unemployed or engaged with low-skilled jobs. As stated by Ritchie & Lewis (2014), this study Consists with ‘generated data’ including perceptions, thoughts, experiences, beliefs etc. Further, this is a cross- sectional study where the author collected the primary data at a single time from the participants. And also, this study is based on inductive reasoning with a pre-understanding of appropriate theories and previous studies towards recognizing additional theories in accordance with the data collection process.

4.2 Research Setting

The study was carried out in Sweden. As mentioned in the first chapter, Sweden’s population consists with a considerable proportion of non-European immigrants. As highlighted by many studies above under chapter two, one of the major barriers that restricts immigrants from entering to the Swedish labour market is the lack of recognition of their academic and professional qualifications. accordingly, the author of this study decided to focus about the ‘niche’ group in Sweden, who came as the dependents. The spouses of these dependents who are studying in Swedish universities at the moment has a considerable chance to find a job for the sake of their Swedish qualifications. But, most of their partners (spouses) may find it difficult to find a suitable job, in the absence of Swedish qualifications. Thus, the author decided to carry out the study about such professional non-European immigrants in Sweden,

4.3 Research Participants

All the participants of this research were migrated to Sweden from non-European countries, such as Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran etc., and were residing in different locations in Sweden at the time of data collection. Moreover, all the participants of this study have moved to Sweden as the ‘dependents’ of either students or job holding spouses, due to the family reunification purpose. A more detailed overview of the participants is presented in the following table.

Table 4.1: Profiles of the Participants

Participant	Country of Origin	Academic/ Professional Qualifications	Previous Work Experience	Last Designation Held (Before migrating)	Current Employment Status
AZ061	Sri Lanka	Bachelors in mechatronics (special) (Sri Lanka)	6 years in both Sri Lanka and India	Engineer in research and innovation in automation industry	Warehouse worker/ cleaner
BH021	Sri Lanka	BSc. Finance (Special) (Sri Lanka), CIMA (UK), ACCA (UK)	6+ years in Sri Lanka	Financial Analyst	Food delivery rider
LS042	Sri Lanka	MBA, CMA, Diploma in international business, Certificate course for Anti money laundering & sanctions compliance (UK), Certificate course for Uniform customs and practices for documentary credits (UK)	12+ years in Sri Lanka (international bank chain)	Global Trade and Receivables Finance Officer	Sales co-worker in a clothing shop

YJ064	Sri Lanka	Bachelors in logistics and supply chain management (Sri Lanka)	17+ in Sri Lanka including 9 years in Qatar	Manager-supply chain and logistics	Kitchen helper in a restaurant
WK076	Sri Lanka	Bachelors in Apparel Management (Sri Lanka) Postgraduate diploma in apparel management (Sri Lanka), certificate course and diploma courses in international relations and human resources	4+ years in Sri Lanka	Merchandiser	Restaurant worker
BP097	Sri Lanka	CBF (Professional banking qualification)	8+ years in Sri Lanka	Banking Officer	Restaurant worker
UT083	India	Masters in science (UK), Master's in Business Management (India)	15 years in India and UK	Business Manager	Food delivery rider
FR079	India	Masters in Business Administration	7+ years in India	HR Executive	restaurant worker
SK037	Pakistan	Bachelors in Commerce (Pakistan), Master's in Business Administration (Pakistan)	4 years in Pakistan	Banking Service Officer	Food delivery rider
LW048	India	Bachelors in Architecture (India)	5 Years in India and Singapore	Design Manager	Unemployed

FT056	Sri Lanka	Bachelors in Business Administration (Australia), Diploma in Hospitality Management (Sri Lanka)	8+ years in Sri Lanka, Dubai and Australia	Administrative Executive	Unemployed
DN036	Nigeria	Bachelors in Business Management (Nigeria)	6+ Years in Nigeria	Senior Management Executive	Parcel delivery rider
LY094	Bangladesh	Bachelors in Marketing Management (Bangladesh)	4 years in Bangladesh	Marketing Coordinator	Warehouse worker
GT068	Sri Lanka	BSc. Business Management (special) (Sri Lanka)	6 years in Sri Lanka	Executive Credit Analyst	Unemployed
KE026	Iran	Bachelors in Financial Management	5+ years in Iran	Senior Finance Officer	Food delivery rider

All these respondents are having either professional or academic qualification obtained from their home countries or in another country, and have at least a couple of years' of professional work experience. That means, people who have had a professional career before migrating to Sweden. The professional fields of the participants are engineering, banking, different management professions such as in accountancy, financial management, supply chain and logistics, business administration etc. Moreover, these respondents are residing in Sweden for less than five years, but still they have not been able to find a suitable job for their qualifications and experiences. As such, these respondents are unemployed at the moment or, engaged with low-skilled jobs such as restaurants workers, cleaners, food delivery riders, warehouse workers etc

4.4 Sampling

Before obtaining the sample, it is necessary to identify the population that belongs to the study. Population is, all the possible participants who qualify the research criteria and who resides in the location where the research is carried out. If a particular study collects data from

the entire population, it is called 'census'. (Saunders , et al., 2009). However, this type of a scenario may possible in a rare circumstance. Therefore, most of the studies need to obtain a sample from their population due to the practical limitations like time constraints, indefinite population, cost of data collection and difficulties in accessing to the entire population (Saunders , et al., 2009).

Population of this study includes all the non-European skilled immigrants who moved to Sweden as the 'dependents', due to family reunification purpose. According to the statistics mentioned above, 19.7% of the of the population in Sweden were born in other countries outside Sweden. However, the statistics lacks the exact percentage of non-European skilled-immigrants in Sweden. Further, all these possible research participants who fulfil the criteria are scattered in different locations in Sweden. Due to all these considerations, author obtained a sample of fifteen from the non-European skilled-immigrants.

In order to obtain the sample of this study, author used two non-probability sampling strategies called purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is a strategy that involves selecting main informants in the research field and then using them to identify 'information rich cases' appropriate for the study (Coyne (2007), as cited in Awori, (2019)). As such, author used the personal network to identify the key informants who fulfil the research criteria and then moved to snowball sampling method afterwards, since the author does not have a broader network in Sweden. Snowball sampling is a technique that entails gathering information from key informants regarding the other cases with rich data that could be used for the study. Under this method, since the first group of identified key individuals assist in guiding the researcher to other persons (from the key informants; networks) with equal characteristics that are important to the study, the chain of participants with identical characteristics relevant to the study continues growing (Patton 2002; Sur 2011, as cited in Awori, (2019)). As further stated by Awori (2019) cited evidence from Biernacki & Waldorf (1981), snowball sampling strategy is highly encouraged for qualitative studies, and also it is especially beneficial for the studies which deal with sensitive topics. According to those authors, these vulnerabilities might involve private data and information which needs the knowledge and experiences of such parties.

As such, the author contacted the first six informants through the personal network. The other informants of the study were accessed through the network of those six key informants (i.e. through snowball sampling).

4.5 Data Collection

In order to collect primary data, fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with different non-European high-skilled immigrants. All the interviews were conducted virtually through online platforms. Author obtained the similar types of major concerns of the informants from the first eight interviews and afterwards, the major focus of the following interviews was given to those identified specific areas. That means, such identified areas were dig-deeper in the following interviews. All the interviews were conducted in English and, the interviews were lasted between 30-45 minutes and all the interviews were recorded under the permission of the informants.

4.6 Data Analysis

First eight interviews conducted were fully transcribed in order to obtain a complete understanding of the different perceptions of the respondents. Afterwards, such eight transcriptions were sub-divided by attaching specific labels based on their relevance to the study by using Microsoft word and excel. The major focus of the next seven interviews were given to the labels identified from the first eight interviews. Therefore, the last seven interviews were not fully transcribed due to the time constraints, and only the specific parts of the interviews were taken for the analysis purpose. The formatting of the transcriptions were Times New Roman 12’ and 1.5 line spacing. Following table illustrates more precise information about the conducted interviews and the respective transcriptions.

Table 4.2: Interview Transcriptions

Participant	Date conducted the Interview	Nature of the Transcription	Number of pages of the transcription
AZ061	24/02/2022	Full Transcription	14
BH021	16/02/2022	Full Transcription	13
LS042	03/03/2022	Full Transcription	16
YJ064	05/03/2022	Full Transcription	17

WK076	12/03/2022	Full Transcription	12
BP097	25/03/2022	Partial Transcription	6
UT083	09/03/2022	Full Transcription	12
FR079	13/03/2022	Full Transcription	13
SK037	08/03/2022	Full Transcription	11
LW048	03/04/2022	Partial Transcription	7
FT056	15/04/2022	Partial Transcription	6
DN036	04/05/2022	Partial Transcription	7
LY094	05/05/2022	Partial Transcription	6
GT068	12/04/2022	Partial Transcription	8
KE026	04/05/2022	Partial Transcription	6

As shown in the above table, several interviews were partially transcribed due to the time constraint. However, all these primary data were analysed through inductive reasoning method. Finally, out of all the interview transcriptions, author identified 56 of open codes, out of which were abstracted in to 16 focussed codes and further abstracted in to 5 theoretical codes. (Refer appendix 1). Thereby, three theoretical codes identified from the fifteen interviews were namely, Forgone previous identity, culture clashes, pointless efforts, career gap and future uncertainty and de-stigmatization strategies. This coding is used to answer the main research question of the study, that is the perceptions of the informants regarding their professional career sacrifices. Extractions from some interview transcriptions are included in this study, in order to add more value for the analysis. Most importantly, a pseudo name was given for each participant, in order to protect their anonymity. Therefore, such pseudo names will be mentioned next to the extractions in the analysis chapter.

However, the secondary research questions are answered in a more holistic perspective, rather through thematic coding. Therefore, the perceptions regarding the secondary research questions were not grouped and labelled as in the main research question.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

De Wet, (2010) has elaborated the importance of ethical considerations in the social science researches. Having agreed, this thesis was conducted in accordance with the generally accepted ethical considerations. Thereby, official emails together with the consent form were sent to most of the participants of the study, in order to inform them the purpose, objectives,

rights and protection of the privacy and sensitivities of the participants. However, few informants were not willing to share any of their personal details including the email addresses. Therefore, the ethical considerations were communicated to those informants verbally and obtained their consent to participate, and to record the interview. In order to guarantee the anonymity, all the informants were given pseudonyms during the transcription. Further, the company names, and other sensitive information provided by the informants were transcribed with a pseudocode. Finally, all the interview recording were deleted after submitting the final project.

Chapter 5: Empirical Findings and Analysis

In this chapter, the author presents the analysis of the empirical findings of the study. All the results and findings are based on the perceptions of high-skilled non-European immigrants who sacrificed their professional careers after migrating to Sweden. The results gathered from the semi-structured interviews conducted with such informants are presented through thematic coding method of data analysis.

The study was carried out to answer one main research question, that is “What are the perceptions of non-European immigrants regarding their professional career sacrifices when integrating to labour market in Sweden?” Apart from that, the study attempted to find answers for two other secondary research questions namely, “How do non-European immigrants perceive equal opportunities in the Swedish labour market?” and “What are the opinions of non-European immigrants regarding the government and other initiatives for immigrant integration in Sweden?”. Therefore, the results and findings will be presented under three sub sections of this chapter. Firstly, the main research question is analysed with the three theoretical codes mentioned in chapter 4.6. The findings related to the perceptions on professional career sacrifices are analysed underlying theory of this study, that is stigma theory of Goffman and its derived concepts.

Afterwards, the secondary research questions are analysed in a holistic approach in the next sections. However, the major focus of the analysis will be given to the main research question, and therefore, the secondary research questions are not analysed based on the thematic coding.

5.1 Analysis of the Perceptions of Professional Career Sacrifices

This section analyses and presents the qualitative data gathered during the study. Table in appendix 1 presents the five theoretical codes/ themes which will be used to analyse the perceptions of non-European immigrants on their professional career sacrifices. As a quick reminder for the reader, such theoretical codes are forgone previous identity, culture clashes, pointless efforts, career gap and future uncertainty and de-stigmatization strategies. Foregone previous identity was the most common and most important theoretical codes identified, with

lots of open codes. Thereby, more focus of the analysis will be given to analyse the forgone previous identity of the informants and how they are struggling with their current identity.

5.1.1 Forgone Previous Identity

According to Chrysochoou (2003), identity is a specific type a of social representation of a person, which can intermediate the connection between that particular person and the society. Identity brings social inclusion to individuals and let them communicate and build network with others in the society. One of the main themes found from the responses of the participants is, they are highly worried about losing their previous identity. Identity hereby refers to the previous status they had with a higher-level professional job. Once they have been working in a well-reputed professional career, it has been difficult for them to adjust their own minds to become a low-skilled worker in Sweden.

“I have managed around 90 people under me, when I was in Qatar as a project manager. I have handled many projects like XXX, and I have been the logistics and warehouse manager in YYY (a multinational Swedish company in Qatar) also. But having that type of an experience, I am now working as a kitchen helper. To be honest, sometimes I am ashamed on myself. And also, I am really really disappointed” - YJ064

“my current job actually that really embarrassed to say what I have to do now..... I have to unload the container boxes and those kinds of things and sometimes I have to pick the packages and dropping in some other places like I don't need any education to do this.” –

AZ061

Jobs are not merely a way to earn money for living. It has a direct impact over how people perceive themselves, and how the society perceives these people. Therefore, jobs can craft a meaning of someone's life. However, a sudden falling out of a person from his professional job, and become unemployed, under-employed, which is totally irrelevant to his background, it creates a massive influence over the social outlet which he had with the previous job status. Not only from the society, the person himself tend to grieve on the respect, social status, dignity and all other related things he lost.

Same story happens with above two informants. One was a manager with over 17 years of experience and the other one was an engineer with over six years of experience. They both have climbed to the upper-middle levels of their career ladders. Beside of all such professional backgrounds, these professionals are currently engaging with some low-skilled jobs in Sweden, which are totally irrelevant to their backgrounds. Consequently, the informants question themselves about the massive toll that twisted on their current identity.

“..... I am not used to this. Think that you have been so much busy with work for a so long time and suddenly you became jobless. So how can you stay home without doing anything?

Sometimes I feel like I am mad.”- FR079

“I was ashamed on myself. I have been doing a good job, and having a good life there, and I lost all of them in a sudden. It's like a dream.”- DN036

Beside of the financial torture, current identity of being a ‘low-skilled worker’ or ‘being unemployed’ has stripped out their whole dignity and the meaning of their lives. The grief of these professional career sacrifices has navigated these professionals towards an emotionally tough situation of missing or losing the previous status. This emotional influence is prominent and beats all the other stressors of being unemployed or under-employed. Thus, it’s been challenging for them to adjust their own minds to the current status and living condition, since they all have practiced their minds as ‘professional employees’ for quite a long time.

“.... we are doing a physical job here. you know it is tricky. It needs lot of a physical strength and also mental strength uh because we have to adjust our minds to work as a food delivery driver and when I was in my country, I was working in the good officers so my biggest challenge is to adjust my mind to work as a food delivery provider” – BH021

Being engaged with huge responsibilities and projects, that utilize a major part of their skills and brain, and suddenly dropped down to a physical job is a tragedy. That distress and the shame of leaving their previous work environments are thrashing their minds even more. After investing several years of the life in to a particular professional field, and losing it all of a sudden designates more than losing a career, instead it is way of losing a whole life.

“.... when I was in Sri Lanka yes, we had money enough money to live in that country we had a good life actually We had a good and a happy life. So sometimes it’s really stressful

and sometimes we feel so down because myself and my husband we talk like now we can't do like previously'' – LS042

While comparing their current status and living conditions with that of previous, they identify themselves as downgraded and disregarded. This is what Goffman (2009) referred to as self-stigma. In simply, a mark of disrespect/shame that the individuals put on themselves. As Corrigan & Rao (2012) described, self-stigma can also create poor self-esteem, self-discrimination, self-isolation, health issues, self-discrimination, poor quality of life etc. Having agreed, Vogel et al., (2007) also state that self-stigma reduces self-esteem, sense of belongingness and most importantly, such self-stigmatized people tend to undervalue themselves by thinking that they are unaccepted by the society.

“..... I am a jobless person. So, if I need to buy something for my daughter, but I don't have enough income to buy that. So, I feel really bad about me. I don't know what to do. I have worked in other countries also, but I don't have this type of an experience before in my life”.

– YJ064

"Self-esteem" means an individual's whole sense of his self-value. It's basically the evaluation of a particular person about himself, including his sense of self-worth, self-assurance, sentiments of competence, and sense of belongingness. Poor self-esteem on the other hand, may have an impact over an individual's ideas, feelings, and behavioural patterns. These signs may be more obvious in certain circumstances; however, those can also be far more subtle too. Absence of a proper income has disintegrated his confidence to meet the day-to-day needs. When compared with the previous life conditions, the above informant perceive himself as deteriorated than earlier. It's kind of a step taken back after migrating to Sweden.

“One day when I delivered a parcel to the customer, she gave me some coins as a tip. I didn't accept it at the beginning, but she gave it two-three times, so I had to accept it. When I checked it, there were somewhere around 15-20SEK. when I was in my country, I used to give tips for the delivery guys, for waiters or for the taxi drivers. But that day, I got a tip from a customer for the first time in my life. While coming back I was thinking did I really fell in to a situation like this! I mean from her side, she didn't do anything wrong, but for me, it was embarrassing.” – DN036

With the amplified opportunities for education, society nowadays has a wide variety of jobs with distinct income layers. The careers therefore, are no longer ‘generational’ and open to everyone. Hence, careers have become crucial in labelling the identity of individuals in a nuanced manner. The more the career/ job title become professional, the more that individual is welcomed in most of the societies. As highlighted by the above instance, having spent years of comfortable life under the shed of a high-skilled professional job before, and now receiving immaterial coins as a tip is not stroking the ego of this person, but it is rather a ‘spoiled identity’ as referred by Goffman (2009).

“... in the first day I worked there, and when I had to clean the tables in the restaurant, I felt a big sorrow about myself, I can't explain that feeling actually. While cleaning the table, I was thinking like why do I need to do this type of a job! Then why did I learn that much!” –

BP097

The informants are experiencing many hardships moving through their new life statuses in Sweden. All the skills and competencies they acquired have now gone in vain. Their current situation is about wrestling with their emotions and trying to adjust to the current identity. It is not that easy. The deteriorated perceptions and the lower self-esteem have made them to perceive themselves in a negative manner.

“Currently I am working in a restaurant, as a kitchen helper, it's totally different from my area. This is the first time I am even working in such a kind of a thing. It is actually difficult for me, because I am not used to it. I have to learn from the beginning, and it is also a physical job. So, I need to adjust myself.” – YJ064

The hardship of being a low-skilled worker coupled with the unfulfilled expectations of the life have further become a strain on these informants’ minds. Consequently, informants self-label themselves as they are outcast, due to lack of self-esteem. As a result, they tend to hide their identity from the society by thinking that the entire society will perceive them in a negative manner.

5.1.2 Culture Clashes

Culture refers to a collection of unwritten rules, attitudes, shared values, beliefs, customs, and artefacts that are generally used by members of a specific group (Schein, 2016). Also, culture is not passed down through generations; instead, it is inadvertently absorbed from the environment in which people live. Hence, culture is different from one group to another. Each nation has its own culture, which Hofstede refers to as "national cultures." (Hofstede, et al., 2010).

“... at the beginning it was very difficult for me to get use to this. In the very first day, I was wearing a mask for the whole day, because I didn't want to reveal my face for the customers. I was thinking like if any person from my country come to the restaurant and if they recognized me, what will happen to my dignity? What will happen to my parents' dignity! So, I tried to hide myself.” – FR079

The informant was trying to hide face from the customers in the first day at the restaurant. The informant has speculated that the restaurant job was not suitable to the informant's previous status and it is awkward if other people identify the informant as a restaurant worker. The informant has internalized the stereotypical attitude that the informant was not supposed to do a restaurant job. The stance of this public stigma has derived from the society that informant was belonging before. That means, not in Sweden, but in informant's own country. Not only that informant, many of the respondents reveal that they do not feel any difference of the treatment/ identification in Sweden, due to the job they doing at the moment. But the respondents revealed that there is a negative impression towards low-skilled jobs in their home countries. Thus, these informants are self-stigmatized due to two reasons. In one hand these informants are choked from the attitudes and perceptions of their own countries for being a low-skilled worker. On the other hand, they are affected from the stereotypes and negative attitudes of the employers in Sweden.

“my country is built with the culture. all of them expect me to do a good job here because with my background. But European culture is different. They accept everything as a job. But it's not the same in our countries” – YJ064

The reason behind these negative impressions of the home countries towards low-skilled jobs is nonetheless, the culture difference. Their attitudes and thinking patterns are deeply inbuilt

with the culture. Most of these individuals are a part of these collective cultures where they need to fulfil the expectations of their families, relations and even the neighbours.

“in our countries, there’s no good recognition for these types of jobs in the society. These are like labelled as uneducated jobs. Because, in my country I have never seen educated people doing this type of jobs. So, with that mindset, our country people think that uneducated people do these jobs. But here, it’s not like that....” – FR079

“They are not that much good, because our culture is very different and yeah so yeah their expectations are different, like they want me to do a kind of higher or a managerial position like I did in our country, or something better than there but the world culture is different in both countries but for me personally I was expected or I was prepared for this because I have a background from England so I know that what’s the British or the European culture so I was well prepared” – UT083

All the respondents of the study were born and raised up in non-European backgrounds. According to them, they are highly attached with their families until they die. Moreover, in their cultures, there is a clear transition between the white-collar and blue collar-jobs, in terms of salary and the social recognition. Under that background, their parents have done lots of sacrifices together with them in order to raise up them to the previous occupational status they held. Thus, the expectation of their parents and other belongings in their home countries is that these people should engage with a similar or perhaps a higher-level job than they did previously. However, as they exposed, European culture is different. It lets the individuals to engage with whatever job they prefer. According to the perceptions of the respondents, they have not been recognized differently, or marginalized in Sweden, due to the low-skilled job they are doing at the moment. But the stigmatization happens due to their non-European background.

Moreover, another finding of the study is the changes of the perceptions of the informants towards low-skilled jobs, after migrating to Sweden.

“With the things I have seen and with the cultural background, we actually used to consider these jobs as uneducated jobs. Because you don’t need any education to serve the foods and to clean the tables..... But, after coming here, my thinking is totally different. now I feel like even education can’t do anything here unless you have the luck. Because there are lot more

people who are educated than me, they are also doing these similar types of jobs. So, now I will never underestimate any person based on their jobs.’’ – FR079

“.... alright again in a general perception we would say that it’s a second-class job, something like that but because of I am having a UK background I never consider it’s like that because that UK life changed my perceptions already so I have a mindset to see the people at least in equality’’ – UT083

Individual attitudes towards low-skilled jobs are highly affected by both public stigma and the nature of that individual’s job. Since Europe is having an equal-class method, there’s no significant deviations of the attitudinal changes towards high-skilled and low-skilled jobs. Thus, there’s no huge public stigma towards low-skilled workers like in other non-European countries. In contrast, overlook of the non-European society on the low-skilled jobs is woven around the myths regarding their level of education, lack of skills and inability to meet the market demands etc. Nevertheless, when these non-European people blend with the European culture, their thinking patterns towards these low-skilled workers have also changed.

5.1.3 Pointless Efforts

Beside of the cultural differences, their second self-stigmatization happens due to the stereotypes of the labour market in Sweden. These informants are fighting with hundreds of rejection emails and painful interviews, realizing that finding a professional job is not that easy.

“I have applied for more than 500 jobs now it’s only three interviews I got that is also after chasing the recruiting manager becausebut if I don’t like even recall the recruiting manager, they do not even consider my application’’ - LS042

These vulnerable professionals are getting the rejection email in the following day of the application itself. It seems that the employers do not even bother to read their applications. as mentioned in the chapter two, these employers perhaps straightaway screen the applications from the name and may be ignoring the foreign-sounding names.

“...it’s really frustrating because this is the first time in my life, I rejected this many times. I got only two interviews up to now and those two interviews also I went till the second

interview and it did not process after that. Those people said it is because of the language but in the applications, it was not mentioned that they need Swedish, and the others (other companies the informant have applied) they cannot even say that what is my problem for not qualifying. so, I can't understand what to do with this uh.' – AZ061

They are unsure in which ways their lives will turn out. However, the bottom-line of these professional career sacrifices and instability of the low-skilled jobs creates a psychological trauma on these vulnerable people, due to the inability of fulfilling their needs and wants.

“I had the confidence when I first came to Sweden ... that I can find a job I because I know about my capabilities and my knowledge but once I applied for so many opportunities and I got rejection emails, I was really surprised and depressed” – BH021

The respondents are over-burdened by not receiving any single positive feedback from the employers and the current low-skilled jobs. Consequently, it creates frustration, depression, disappointment etc.

“I was thinking too much. Sometimes, I didn't want to eat even, I couldn't sleep properly. Because, this is the first time in my life that I got rejected from like hundreds of employers.” – FR079

“It's so crazy. I was totally disappointed on myself for the first time in my life. I was so pressurized and I was blaming to my husband saying why did you take me to this stupid country!” – FR079

The mixed feelings of continuous rejection, frustration, depression and disappointment creates a pessimism in their lives. The helplessness of being rejected for many times lessens the self-confidence and self-esteem of these individuals.

Many studies mentioned above in chapter two have identified that one of the major reasons for the immigrants to not find suitable jobs is their foreign background. This is mainly due to the stereotypes of employers either about the foreign academic qualifications, or other group-specific attitudes. This is what Goffman referred to as public stigma. When the general public shares common stigmatizing perceptions about a particular group of people, or a particular subset of the common society, it is known as public stigma (Vogel, et al., 2013).

“... in my current work, we feel that if something goes wrong every time, we are the persons who did this, like that they think like that if someone else do the mistake but they first suspect and blame us so they think because of these immigrant guys only this happened...” – AZ061

“..... in last summer we had to work like I felt like that I’m like a dog they didn’t treat us like a human that continuously we were working even I don’t know I can’t express that uh” – AZ061

This type of sweeping negative opinions of a big group may create stereotypes, discrimination and bias against the minority sub groups of the society. Hence, public stigmatization may be detrimental (Vogel et al., (2013), as cited in Corrigan (2004)). This ends up with huge career mismatches among the non-European immigrants. According to the above examples, not only in finding jobs, but also in their current low-skilled jobs, they are marginalized under the label of ‘immigrants’, either by their employers or other stakeholders in their current low-skilled jobs.

“I met one person. She has been working as a talent acquisition specialist in Sweden before. She was telling me that when some clients give them the projects, they give a list of some specific countries, and ask not to accept any application from those countries.” – FR079

This can also call the ethnic discrimination. This ethnic or racial discrimination or the stigmatization is not limited to one specific phenomenon and it can happen in any occasion or any process in the society and in the labour market. According to Bursell (2012), ethnic discrimination happens in the recruitment processes, when the employers assess the candidates from minority ethnic groups in a more negative manner than the candidates from the main ethnic group.

“I sometimes feel the employers themselves they don't know what type of candidates they are looking for. Because, the advertisement, they mention something, and if we call them or if we were selected for the first-round interview, then they tell a different story. So, I feel like they are finding reasons to avoid us.” – FT056

Bursell (2012), has further stated that, employers discriminate such ethnic minorities either intentionally or unintentionally based on the homogeneity. In other terms, the employers prefer to have the candidates form where the society perceive as belonging to their specific

group. Such employers believe that people from other ethnic minority groups are not productive as the people from majority group. However, according to Bursell, all such arguments are due to the stereotypes of the society. (Birkelund, 2013). All these stereotypes become a huge burden over these professionals, in the missing and absence of their professional careers.

This not only affect to the informants themselves, but also it directly or indirectly affects to their family members and other belongings too. This is called ‘stigma by association’ (Bos, et al., 2013) according to Bos, et al., (2013) cited evidence from Hebl & Mannix, (2003) & Neuberg, Smith, Hoffman, & Russell, (1994), individuals who are accompanying with stigmatized people are frequently getting devalued due to their accompaniment with somebody who has a stigmatized condition.

‘I have a daughter I just want to take care her, and my wife, and also from back home, my parents are there. So, as I said, this is the first time I am a jobless in my life so this is some kind of a depression’’ – YJ064

According to the previous studies conducted by Struening et al., (2001) & Mak & Kwok, (2010), as cited in Bos et al., (2013), have found that the perceptions of ‘stigma by association’ has a direct connection with reduced self-esteem and psychological distress in those who are associated with stigmatized individuals. According to the above response, the informant YJ064 is feeling guilty about himself for not having a suitable job, that can afford his family responsibilities. It has created distress on him.

Further, according to Bos et al., (2013), cited evidence from Phelan et al., (1998) has discovered that generally, the people who are associated with stigmatized individuals tend to conceal their relationship with such a stigmatized family member, or persuade that family member to conceal the stigmatized-situation from others. However, the results of the study identified a reverse relationship with the above statement. That means, the informants of this study revealed that they are not been pressurised by the family members to conceal their identity, instead the informants by themselves have attempted to hide their relationships with their families and the belongings.

‘... I didn’t speak with my wife and my family, and a lot of time I used to sleep a lot because I had nothing to do and I was really worried and not in a good mood.’’ – BH021

“Some of my childhood friends are there in some other countries like Australia. So, we use to talk with each other once in every couple of weeks, just to have small chit-chats. But after coming here, when my friends call me, it was so annoying, because, with this situation, I couldn't talk with them with a free mind. So sometimes, I purposefully didn't answer their calls.” - KE026

According to above examples, the informants by themselves try to avoid the interactions with the family members and other belongings, since it has been bothering to their minds to balance both current identity and the previous social relationships. Even though the informants try to avoid their beloved ones and try to become isolated, almost all the informants exposed the immense psychological support they receive from their spouses. The encouragement and the motivation received from the spouses have been a focal point that help to bounce their mentalities back towards a hope of a better future.

5.1.4 Career Gap and Future Uncertainty

Professional skills are learnt and developed throughout the life. Such skills are often utilized and further polished by the careers. Under-utilization of such skills may disconnect the professionals from their specialized fields. Additionally, it disinclines their confidence about their own professional careers. Under the absences of the involvements in professional careers, followed by the thrashing of hundreds of rejections for a quite a long time, the unbroken professional career paths are now fading away, creating career gaps. Employers then again easily disregard the applications with career gaps.

“.....the second thing I am afraid is, in my career life, I don't have any gap in my career. I continued my career from 1-17 years. I didn't have any period staying home and searching for jobs. This is the first time I am waiting and searching for a job. So, when I reapply for a job now, the interviewers may ask what is that gap. So, I don't know how to fill it” – YJ064.

“....when you are working so it is better to have profile with continuous working experience so my biggest worry is that I created a gap in my profile so I need to justify that gap, if I go to an interview or if I am looking for another opportunity” – BH021

Career gap is kind of an invisible enemy for the resume, where the employers easily skip such profiles when assessing the job applications. If a perfect candidate with a career gap receives an opportunity to face an interview by a chance, he should be able to justify the reasons for that gap, in a way it makes sense for the interviewer. Unless otherwise, it be just a deal-breaker for the applicant.

“... I didn't engage with what I am specialized and then I am not updating I am getting out dating and then after sometimes when I'm having a job there is a huge gap when I'm starting and when my last day of the previous job and so how can I fill that gap?” – AZ061

Employers often consider about the up-to-date knowledge and the capabilities of their hires. Thus, it is necessary for the applicants to demonstrate their capabilities especially in terms of the trends, challenges and developments of the respective professional fields. Nevertheless, the career gaps they undergo at the moment has limited to a time off in Sweden for jobs searching, and making them automatically outdated from their professional fields. Under the feelings of job insecurity, the future of the lives of these individuals have become uncertain.

“.... it is totally uncertain. I don't have any plan also. Because I cannot work with a plan now.so my life is like going without a plan. It's like floating. I don't know what will happen to my life. I feel like these are very dark days for me.” – YJ064

Lives of these vulnerable have been kept on hold, with not knowing until when that hold is. Perhaps, it may not be as same as earlier. Due to the uncertain realities of their current situation, they are unable anticipate what is happening. Thus, their lives are just flowing on without any direction.

“I feel like getting my previous professional career is a miracle here” – BH021

“we need to have a house where we can live for quite a long time. But if we want to buy a house, we need to apply for a bank loan but to apply for the bank loan we need to have a permanent job so still because of that reason we still couldn't find a better house. You know, moving from house to house with 4 kids is difficult. So, even it is hard, I will continue this job to achieve our dreams little by little.” – WK076

All the sacrifices they made to get in to their previous employment status have now gone in vain. Their lives are stocked with paused dreams. Nevertheless, they are still struggling to reach their dreams little by little until they find their professional careers.

5.1.5 De-stigmatization Strategies

De-stigmatization is the process where the stigmatized individuals obtaining social recognition and worth, beside of the public stigma (Lamont, 2018). According to the empirical results of the study, the informants are stigmatized from two sides. In one side, they are stigmatized from the stereotypes of the home country people's negative attitudes towards the low-skilled jobs. On the other hand, they are stigmatized from the stereotypes of the employers regarding the immigrants. However, these informants deploy different strategies to de-stigmatize their current stigmatized situations. Such strategies are presented in this chapter under two sub-sections.

5.1.5.1 De-stigmatization to Breakthrough Home Country Stigma

All the informants are having non-European cultural backgrounds, where these informants are deeply attached with their families and other relations. Under the heavy influence of the culture, the expectations of the society towards different layers of careers are different. According to the general beliefs, the employment status is purely depending on the level of education. Thus, it is necessary for the educated individuals to engage with a white-collar or a higher level job, whereas, the low-skilled jobs are reserved for uneducated individuals. These deeply rooted stereotypes of the societies generate huge public stigma on low-skilled jobs.

“...my sister was so worried when I said that I was going to do a cleaning job she was so worried because she used to tell me like you don't even wash your own washroom but how do you go and wash the other toilets” – LS042

Lives of these informants have turned upside down. The informants are expected to perform in a same or in a higher level than their previous statuses. However, the unfulfilled expectations of their family members have become difficult to convince. Doing a low-skilled job, according to their perceptions is a loss of pride. In order to break this stigmatization, most of the informants hide their current identity (of being a low-skilled worker) from the back home belongings.

“.... never! I will never tell them I am doing this type of a job here. Because, you know, they never understand. And if I tell them, they will overthink. They will say what shall we tell our relations? how do we face them? Like that. So, it is better not to tell them. They don't come here and see what I am actually doing, so I don't tell them. so they are also happy I am also happy.” – KE026

“...no no. how can I tell them nah? Because, as I told you, the mindset of our culture is totally different. So they don't know this. I told them I found an office job” – FR079

In order to break through the stigmatization towards low-skilled jobs, these informants hide their actual current identity from the families and other belongings. Thus, this invisible identity will not be shared with any of their personal network outside Sweden, and the families back in the home countries may never know the inner truth of these individuals.

5.1.5.2 Strategies to Breakthrough the Stigma in Swedish Labour Market

The second self-stigmatization of these individuals arise due to the stereotypes of the employers in the Swedish labour market. in order to breakthrough this stigmatization, the informants deploy three strategies. Such strategies are described in the following sections.

Acquiring a Swedish academic qualification

As many studies evidenced in chapter two, one of the major reasons for not finding a suitable job is due to the lack of recognition of the foreign academic credentials. Even though the qualifications are validated to Swedish equal qualifications, still the informants are not getting any chance.

“....so I applied for a masters last year and currently I'm studying for my masters in accounting and financial management so I believe if I can learn a little bit about the language and also add Swedish qualification to my profile it would give me a further chance to add some extra value to my profile. after adding this in to my LinkedIn profile, I was contacted by couple of recruiters, but before, even I applied for lot of vacancies, I didn't get any single positive response. Now, without applying also they are contacting me....so I have a little hope now, after completing my masters here, I will be able to get my previous career back” – BH021

Eight informants out of the fifteen have realized that the major stereotype of the employers happen due to the lack of recognition of their qualifications. Thus, these eight informants have decided to acquire a Swedish academic qualification. Some of these informants have already started their master's whereas the others have already applied and waiting to start in this year or by next year. Obtaining a Swedish academic qualification is nevertheless a guaranteed solution for de-stigmatization. However, according to the above quotation of BH 021, for the sake of the Swedish qualification added to the LinkedIn profile, the informant is getting outreached by the recruiters, even the informant didn't apply for the vacancies. As such, it is merely a hope that they will be able to find a suitable professional career under the light of a professional career, but rather it is not guaranteed.

Learning Swedish Language

As evidenced by many of the studies in chapter two above, and as experienced by many of the informants of this study, language is a biggest barrier for them to not find a professional job.

“I meet certain customers they don't like to see us like immigrants in the shop. One day, one customer asked me like who gave this job to you?....because, sometimes in the long conversations, I try to communicate them in English” - LS042

The perception of the society is that if someone does not know the language, they should not be engaged even with a low-skilled job. Moreover, many of the informants have realized that the employers make forge excuses to avoid these immigrants by making language as a barrier.

“I got selected for a second interview for like 10 interviews. Out of those, I have selected for the 3rd interview for around 5 of those. But unfortunately, I have to say that I have a bad experience. Because I got very good experience in international companies, also I have required academic qualifications. But unfortunately, they rejected me at the last stage saying because of my language problem. But most of those advertisements, they didn't mention that they need Swedish language. They said it's only English. So based on that only we applied.”

– YJ064

It should be agreed that there are some professions where the language is mandatory to deal with the stakeholders associated with that job. But still, almost all the job portals in Sweden

evidence that there are lot more back-office positions which can be performed even without the language. In such advertisements, their language requirements become only English. However, even under this situation, still it creates steep odds for the non-European immigrants to enter in to the professional labour market, due to the negative perceptions of the employers. Consequently, the informants of the study have realized that the employers make forged excuses in terms of the language barrier to hinder them in the labour market. in order to de-stigmatize this exclusion, all the fifteen respondents of the study are currently learning Swedish language.

Sending bulk of applications

Under general circumstances, the higher the effort put by an individual, the higher the chance of achieving the goal. Even though the situation here is somewhat different due to the stigmatizations of the labour market, it was identified that the informants send bulk of job applications, with a positive expectation that there will be an opportunity to get a job by a chance.

“Every day I check all the job portals and apply to all the possible advertisements. And people say in here the employers consider the cover letter also. So, I always customize my cover letter to each advertisement. I know it takes a lot of time, but I have no other option.” –

SK037

Beside of the opportunity cost, these individuals spend more time to customize their cover letters and to spice-up their job application, in order to increase the chance of finding a suitable professional job.

Thus, without not knowing how far these strategies will work out, these informants are deploying the above three strategies to de-stigmatize the stigmatization of the employers in Swedish labour market.

5.2 Perceptions Towards Equal Opportunities

As already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, perceptions of equal opportunities and the government initiatives are analysed in a holistic manner, rather based on thematic codes, since those are the secondary research questions, and due to the limitations of the word count. This section contains the perceptions of the informants regarding the equal opportunities in the Swedish labour market.

As many studies presented in chapter two above evidenced that there is ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labour market, this study attempted to identify the perceptions of these professional immigrants regarding their experiences and thoughts on it.

Many of the informants have experienced that they are excluded from the recruitment process without any clear evidence or clarification.

“..... they (some employers in Sweden) wondered how I got my qualifications because, almost all my qualifications are from UK because my previous employer sponsored us to get those qualifications, some of these banks, they said they did not have such qualified persons in their offices. But still after the first interview I did not receive good response they mentioned that they had decided to move with other candidates.”

These immigrants are rich with knowledge and possess well-reputed academic and professional qualifications, which impress even the potential employers. Even though these employers are impressed and perhaps even wondered with the qualifications, but still they tend to exclude these vulnerable people stating that they decided to move with another candidate. According to the experiences of the informants, the employers are even unable to explain clear reasons for why they do not move forward with these candidates. It seems a clear and purposeful exclusion by the employers in Swedish labour market, which put road barriers and restrict these immigrants from yielding the harvest of their knowledge.

“What I have heard before is, Sweden is a very equal country. Yes, I agree. They give equal rights for every human being. But for the job market, I don't think so it's correct. Basically, they will not give you jobs until you speak Swedish. And also, you should have a recommendation from Swedish people. So, without these, it will not be possible to find a job. This is what I understand.” – YJ064

Perception gap of the employers regarding the non-Europeans creates less chances for these individuals to enter in to their professional careers. Due to the public stigma towards these informants, employers prefer Swedes or other European immigrants instead. Thus, the employers put road barriers asking these informants to obtain recommendations from the Swedish people. obtaining Swedish recommendations become impossible in the absence of a broader network and due to the reduced human interactions with their current low-skilled jobs.

“..... if we are fluent with the language, I don't know whether these people give us a chance I still have that doubt in my mind..... I got one friend, she completed the language up to the native level, but she still doesn't have a job” – LS042

Even the informants are using different de-stigmatization strategies such as obtaining a Swedish academic qualification and learning the language, but still the return of their current sacrifices is unguaranteed. as the informants perceive, there may be a chance perhaps, but still, it will not be a 100% equal chance as the swedes and other Europeans here.

“.... because, uh even my company uh, for the people who speak Swedish, they pay higher, but we do the same job and if some someone who can speak Swedish, to the same thing they pay more so I don't think it's equally here.” – WK076

Not only when entering to the labour market, but also these informants are not receiving equal opportunities in their current low-skilled jobs. Employers are creating the language barrier as a fictitious excuse and enjoying the benefits from under-paid non-European immigrants.

5.3 Perceptions Towards Government and Other Initiatives

Swedish government together with some other institutions exert several programmes to increase the level of employability of the non-European and other immigrants. Nevertheless, the unemployment statistics presented in chapter one above leaves a point to think about the applicability of these initiatives. Thus, as a secondary object, this study attempted to identify the perceptions of the informants whether these initiatives work out in accordance with the way they are expected. According to the empirical findings, the overall perceptions of the

informants are twofold, either they are totally disappointed or they are unaware about these initiatives.

“when I tried to contact a person in arbets (the Swedish employment agency), she said that I have come as a dependent and my husband has come for studies so the first argument, she brought up was, we have like shown money for our studies and for survival for two years, so I have enough money and I don't need a job now in Sweden. I told her we have not come on a trip we have come here with so many skills so I need to do something and I need to get use of this time” – LS042

It is agreed that the informants who came as the dependents of the students have shown money for two years, but it does not mean that these high-skilled professionals need to be break rocked and stayed at the homes, without doing anything. Also, it should be understood that job is not merely to earn money. Even money brings a huge motive, and become a prominent factor of doing a job, still there are lot more that people expect from doing a job. Especially, to get use of the knowledge and the skills they gained over the years of scarification, to get themselves updated with the modern business trends, and to move with the co-workers and with the society etc. thus, even these informants have shown money, it does not do everything for their self-satisfaction.

“..... I submitted that activity report few months, but I didn't see any progress. I'm just spending so much of time and submitting my report so I stopped doing that because at that time also I can apply for two or three jobs and get something..... after that I got an email from my case officer saying I have not been active since few months and therefore they going to discontinue me. I wrote I have been seeking support in so many ways but you have not been able to provide the support that I expected so no point of being active on this, please discontinue.” – LS042

Instead of providing a proper direction to re-build their career paths, these institutions are rather wasting the time of the individuals and make their lives more complex and miserable. The above informant LS042 having over twelve years of experience in an international bank chain with so much of academic and professional qualifications, together with lots of skills and competencies. however, all such competencies have become pointless. The informants are

not receiving the expected support from these initiatives, and it's rather a disappointment and discouragement.

Another finding of the study is, some of the informants were unaware about these initiatives, even they have been lived in Sweden for more than a year.

“.... I think government is doing lot of things. They are providing language schools and many things. But the problem is, those things are not reaching to the correct people. Most of the people here are unaware about those. For the best example, I didn't even know about that jobspranget thing until you told me before. It is my mistake also, for not finding things. But, how can I know those unless if someone told me? unless I have a proper network here? So that's why I say government is giving us support, but there's a problem with their information dissemination.” – UT083

A proper communication and information dissemination is a key element for a smooth functioning of any programme. Since these programmes are focussed on the immigrant, and since the immigrants do not have a broader network in Sweden, that absence of network and interactions make it difficult to draw the attention of the target market of these programmes and initiatives. Therefore, the oppressed individuals who really need the support of these initiations are not getting the benefits out of those. Therefore, there should be a proper mechanism to disseminate the information to the grass root levels.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The study was carried out in order to identify the perceptions of the non-European immigrants regarding their professional career sacrifices after migrating to Sweden. The underlying theory used for the study was Goffman's stigma theory. Thus, the empirical findings in accordance with the theoretical implications are discussed in this chapter. Some findings of the study were in line with the empirical findings of the previous studies, whereas, some of the findings were not. Therefore, such relationships and mismatches are presented in the following sub-sections separately.

6.1 Implications with Stigma Theory

Stigma arises due to the stereotypes of a particular group of the society about another minority group in the society (Bos, et al., 2013). As Krupa et al., (2009) stated, the discriminatory attitudes and beliefs of people also create stigma in the modern context. When the affected individuals internalize these public stigmata, it creates self-stigma (Corrigan & Rao, 2012), resulting lower self-esteem, efficacy and many other deprived health concerns.

Having agreed, the results of the study identified that there are two types of public stigmas related to the study. In one hand, there are negative impressions/ stereotypes of these informants' home country people regarding the low-skilled jobs, as they accept the low-skilled jobs are set aside for the uneducated people. As analysed in the previous chapter, such thinking patterns have been heavily abided by the cultural influence. thus, in accordance with that mindset, there's no room for the skilled people to engage with low-skilled jobs. on the other hand, the stereotypes of the employers in the Swedish labour market towards the immigrants are assaulting these informants and restricting their opportunities to get in to the professional jobs. when the individuals are affected with both these public stigmata, and when they internalize both these stigmatizations, it ends up creating a dual self-stigmatization. One self- stigmatization happens when these individuals internalize the cultural attitudes of the back home countries and struggling to reveal their current identity (of being a low-skilled worker) to their belongings in the home country. The other self-stigmatization happens when these individuals are unable to find a suitable job for their qualifications, due to the stereotypes of the employers in Sweden. This dual self-stigmatization ends up with creating

self-embarrassments, and other mental health concerns such as depression, frustration, lower self-esteem etc.

In order to break through these stigmatizations, the respondents deploy different de-stigmatization strategies. For examples, hiding their current identity from being a low-skilled worker is the strategy they use to break the stigmatization happens from their home countries. While hiding the actual identity, some of the informants pretend to behave like they are engaging with white-collar jobs here. Similarly, in a way of breaking the stigmatization from the Swedish labour market, the informants deploy three strategies. Some informants are either already started or planning to obtain a Swedish academic qualification to spice up their profile more. Some other informants continue sending bulk of job applications on daily basis, and all the informants have already started learning the language, as the employers make language as the biggest road barrier for these informants to restrict the opportunities in the labour market. however, the relevance and the applicability of these strategies are debatable and the plausible benefits of these strategies are not guaranteed. All these are the efforts of the informants with a hope of a better future.

However, the results revealed two-clashes with the findings of the previous studies. Previous studies have identified that people who are associated with stigmatized individuals tend to conceal their relationship with such a stigmatized family member, or persuade that family member to conceal the stigmatized-situation from others. But according to the findings of this study, these informants themselves try to hide their identities, without any persuasion from others. Secondly, according to Corrigan et al., (2009) people who are self-stigmatized has a high probability to believe the stereotypes of the society which suggests the inability of these stigmatized individuals to finding jobs. As a result, these individuals easily give-up their efforts creating a 'why try effect'. However, the findings of this study reveal that the informants use different de-stigmatization strategies to overcome from the situation instead of why try effect.

As a quick summary of the findings of the secondary research questions, almost all the informants of the study do not accept that the Swedish labour market is providing equal opportunities for the right qualifications, it is rather a matter of stigmatization attitudes of the employers. Therefore, even after obtaining a Swedish qualification and after learning the language, still receiving equal opportunities are uncertain.

Even some government and other institutions have been established in order to mitigate the employment gap of the immigrants, still none of the respondents have received any single benefit out of those. Those have been rather ineffective and inefficient in terms of operations and dissemination of information.

6.2 Conclusion

The study was mainly carried out to identify the perceptions of non-European high-skilled immigrants regarding their professional carrier sacrifices when integrating to the Swedish labour market. The empirical results of the study recognised that the major concerns of the informants are the self-embarrassment to move with the current identity, waste of their skills and the sacrifices they already made before, to get in to their previous identity, culture clashes, career gap and the future uncertainty of their professional career path and their whole lives, dual self-stigmatization etc. Thus, these professional vulnerable are currently sacrificing their present for a hope of better future by pulling themselves up through different de-stigmatization strategies, while bearing the painful losses and while living with the nostalgic memories.

6.3 HR Implications of Professional Career Sacrifices

The downside of the professional career sacrifices becomes an alarming factor for the entire labour market in Sweden. The brain waste and the under-utilization of skills make the labour market less productive, inefficient and ineffective. The longer these professionals are departed from their professional careers, the more they will be out-dated and perhaps may not be able to get in to their respective fields without a proper training and development. Hence, the burden again comes to HR. In another hand, it may have a direct influence over the current low-skilled jobs that these individuals are engaged with. Since their full potential is not utilized in their current jobs, and since those are totally irrelevant to what they learnt, they do not have any satisfaction with their current jobs at all. It may again create less productivity and poor performance of their current jobs too. In any hand, the ultimate impact becomes a

burden to the labour market as a whole. Therefore, this serious issue needs to be addressed soon in a proper manner.

6.4 Suggestions to Improve the Employability of Professional Immigrants

The suggestions presented here are for the government and labour market side, to increase the level of employability of these vulnerable people. Moreover, these suggestions are a combination of thoughts of the informants of this study, and the thoughts of the author in accordance with public stigma reducing strategies identified by previous scholars.

Some of the previous studies (Such as Amsalem, et al., (2021) & Corrigan, et al., (2012)) have found that social contact can reduce public stigma. One of the major reasons for the stereotypes and the public stigma of these Swedish employers are the lack of interaction with these immigrants. Therefore, they are blinded by the common stereotypes of the society towards these immigrants.

First and foremost, since these individuals have registered themselves in the existing employment programmes and agencies, the respective officials have detailed records of these individuals. Thus, if they can create a particular database that can be linked with the different opportunities available, and act as responsible intermediary between these individuals and employers, it will facilitate the interaction between employers and these individuals and will break the public stigma of the employers even up to a certain extent. It does not mean that the employers should offer a similar job position that these individuals had before. If there are any trust issues or doubts about the performance, skills, education or attitudes of these individuals, they can offer at least a lower-level position, but in the same professional field. So, they can show their performance and climb up the ladder afterwards.

Another suggestion linked to the above scenario is from the language perspective. It is totally agreed that these individuals need to learn the language and adjust accordingly to the culture of the host country. However, learning a language is not that easy, and it takes a considerable time. By the meantime, if the labour market can provide them even lower-level opportunities in their respective professional fields, and motivate them to climb though the career ladder with the fluency of the language, it will benefit both these individuals and the labour market.

The next recommendation would be a request rather a suggestion. If the employers can take a leap beyond their network recruitment, it will hit to the right talent. Because, these informants are lacking a broader network here and consequently, they are excluded from the labour market in the absence of recommendations from swedes. In that way, these vulnerable people will at least get a chance to face for an interview, and to prove themselves.

Finally, as mentioned in chapter 5.3 above, there are several government and other initiatives that working towards increasing the employability of the immigrants. However, none of the informants of study, nor their friends or other known ones have received any expected support from such initiatives. Some of the informants were unaware about some of those initiatives either. Therefore, there is a loophole in the dissemination of information. Thus, it should take necessary actions for an effective communication method, in order to reach the information and the associated benefits to the grass root level.

If the respective authorities take this serious issue in to their deep consideration, and if the necessary actions are taken to effectively utilize these unutilized resources, Sweden with no doubt can do a lot more to this world with the power of knowledge.

6.5 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Researchers.

The first few informants of the study were contacted from the author's personal network, and the other informants were contacted through snowball sampling, under the recommendations of the initial informants. Therefore, author is aware about the biasness of selecting informants. It may also have a direct impact over the results of the study too.

Another major limitation of the study is, the sample size was limited to fifteen non-European immigrants, and most of the informants were from Asian countries. Therefore, it is recommended for future researchers to increase the sample size, and to include the immigrants from non-European countries other than from Asia. Thus, it will deliver more comprehensive and comparative results.

Finally, the current study was purely based on the perceptions of the non-European immigrants. Therefore, it could be recommended for future researchers to obtain the perceptions the employers in the Swedish labour market, on how they feel about these

immigrants and what factors drive them to restrict the access of professional labour market for these immigrants.

I hereby confirm this study is my own work.

Liyanamahadura Himeshi Navodhya De Silva

02/06/2022 at Gothenburg

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Coding

Open Codes	Focussed Codes	Theoretical Codes	
ashamed	self-embarrassment	Forgone previous identity	
embarrassment			
not getting benefits of educated things	disappointment		
loosing previous jobs			
Reduced quality of life			
not used to physical jobs	difficulties in adjusting		
difficult to adjust minds			
stress	impacts over mental health		
feeling down			
lack of confidence			
poor self esteem			
trying to isolate			
motivation	encouragement from spouses		
guidance			
not revealing face	hiding identity	Culture clashes	
black mark on dignity			
Embarrassment to move with families and relations			
strong associations	collective cultures		
expectations of belongings			
different thinking patterns	cultural influence		
different social classes			
differences in European and non-European culture			
not getting interviews	ignorance by the employers		Pointless efforts
lots of rejections			
frustration			
making language as a barrier	exclusion by the employers		
making forge excuses			
not explaining a clear reason for not selecting			
loosing self-courage	lack of confidence		
surprise			
downgrading by themselves			
Harsh treatments from current employers	discrimination by current employers		
unfortunate situation			
Unsecured jobs with unsecured income			

ethnic discrimination		
impacts over family bonds		
staying home	career gap	Career gap and future uncertainty
career break		
job searching		
difficulties in justifying the gap		
outdating		
no life plans	uncertainty	
doubtfulness		
hard working		
difficulties in achieving dreams		
instability of life		
expectations of the society	de-stigmatizing home country stigma	De-stigmatization Strategies
ignorance		
hiding current identity		
whitewashing a fake identity and status		
not sharing the actual identity		
learning language	de-stigmatizing employers' stigma in Sweden	
continue studies		
obtaining swedish academic qualificaion		
active job seeking		
bulk of applications		

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Information to participants about the student Master project ‘Nostalgia of Non-European Skilled-Immigrants in Sweden’

Many of the non-European skilled-immigrants in Sweden are unable to engage with a job that suits their qualifications, due to several boundary objects in the labour market. Consequently, it swings those high-skilled immigrants towards low-skilled jobs. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify the perceptions of non-European skilled- immigrants regarding the career sacrifices they made after migrating to Sweden.

The study is a student project and will result in a thesis within the Master Program in Strategic HRM and Labour Relations at the University of Gothenburg. The study is conducted independently by Liyanamahadura Himeshi Navodhya De Silva, under the supervision of Senior Lecturer Vedran Omanovic, of the School of Business, Economics and Law at the

University of Gothenburg. The project adheres to the key ethical principles of the Swedish Research Council for research in social science research.

Data Collection

Data collection consists of qualitative interviews with high-skilled non-European immigrants in Sweden, who are currently unemployed or engaged in low-skilled jobs. Further, these interviews are recorded with the permission of the participants.

Voluntary participation and non-disclosure

Participation is voluntary and confidential. Participants can choose to cancel their participation at any time and have a right to withdraw from the study should they wish. Unauthorized individuals will not have access to the material and participants involved in the project are covered by professional secrecy. Personal names are not registered, and participants will be given a pseudonym and exchanged for fake names when interviews are transcribed and analysed. This also applies to organizations that wish to be given a pseudonym.

Handling of collected material

Recordings of the interviews are kept locked away on password protected computers and are only available to authorized researchers. In the final thesis, extracts from interviews may be cited and given a pseudonym [e.g., a fake name]. The collected material and interview transcriptions will not be used for any purpose other than scientific research and for teaching purposes under the conditions described herein. The results may also be presented in a scientific article or report. Interviews files will be erased once the analysis for this and future related projects have been conducted.

Results and publication

The results of the study will be published in the form of a Master thesis completed on 03/06/2022. Participants will be able to download the essay from GUPEA (<https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/4560>). Participants are welcomed to attend the future presentation of the project.

For questions and further information, please contact:

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Responsible Supervisor

Vedran Omanovic

Title: Senior Lecturer

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Consent to participate

I have read and fully understood the scope and implications of participating in this student MA project. Any questions I had were answered satisfactorily.

I agree to participate, and that the interview can be digitally recorded and agree

I agree to my personal details being handled as described above.

(To mark your consent, please type ‘a’ in the above two boxes)

Name & Signature (Participant)	Date & Place
Name & Signature (Student) <i>Liyanamahadura Himeshi Navodhya De Silva</i>	Date & Place

Appendix 3: Interview Guide

Background of the Person

- Can I know some basic information about you?

Applying for Jobs

- Could you please tell me about your experience in applying to jobs in Sweden?
 - For how long have you been applying for jobs in Sweden?
 - For what type of jobs, you applied at the beginning?
 - In roughly, for how many job vacancies you might have applied as of now?
 - What was the response you got from those employers?
- How did you feel when you get lots of rejections from those vacancies you applied?
- Did you try to apply through or tried any support from the institutions like arbetsformalingen, mittliv, jobspranget?
- Shall we talk a little bit about your current job?
 - What made you to apply to this type of a job?
 - How long did it take for you to find this job?
 - How did you know about this position?

Perceptions Regarding the Current Situation

- How do you feel about this job now?
- what are the opinions of your spouse (and children) about this job?
- Do your parents, relations and other belongings in your home country know that you are doing this type of job?
 - If yes- what are their thoughts about this?
 - If no- why don't you tell them?
- Before migrating to Sweden, how was your feeling about this similar type of low-skilled workers in your own country?
 - How do your opinions regarding those people have changed now? Since you are also more or less in a similar category now?
- Do you feel like you are been treated/identified quite differently than the other people because of the job you are doing now? (in Sweden)

- What are your experiences about having an immigrant background when applying to jobs here? (to identify whether they feel like are marginalized as an immigrant)
- What are your opinions regarding the equal opportunities in the Swedish labour market?
- Do you think if you become fluent with the language or if you get a Swedish qualification, you will receive equal opportunities like the Swedish people or other Europeans here?

Perceptions Regarding the Career Sacrifices

- How do you feel about losing your previous career?
 - How does it affect to your mentality?
 - How those feelings affect when you try to move with the society?
- How do you perceive the future of you and your family with this situation?
- How do you adjust yourself to find a skilled job?
-

Concluding Questions

- Based on the things we discussed during this interview, what would you say are the most important aspects that should be highlighted?
- What specific solutions would you like to recommend to increase the employability of skilled non-European immigrants?
- Is there anything that I have forgotten to ask about, or maybe something that you believe is of importance in relation to the current study, that you would like to bring up?

- If any further questions arise, is it okay for me to contact you again?

Thank you so much for your participation.