Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Sweden

A Study on Obstacles and Strategies of Arab-Immigrant Entrepreneurs

Master's in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, New Venture Creation Track

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Abstract

Entrepreneurs in different countries and industries face many obstacles during their journey. It comes down to the entrepreneur to build strategies on how to overcome those obstacles. In this research, we focus on providing an in-depth analysis on the obstacles that Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs face in Sweden and how they overcome them. Immigrant entrepreneurship has had its fair share of research. Nonetheless, we see a research gap on the topic of strategies to overcome obstacles implemented by Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden.

We conducted this research by applying a qualitative analysis approach through interviews with businesses owned by Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden. The interviews conducted were semi-structured in that we had the topics we wanted to discuss, but led the conversation in the form of a dialogue.

Research has shown that there are common obstacles that immigrant entrepreneurs face; the details of which will be discussed in this paper. The results are from our own research on the local Arab-immigrant entrepreneur community in Sweden and came down to five major obstacles; the Swedish culture, Swedish regulations, language, illegal activities, and financing. The strategies concluded were: integration efforts, customer relations, and personal networks.

The results of this research can be used by Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs who are about to launch their startup, researchers with an interest in exploring this field and contributing more findings to it, and policymakers who are looking for ways to have a better integration process for immigrant entrepreneurs in the Swedish community.

Keywords: Arab entrepreneurs, immigrant entrepreneurship, immigrant entrepreneur obstacles, immigrant entrepreneur strategies, entrepreneurship in Sweden

Acknowledgments

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1 Introduction

In this research, we will discuss obstacles and how entrepreneurs overcome them while focusing solely on Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden. The core focus of this research is to contribute to immigrant entrepreneurship literature by investigating and defining the different strategies to overcome obstacles implemented by Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden. The countries used in this research when calculating statistics and finding immigrant entrepreneurs fall under the "League of Arab States" [1].

1.1 Research Purpose and Objectives

Recent research has discussed immigrant entrepreneurship by looking at three major perspectives; the cultural perspective (Ohlsson, Broomé, and Bevelander, 2012; Aaltonen and Akola, 2012), the structural perspective (Lutz, Kemp, and Dijkstra, 2010; Mitchell, 2016; Korpi, Hedberg, and Pettersson, 2013), and the mixed embeddedness perspective (Kloosterman and Rath, 2002; Rath and Swagerman, 2015; Ohlsson et al., 2012). Our aim with this research is to tie available literature with our findings to provide an understanding to entrepreneurs and researchers on how the Arab-immigrant community in Sweden conducts business strategies to overcome obstacles. We use concepts such as the cultural perspective, the structural perspective, and mixed embeddedness to give us direction on what research has been made to be used as support with our research results.

According to research done by Bindala and Strömberg (2013) on Sweden, firms launched by immigrant entrepreneurs represent 14% of all firms launched in Sweden, most of which are categorized as SMEs. Hjerm (2004) also discusses the impact of such an involvement by immigrant entrepreneurs. On a macro level, this contributes to lower unemployment levels and a sustainable economic growth. On a micro level, this contributes to a better integration process for the immigrant as well as provide a source of income. This shows a positive effect on the Swedish economic growth.

It is also important to mention that the number of immigrants in Sweden is increasing, which according to the latest census from Statistiska Centralbyrån (2017), was approximately 2.18

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[1] The League of Arab States: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (CIA World Factbook, 1945).

million in 2015 [2]. Of those, Arabs represent approximately 375 thousand immigrants, which is 17.2% of the total immigrant population in Sweden [3]. A research conducted by Hjerm (2004) explains how a contribution by immigrants to the Swedish market results in lower unemployment levels and sustainable economic growth. For this reason, it is important to understand how this minority group is growing and integrating within the Swedish community.

In general, there has been research on immigrant entrepreneurship in Sweden (Ohlsson et al. 2012; Slavnic, 2013; Hjerm, 2004; Bindala and Strömberg, 2013) as well as obstacles of immigrant entrepreneurs in general (Bindala and Strömberg, 2013; Korpi et al. 2013; Aaltonen and Akola, 2012). Yet, there has not been sufficient research focused on how Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden overcome those obstacles. Therefore, our contribution lies within providing new findings on strategies concerning Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden. We are not concerned with whether or not Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs have a unique set of obstacles and strategies.

Specifically, the purpose of this thesis is to fill a gap in research that identifies the strategies of Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs for overcoming obstacles; in our case focusing on Sweden. Thus, supporting the recognition of the heterogeneity of immigrant groups.

1.2 Outline of the Thesis

We will first conduct a literature review on three main topics; immigrant entrepreneurship, concepts discussing immigrant entrepreneurship, and immigrant entrepreneurship strategies. When discussing immigrant entrepreneurship, we will provide definitions by different researchers then give examples of immigrant entrepreneur actions from a global perspective. Next, we will elaborate on literature that focuses on the different concepts of immigrant entrepreneurship which includes: the cultural perspective, the structural perspective, and mixed embeddedness. The final subtopic in the literature review chapter involves strategies implemented by immigrant entrepreneurs from a global perspective and a Swedish perspective.

Next, we will move on to the research methodology, where we will discuss the procedures

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[2] The variable used for those calculations is any person who was foreign-born and is now living in Sweden.

[3] The variable used for those calculations is any person who was born in one of the League of Arab States and is now living in Sweden.

taken to conduct interviews with our target entrepreneur. We will then link the literature to our research question: *What are the obstacles for Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden and how do they overcome them?* This will allow us to reflect the literature to the research we will conduct on Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Malmö, Sweden. Finally, we will draw conclusions on the research conducted and present possibilities for future research opportunities within the field.

2 Literature Review

In this chapter, we will discuss literature related to the different sections of our theoretical framework. We start off by introducing immigrant entrepreneurship as a general phenomenon. This entails different viewpoints and approaches to the field. We then move into discussing concepts within immigrant entrepreneurship such as cultural obstacles, structural obstacles, and mixed embeddedness. Finally, we move into exploring the different strategies implemented by immigrant entrepreneurs.

During our literature review, we have seen researchers use different terms when discussing immigrant entrepreneurship including ethnic entrepreneur, ethnic minority entrepreneur, and foreign-born entrepreneur. To maintain consistency, we will use the term "immigrant entrepreneur" and "ethnic product" hereinafter.

2.1 Immigrant Entrepreneurship Definitions

The concept of entrepreneurship is defined to be the act of "combining resources in novel ways as to create something of value" (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990, p.112). Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) also discussed that it involves a combination of innovation and risk, especially when referring to immigrant entrepreneurship. As different entrepreneurs provide different levels of value, there needs to be a distinction between them. In immigrant entrepreneurship, it is important to understand that there are two types of entrepreneurs, low-skilled and highly skilled entrepreneurs (Price, 2012). Highly skilled immigrant entrepreneurs contribute to sectors that require an educational background. On the other hand, low-skilled immigrant entrepreneurs are limited with their options due to the lack of required knowledge. This leads low-skilled immigrant entrepreneurs to introduce ethnic products that are connected to their backgrounds such as clothing or food products (Kloosterman and Rath, 2002).

This only goes as far as defining immigrant entrepreneurship. To understand how immigrant entrepreneurs act in different countries, we will look at literature in the following sections that explains examples from the USA, UK, Australia, Finland, and Sweden. Before getting into the comparisons, as Rath and Swagerman (2015) suggest, immigrant entrepreneurs are part of a very broad category. We can classify them by first or second generation[4], gender, age, reason of migration, education level, language skills, lifestyle, religion, and more.

2.2 Concepts in Immigrant Entrepreneurship

The field of immigrant entrepreneurship has been discussed from the perspectives of different researchers from different regions; examples of which have been discussed earlier. This has led to a variety of concepts that can be further explored.

One argument, by Musterd, Andersson, Galster, and Kauppinen (2008), stresses that the native-born population gets a preference when it comes to the labor market, leading to unequal pay and discrimination; driving the immigrant to the path of entrepreneurship. The harsh job market issue has also been supported by Hedberg (2009). Other researchers have argued that one driver for entrepreneurship is the social position of the immigrant in their society. Some immigrants take the path of entrepreneurship as an attempt to be accepted within their community and recognized for their efforts; and not solely for the purpose of having an income (Sahin, Nijkamp, and Baycan-Levent, 2007).

Looking from a different angle, some immigrants see an opportunity from the fact that they are part of an immigrant community and capitalize on that by starting a business (Aaltonen and Akola, 2012). Altonen and Akola (2012, p.6) state this "will help them to succeed in fields of business that require ethnic credibility or connections to their ethnic community either in the new country or in the country of origin". Another concept discussed is the blocked mobility theory. This theory states that acts of discrimination coming from the host country lead the immigrant to resort to a path of entrepreneurship (Price, 2012; Light, 1984).

The above-mentioned concepts come down three main concepts for discussion in immigrant entrepreneurship: the cultural perspective, which is defined as whether or not a person's ethnic background is one that supports and pulls towards entrepreneurship (Rath and Kloosterman, 2000); the structural perspective, which stems out as a result of discrimination

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[4] First generation immigrants are immigrants that are foreign-born. From this definition, second generation immigrants are the offspring of first generation immigrants and are born in Sweden.

from the host country and other factors such as language skills and education levels (Mitchell, 2016; Rath and Swagerman, 2015); and mixed embeddedness, which combines factors from both the cultural and structural perspectives (Mitchell, 2016; Rath and Swagerman, 2015).

2.3 Cultural Perspective

Immigrant entrepreneurs are those who move to a new host country and end up starting a business; but have not necessarily relocated for that reason (Aaltonen and Akola, 2012). With that relocation, the values and traditions are carried along. According to Masurel, Nijkamp, and Vindigni, (2004), the culturalist approach suggests that cultural values and characteristics are the main pull to self-employment for immigrant entrepreneurs. They also mentioned as part of their research (Aaltonen and Akola, 2012, p.9) that it "takes time to learn the habits and mind-sets of the locals". According to their results, this difference of culture has created a gap leading to an issue of trust between immigrants and external parties, ultimately creating structural barriers, which will be discussed in section 2.4.

Another perspective by Yuengert (1995) argues that the possibility of an immigrant becoming an entrepreneur is higher for certain groups of immigrants depending on where they come from; countries where the levels of self-employment are high. Other research (Kariv, Menzies, Brenner, and Filion, 2009) has also proven the importance of transnational ties for the potential success of an immigrant entrepreneur's business. This eventually builds a bridge between an immigrant's home country and new host country. Collins (2003) concluded in his study that categorizing immigrant entrepreneurs and introducing multiculturalism has led to better opportunities for immigrants.

Another study from Sweden by Hammarstedt (2001), shows that immigrants with strong cultural traditions were more entrepreneurial and took action towards launching their business. The research also showed that first generation immigrants were more inclined to launching a business than newer immigrant groups or native-born Swedes. One of the driving forces resulting in launching a business, according to Hammarstedt's (2001) research, is discrimination in the labor market.

According to Aaltonen and Akola (2012), one cultural barrier to consider is the level of trust amongst the people of the community and the immigrants. Immigrants tend to build trust within their co-ethnic community but that does not reflect well with regards to the host

community. To overcome this barrier, proper integration within the community would be needed. This would require the immigrant to "share the same codes, language, and narratives" (Aaltonen and Akola, 2012, p.6) of the host community.

Following the trust issue as a barrier, the next barrier is the clashing cultures between immigrants and the host country. Clashing cultures is used as a negative description, but as a way to show a difference in cultural traditions and values. This barrier has been deduced by Masurel et al. (2004) where they explained within their research that the integration process takes time and is not easy.

2.4 Structural Perspective

The structural perspective is a view that discusses how external factors, such as discrimination within government regulations, may lead to a path of self-employment (Mitchell, 2016; Rath and Swagerman, 2015; Altonen and Akola 2012).

As Mitchell (2016, p.33) argues, "The structuralist perspective suggests that external factors in the host country account for the business entry decision of immigrants, in that they push the individual to create a firm, in the most part, to avoid unemployment." He also describes some of those factors to include discrimination, poor language skills, non-transferable qualifications, and the immigrant status; an opinion also shared by Ohlsson et al. (2012). This has all led to an over-representation of self-employed immigrants. Mitchell (2016) sums up the core theoretical foundations of the structural perspective into four categories. First, discrimination is dealt with as an incentive for the path of self-employment. Second, immigrant entrepreneurs are overrepresented in markets with low barriers of entry. Third, immigrant entrepreneurs are in a survival mindset when implementing strategies. Fourth and final, immigrant-owned firms have low growth potentials.

Given the views of the structural perspective and the structural barriers of entry for immigrants, we can formulate a logical conclusion that immigrant entrepreneurs would enter a market with low barriers of entry; a conclusion supported by Kloosterman et al. (1999). The researchers deduce that this is a result of a lack of financial capital and human capital which includes educational qualifications.

As an example, we take Bolivian immigrants in Washington DC, USA. Through a research conducted by Price (2012), the author concludes three reasons as to why immigrants conduct businesses; the enclave thesis, the blocked mobility thesis, and the diversity advantage thesis.

The enclave thesis, which is more applicable to the cultural perspective, implies entrepreneurial actions are done to serve ethnic products to concentrated ethnic communities. The blocked mobility thesis implies an entrepreneurial initiative due to discrimination from the host society. The diversity advantage thesis applies to highly skilled immigrants that are able to provide creative solutions to the urban society and contribute to the economic growth.

One example explores the entrepreneurial movement of Jewish immigrants in London. Through a research run by Godley (2014), he has seen results that differ from what has been done by Bolivian immigrants in Washington DC, which will be discussed in subsection 2.6.1. Jewish immigrants were relatively well-educated and made quick moves into entering the market. They competed in the clothing industry, furniture-making industry, and retailing. The Jewish community's main tactic for competing in the market was cutting labor costs. This has allowed them to lower their prices and compete despite being faced with discrimination. Those who have succeeded then went on to diversify into other sectors.

Looking at structural barriers, a study conducted by Lutz et al. (2010) states that there exists a number of structural barriers to market entry with respect to immigrants. From the survey undertaken, some of the barriers with the highest mean include, but are not limited to: required sales volume, capital, financial risk, behavior differentiation, advertising, distribution, and government regulations.

Unlike cultural barriers, there is a bigger number of barriers to discuss when looking at the structural perspective. Through a research conducted by Shala, Kidane, and Ong (2009), some structural barriers include lack of language skills, lack of education, no access to markets, and lack of access to capital. Rath and Swagerman (2015) also point out that discrimination factors not allowing immigrants to enter the labor market is another structural barrier to consider. Studies conducted by Mitchell (2016) reach similar conclusions including discrimination and lack of language skills.

2.5 Mixed Embeddedness Perspective

The concept of mixed embeddedness is defined as "a concept [...] which encompasses both sides of embeddedness to analyze processes of insertion of immigrant entrepreneurs" (Kloosterman, van der Leun, and Rath, 1999, p.253). It has been introduced by Kloosterman et al. (1999) as new way of studying the roles of immigrant entrepreneurs. They go on to explain that not only should you look at the social aspect of immigrants' embeddedness, but

you should also include their embeddedness of socio-economic and politico-institutional factors. Later researchers have started using this method when discussing immigrant entrepreneurship.

According to Mitchell (2016), he positions the concept of mixed embeddedness to be a cross between the structural and cultural perspective; a combination of internal and external forces. This, put together with the political and regulatory structures, forms the concept of mixed embeddedness and is used to discuss opportunity structures for immigrant entrepreneurs.

In other literature, Rath and Swagerman (2015, p.154) give an example of how an immigrant's position within the host community defines the opportunity structure for their business. Different products or services require different sets of skills, competencies, and resources. This leads to the conclusion that "the social, economic and political positionality of individual entrepreneurs is crucial for our understanding of their business activities, notably the obstacles and opportunities that are involved".

Collins (2003) for example, states that the mixed embeddedness concept has helped research on immigrant entrepreneurs in Australia when looking at how federal, state, and local governments have set laws, policies, and procedures that have directly or indirectly affected the opportunity structures for immigrant entrepreneurs. This research shows how immigrants have affected policies implemented by the government where they encourage unemployed immigrants to launch their businesses. Immigrant entrepreneurs in Australia are involved across all industries with a focus on retail that caters to a niche customer base. They also have a higher involvement in international trade than do Australians.

In other research, the mixed embeddedness concept has supported the research conducted by Ohlsson et al. (2012, p.2) in how they perceive factors that affect the opportunity structure for immigrant entrepreneurs. The authors state "With a starting point from the individual perspective of the mixed embeddedness model we tested the hypothesis that the country of birth and the local labor market area of the individual do little to explain individual differences in the propensity to be self-employed…".

When discussing mixed embeddedness barriers, researchers explore internal and external factors as the definition has been clarified by Kloosterman et al. (1999). Rath and Swagerman (2015) list bureaucratic rules and regulations as obstacles in the mixed embeddedness perspective. This tends to happen as a result of immigrants lacking the host country's language skills to understand procedures; a problem that can be solved with a government

effort in providing information in international languages. Another example of barriers was explained by Collins (2003) on how Australia's government had changed laws, policies, and procedures to go in line with the growing number of immigrant-owned businesses.

2.6 Immigrant Entrepreneur Strategies

2.6.1 Immigrant Entrepreneur Strategies in a Global Context

During our research within immigrant entrepreneurship literature, we have seen that there is a general trend in the way immigrants act in terms of strategies for sustaining a business. Here, we will discuss the different approaches immigrant entrepreneurs have taken to survive their businesses.

In a study done by Aldrich and Waldinger (1990), they have concluded several strategies undertaken by immigrant entrepreneurs. One way immigrant entrepreneurs overcome obstacles they face is to run training sessions on how to maintain a business; although the form of this training and how it was conducted was not mentioned. Another method was to exploit their close networks of friends and family. Immigrant entrepreneurs would usually hire workers from within their family. This way they could ensure that the workers they hired would have a more guaranteed level of efficiency, integrity, and would generally cost less. Immigrant entrepreneurs also started realizing the importance of maintaining relations with their customers and suppliers. They also took part in intense competition within their community to win over more customers. The final and unfortunate strategy was to find loopholes in the governmental system or take part in briberies that would benefit the business, usually financially.

In another study by Price (2012), she discussed tactics used by Bolivian immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States. The first was that they relied heavily on co-ethnic networks to staff their businesses. Another tactic they used was to expand to clientele beyond their ethnic community. This allowed for an increase in potential customers. The Bolivian community also follows a moral code within its community, which is an "internal characteristic" (Price, 2012, p.147) of Bolivians. Although acts of solidarity were common among immigrant groups, Bolivians took this closeness very seriously. Bolivians also used a method known as the rotating credit. With the rotating credit method, every participant would chip in a certain amount of money on a monthly basis. At the end of the month, one participant would take a lump sum and the cycle keeps rotating. The final tactic is

transnational trade, where immigrant entrepreneurs would conduct trade across borders with their home country being on the other end; essentially building ties between both the host country and the home country.

Finally, Aaltonen and Akola (2012) gave the perspective of immigrant entrepreneurs in Finland. The first strategy discussed is the immigrant entrepreneurs' use of ethnic communities to their benefit to build trust and credibility. Immigrant entrepreneurs also put an effort into integrating well within their host society in terms of culture, values, and traditions. This helps them become a good fit for the host country's moral code, language, and narratives. Finally, to help build this trust with the community, they engaged in networks and social clubs within the host community.

2.6.2 Immigrant Entrepreneur Strategies in a Swedish Context

Looking at the Swedish context of immigrant entrepreneur strategies, we examine the findings of Shala et al. (2009). Similar to the global context, immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden choose family and co-ethnic members when it comes to hiring workers and staff for their businesses. They also tend to target ethnic markets by providing ethnic products. This helped them overcome the hardships of having a language barrier. When looking at financing, immigrant entrepreneurs resort to securing loans from relatives and friends to help them launch their business. Another tactic used is the involvement in social networks within their ethnic community and host community. This sometimes led to formal and informal business transactions taking place.

The above-mentioned strategies are the most common ones according to their research. Shala et al. (2009) continued to discuss other forms of strategies used by immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden. Immigrant entrepreneurs entered markets with low barriers of entry, they also depended on word of mouth to make sales. When put in a situation of doubt on what business decisions to take, they sought advice through informal channels such as family members, relatives, or friends.

3 Methodology

In the following subsections of this chapter, we will elaborate on our efforts of conducting this research. We will include our research approach, type of interviews, our advantage as researchers on this topic, interviewee criteria, and a brief interview guide. Later we will discuss the sample data that we have and the data analysis approach of our results.

3.1 Data Collection Method

In this research, we followed a qualitative approach to help us collect data and formulate a theory (Bryman & Bell, 2015) for our research question. This approach, as discussed by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), helped us better understand the information that has been presented to us to reach a conclusion. In the situation of our research, a qualitative approach is much more beneficial in that it helps us gather different perspectives from entrepreneurs.

For the interviews conducted, we followed a semi-structured interview process (Bryman and Bell, 2015). We had a list of topics we wanted to discuss; but to keep the entrepreneur comfortable, we let the conversation naturally flow and later asked about points that have been missed. The discussion was more of a casual conversation that was recorded when they agreed. Since we share a common mother tongue with the entrepreneurs, the interviews were conducted in the Arabic language to help the interviewees better express themselves. While producing this thesis is in the English language, this may cause a limitation when dealing with translation as it may lead to words being lost in translation.

We were able to have good access to the Arab-immigrant community in Malmö, Sweden, and this has helped us collect valuable data. One advantage that we may have over other researchers in collecting data from Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs is our background. The fact that we are Arab has given the entrepreneurs a sense of comfort in sharing insights. It was relatively easier for us to break the ice with the entrepreneurs as we used informal language during our talks. The main method of landing those interviews was purely through personal networks within the community. No cold calling or email strategies were undertaken.

The criteria followed to make an interviewee applicable for our research are fourfold. First, the entrepreneur must be a first-generation immigrant. Second, the entrepreneur must be a Swedish speaker. Third, the entrepreneur must have resided in Sweden for at least 5 years. Finally, the entrepreneur must be of Arab origins. The reason we are following the first three

criteria is to ensure that the entrepreneur has been well-integrated within the Swedish community and able to have a perspective on the "before and after" aspects of their integration. This would give the entrepreneur enough time to understand regulations and the business culture in Sweden. Regarding the final criteria, being of Arab origins is needed for the entrepreneur to be within our research focus.

The interview started with a collection of general information such as age, length of stay, profession, and startup industry. We also asked about the reasons of moving to Sweden. Then, we moved into the specifics of their entrepreneurial journey; how they launched and sustained their business, keeping mind the topics discussed in the literature review. The details of their startup process and what they have gone through was discussed in detail starting off with their entrepreneurial motivations, details about their business and experience, and challenges faced in establishing the company in Sweden. After talking about the first steps taken to start the business, we talked about the challenges faced for running and maintaining it. This also included talking about the market, customers, and suppliers. Finally, we discussed the strategies used to overcome obstacles along the way.

3.2 Sampling

We have chosen to explore Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs for several reasons. The first of which is our Arab backgrounds as the authors of this paper. The second reason being that we have the access to Arab-immigrant networks here in Sweden, specifically in the Skåne region. The final reason is the large number of Arabs in Sweden; which add up to approximately 375 thousand according to Statistiska Centralbyrån (2017).

Our research is based on Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs located in Malmö, Sweden. We interviewed 9 Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs based in Malmö, Sweden. Those entrepreneurs own businesses within the retail industry. The results can be used as a benchmark for future researchers focusing on other regions.

This research has been conducted to have a closer look at Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden and their entrepreneurial journey. We focused on the obstacles they face and the strategies they use to overcome them. Following our interviews, we collected the data and thoroughly analyzed it, allowing us to make use of it for further discussion.

3.3 Data Analysis

The interviews that we were given permission to record were transcribed and all the information used to reach conclusions will be discussed next. At times when we are asked not to record, notes were taken by hand to ensure we did not miss important information. This way we can provide results in the most accurate manner, allowing future researchers to also benefit from the data and expand more upon this research field.

We analyzed the data to see potential patterns across cases from the results of our interviews. The data analysis and approach will follow the methodology defined by Eisenhardt (1989), which will support in reaching a conclusion and building a theory that will add knowledge to the field. Our goal is to answer our research question, "*What are the obstacles for Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden and how do they overcome them?*".

We consider this methodological approach to fit well with our objectives for this research. The methods and tools used were capable of supporting our purpose to reach a conclusion of defining strategies for overcoming obstacles.

4 Results

In this chapter, our aim is to analyze and discuss the results from our interviews with Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden. A total of 9 interviews were conducted within the retail sector of Malmö, Sweden. The entrepreneurs we interviewed may have potentially shared sensitive or confidential information. Therefore, it will be very important that we honor their trust in the inclusion of the data for this research. All data and information will be completely anonymous.

Next is a table briefly describing the entrepreneurs and their businesses. The currency used for the 2015 turnover is the Swedish Krona and the numbers are presented in millions with an "M" next to the value. The turnovers we were not able to obtain are denoted by "-".

Alias	Age	Years in Sweden	Business	Launch Date	Employees	2015 Turnover
Mohammed	47	5	Herbs & Spices	2014	2	0.73 M
Ahmed	45	31	Arabic Sweets	2006	3	2.42 M
Samer	38	33	Beauty Products	2011	2	0.86 M
Fadi	23	5	Roaster	2017	3	-
Wael	51	19	Moroccan Products	2016	2	-
Rami	47	18	Perfumes	2014	1	0.61 M
Feras	33	5	Bakery	2015	3	-
Khaled	54	32	Furniture	1998	4	2.9 M
Adam	36	7	Barber	2016	1	-

Upon the completion of the interviews, we analyzed each interview to find certain patterns and perspectives from the entrepreneurs. The coding process of the interviews was based on keywords and variables having to do with obstacles and strategies. The context of the topic being discussed was also taken into consideration. The three contexts used were cultural, structural, and mixed embeddedness. Terminologies and ideas were expressed differently from one entrepreneur to the other, and it was our job to categorize the data based on what context was being discussed.

We followed the grounded theory process (Bryman and Bell, 2015) during our analysis. The

tool to be used is coding, where "data are broken down into component parts, which are given names" (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p.577). After breaking down the information we obtained from the interviews, we split the obstacles and strategies into clusters based on patterns. Below, we will discuss those obstacles and strategies.

4.1 Obstacles of Arab-Immigrant Entrepreneurs

Here, we aim to demonstrate what we found to be common obstacles with Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs for launching and running their business. We have concluded four main obstacles; Swedish culture, Swedish regulations, language, illegal activities, and financing.

4.1.1 Swedish Culture

As we have seen through our various talks with Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs, some have mentioned the Swedish culture in several contexts. There are times when cultures do not match and lead to a difference or misunderstanding. This does not necessarily mean there is always a negative impact, but it is rather based on the scenario taking place.

A common example given was the greeting when entering a store. In the Arab culture, it is the customer who greets the store owner. While in the Swedish culture, it is the store owner who greets the customer. One entrepreneur, Mohammed, went on to explain his experience when selling an ethnic product to a Swedish customer in comparison to selling to an Arab customer. The Swedish customer had an interest in knowing more about the product, its history, where it came from, etc. He says, "Non-Arabs spend more time in the shop to explore, they ask more questions". After getting this information, the customer would simply buy the product and leave. On the other hand, with Arab customers, since they usually know about ethnic products, they engage in side talks and try to build relationships. The side talk can be initiated by either party, not necessarily the customer.

Another entrepreneur, Ahmed, also mentions that Swedish customers are always keen on learning more about the ethnic product they are buying. This leads them to asking detailed questions about the products. Ahmed says "sometimes they ask about the calories in the sweets, [...] how will I know that?" when referring to curious Swedish customers.

One more example is with our interviewee Khaled. He has been in the country for 32 years and still feels the consequences of not integrating with the culture properly. Since his children are Swedish-born, he gives them the responsibility of dealing with Swedish customers. He

explains his reasoning by saying, "I mainly focus on the Arab customers and let my children handle the Swedish customers since they grew up here; they understand the Swedish mentality better than I do".

4.1.2 Swedish Regulations

The next obstacle at hand is the Swedish regulatory process. As many of our interviewees stated, the Swedish bureaucracy is quite complicated and needs a lot of effort to be followed properly. Fares talked about the difficulties he faced to register his company stating that "sponsorship was obligatory for company registration approval since I have no income or employment records for the past five years". Entrepreneurs do not have the knowledge needed to follow the correct processes and end up talking to several entities to get their answer. This is partly due to the lack of an effective integration system that helps them better understand the system.

With one of our interviewees, Mohammed, he stated that since he has no knowledge on the matters of paperwork, his partner "handles all the headaches of paperwork". Another entrepreneur, Fadi, shares the same thoughts when it comes to regulations that it is very complicated. He adds, "you have to go through a lot of processes with different authorities. [...] It is not like home; the rules and regulations are different".

The final point in relation to Swedish regulations is the taxation system. Many of our interviewees were not exposed to taxes in their home country. Even at instances when they were, the same laws do not apply. This, again, is the result of an improper integration process within the host country.

4.1.3 Language

When we discuss language as a barrier, there are different aspects we need to consider. From one point of view, even if an immigrant is willing to learn the language, it still needs time and effort. Eventually, the language will become part of their everyday life and the barrier will fade away. Nevertheless, until that time comes, there is lost potential business. As Feras, one of our interviewees mentioned, language is a major obstacle for him since he barely manages to engage in a conversation with Swedes. The same comment was given by two more entrepreneurs, Mohammed and Adam. The common factor was their length of stay in Sweden; Feras and Mohammed have been in Sweden for only 5 years, and Adam has been here for 7 years. As it was mentioned by the entrepreneur Adam, the "delay" in learning the

Swedish language depends on who you spend your time with and the effort you put in.

If entrepreneurs continue to lead a path where they do not put an effort to learn the Swedish language, the cultural gap between Arabs and Swedes will remain. This is because language could possibly be the only barrier stopping two people from different backgrounds engaging in a conversation. This scenario happened with one entrepreneur, Mohammed, where he sends his business partner to take care of any communication related tasks. He states, "it's hard for me to engage in a very detailed conversation with government offices in the Swedish language, so I always send my partner who's been living here from ages to handle these issues".

When entrepreneurs decide to remain in a closed community and not engage with locals, they end up creating a co-ethnic bubble and limit themselves from integrating with society. As Adam discussed in his interview, he used language as a strategy to target Swedish customers, as well as Arabic which is his mother tongue.

4.1.4 Illegal Activities

What we want to focus on are the entrepreneurs who follow taxation laws. It is unfortunate for them that their business is negatively affected because other entrepreneurs are breaking the rules. One entrepreneur we interviewed, Samer, has been running his business for 6 years in the cosmetics industry. He goes on to explain that competitors taking part of illegal activities are benefitting from the extra money, hence giving them an unfair advantage. During our interview, he discussed this by saying "other shops sell without bills in segregated areas".

Ahmed also elaborates on how his "imitator" competitors don't offer job contracts and that employees work in what he called the "black market". This idea was also shared by Samer who states, "all their employees are without employment contracts, they make more money than us because we work legally".

Illegal activities are inevitable in any community. Instead of focusing on how a minority group try to take advantage of the system, we should focus on those who follow the law and see illegal activities as an obstacle. To avoid any misunderstanding, at instances where an illegal activity is undertaken, the law should always take its course.

4.1.5 Financing

After having talks with two entrepreneurs, Rami and Feras, it was not long before the topic of financing came up during an ongoing conversation. The emotion they had was frustration that they were not able to secure funding for their business. They believe that the rejection of their funding requests has stemmed out of discrimination. They went on to discuss how they feel discriminated due to their background. Some have resorted to dip into their savings because of that; leaving them short on a cash and involved in a high risk, competitive market. Rami said that he used his savings and borrowed from his family.

On the other hand, we have an entrepreneur, Samer, who explained that he had no interest in obtaining a bank loan due to religious reasons. By following the Sharia Law, which are the rules set in accordance to the Islamic religion, Muslims are not permitted to take a loan that charges them interest rates. Mohammed shares the same mentality towards obtaining bank loans and adds "my beliefs go against bank loans and interest rates, [...] my partner and I used our savings; and even if we had the chance to take out a loan, we would not have done it". This leaves financing as an obstacle for them since they had to find other means of securing an investment.

4.2 Strategies of Arab-Immigrant Entrepreneurs

In this section, we combine the major strategies undertaken by Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs into clusters. These clusters have been divided into: integration efforts, customer relations, and personal networks.

4.2.1 Integration Efforts

During our talks with the entrepreneurs about how they overcome their problems, the most common answer given was putting an effort into properly integrating with the society. The entrepreneurs were quick to realize that, in order for them to sustain their business, they needed to become part of the society. Of course, not everyone was willing to put the effort properly, but they did confirm that they are working towards a firmer integration. Samer, although he has been in Sweden for 33 years, still supports having a better integration process for newcomers to help facilitate the everyday interactions any person faces on a daily basis.

Another entrepreneur, Mohammed, who has been in Sweden for 5 years, discussed that he has faced issues with Swedish regulations and culture due to his lack of knowledge on the

matter. His approach was to gradually work towards a proper integration. The reason he wanted to take his time is because he did not want this extra effort to affect his current efforts in investing time for running his business. If this issue had been taken care of at an earlier stage, things could have turned out differently for him on a personal and business level.

With more on the integration aspect of customer encounters, Fadi explains how he plans on catering to his Swedish audience. Since he looks at Swedes as environmentally aware consumers, Fadi set up plans to change the packaging to a more environmentally friendly package. He states "if we want to target Swedish customers, we need to consider a good package, an environmentally friendly package".

Another perspective is that of Rami, who is in the line of perfumes. Before taking his first step into entrepreneurship in Sweden as an Arab-immigrant, he worked for a Swedish company to help him understand the mentality of Swedes. He explains, "I worked at a Swedish fabric factory when I first arrived in Sweden, this helped me learn about their mentality and how they do business in Sweden.

4.2.2 Customer Relations

When entrepreneurs are involved in illegal activities that save them money, they are able to compete on price more freely; hence winning over new customers. This in turn means that entrepreneurs who follow the rules are bound to lose some customers since their prices are higher than those who take part in illegal activities. Although both types of entrepreneurs might put an effort in building customer relationships, entrepreneurs that follow the rules would want to put more effort on it.

The strategy involving building strong relationships with customers stemmed out of the obstacle of illegal activities by competitors. Entrepreneurs were fast in realizing the negative effects this had on their business and knew there was nothing they can do about it externally. That is when they decided to take matters in their own hands and work on a solution internally. This solution, according to Khaled who runs a furniture shop, was to maintain the customers he had through three major steps. The first step is to build a strong relationship with customers in hopes of creating loyalty. The next step was to show customers the value of his products in that they are better than the competition in quality. The final step was to try to maintain a steady pricing that, even though it might be slightly higher than competition, would still be accepted by their loyal customers.

Ahmed, who is part of the FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) industry, talked about how he works on educating the customer on the quality of his products. He states, "I explain to my clients that I use the best ingredients". Another entrepreneur, Samer, who is part of the cosmetics industry, said that he sometimes tries to compete on price. He also guarantees his products with a return policy. Another entrepreneur, Khaled, said he generally worked hard on maintaining customer relationships. Khaled takes it a step further by "providing easy payment plans" for his furniture products and shows "supplier certificates for authenticity". The common factor among those entrepreneurs is their long length of stay in Sweden; Ahmed has been in Sweden for 31 years, Samer for 33 years, and Khaled for 32 years. This could be interpreted that, over time, those entrepreneurs have learned how the market works and have found the most effective strategy when it comes to winning over customers compared to newcomers.

We can also take a look at how Feras handled customer relations. To ensure that his non-Arab customers were happy and comfortable with buying from him, he explains, "I show them how I make specific sweets by inviting them inside the kitchen". As part of his strategy for retaining customers and building relationships, he gave some more examples; "look at my shop decoration, [...] my customers feel like they are in Syria. The atmosphere, service, music, decoration; it's like a journey for them. That's how I stand out from others. My customers became friends, not just people here to buy sweets".

A final example on building customer relations is our entrepreneur Wael. Wael talks about how having customers from the same background has helped him build better relationships that are long-lasting. Being from the same background breaks the ice and helps maintain a conversation; he adds, "it becomes a friendly conversation because there aren't many of us. We are actually very happy when we meet each other, and the relationship goes on from there".

4.2.3 Personal Networks

The co-ethnic community has played a big role in the actions taken by Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden. They were able to not only benefit from previous experiences, but also exploit their network to the best out of it. From the talks we had with those entrepreneurs, we concluded that they mainly used their network of family and friends for financing their ventures. Others have used their networks for closing sales and word of mouth marketing. In one example, Samer used his network to hire people he can trust with the cash

register who will not make unregistered sales.

Samer used his co-ethnic network to generate sales since he focuses on B2B sales and knew a lot of entrepreneurs who own barber shops. He says, "most of the Arab barbers in Malmö are my friends and I supply most of their required products". This also helped him in turning personal relationships into business relationships, which ultimately lead him to overcome some of his obstacles that included illegal activities by competitors.

In another example, Feras and Rami walked us through how they financed their companies by getting support from their family to help them get a steady foot in the market. Without external support, they might have not been able to start their companies as finances were a major obstacle. Looking from a different angle, Khaled mentioned that although there was no cultural push behind his business actions, it so happened that he was serving his co-ethnic community.

4.3 Summary of Research Results

In this thesis, our aim is to answer the research question *"What are the obstacles for Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden and how do they overcome them?"*.

To conclude our research results, we have listed and categorized what obstacles Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden face and the strategies they implement to overcome them. Every entrepreneur we interviewed had a different story. What we did was analyze the data to find patterns and commonalities.

Following the research and analysis, we have categorized the obstacles of Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs as: Swedish culture, Swedish regulations, language, illegal activities, and financing. The strategies of those entrepreneurs were categorized within three main clusters: integration efforts, customer relations, and personal networks.

5 Discussion and Analysis

In this chapter, we move from results to discussion and analysis. First, we will explore the links between previous literature on obstacles and the results from our research. Following that, we will do the same for the strategies. We then move into our analysis of the results. In that subsection, we will identify relations between obstacles and strategies and discuss how those strategies came to be and were implemented.

5.1 Discussion on Obstacles

In this section, we relate literature to what has been discussed in the results based on our interviews. To restate what we concluded as obstacles for Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs, we have five main obstacles: the Swedish culture, Swedish regulations, language, illegal activities, and financing.

Swedish Culture

What needs to be considered here is not what is right or wrong; every culture has its own way of going through everyday activities. Similar to what Masurel et al. (2004) have discussed, culture is something carried across borders. When newcomers become part of the host community, they need to work on reaching a common ground. We need to look at this as a situation where there is a mismatch and a resolution will lead to a better integration.

As with the examples of our interviewees, it is a matter of finding a common ground. With newcomers, they have to adapt to cultures and traditions in the host country. From what we have discussed in our results, entrepreneurs are actively seeking ways to ensure that locals feel welcome in their shops by learning about the Swedish culture.

Swedish Regulations

After looking at the results concerning the Swedish regulations, we can relate this to research. We need to understand that not all economies operate alike. A good example of how newcomers have affected policies is the example presented by Collins (2003), where he explains the process the Australian government administered to meet the needs of newcomers while maintaining its core policies.

This is not necessarily the only solution to helping immigrants integrate in a new host country. One way to have a better integration process is for the governments and municipalities to provide an easier solution for newcomers, even if only on a temporary basis. For example, the government can provide newcomers with a simpler tax payment process. This buys the authorities some time to better understand what works best for the laws and regulations.

Language

Several researchers (Mitchell, 2016; Rath and Swagerman, 2015; Altonen and Akola 2012) have discussed how language is always a major barrier that negatively affects the integration

process. This, unfortunately, leads the community down a path of possible discrimination and unnecessary conflicts in communication (Ohlsson et al. 2012). As foreigners, language is the key to proper communication with the locals. Therefore, it is important that this issue is addressed.

Fluency in a language takes time, and this is what some of the entrepreneurs we interviewed faced. It has taken a lot of time to be able to communicate in Swedish, but they have done it to increase the number of potential customers. Eventually, they reached a point where they were able to either communicate in Swedish or assign someone who can speak Swedish fluently.

Illegal Activities

Illegal activities are debatable to be considered as strategies or obstacles. It has been discussed by several researchers (Mitchell, 2016; Kloosterman et al., 1999) that discrimination is one of the factors that eventually leads to a path of entrepreneurship. This discrimination, as an example, may lead to working illegally for a co-ethnic business, resulting in the entrepreneur taking part in an illegal activity. If we look closely at such a scenario, the entrepreneur has benefited by paying a low salary that is not taxed; hence making illegal activities a strategy for saving money. As mentioned earlier, this gives the entrepreneur an unfair advantage with competition. Other illegal activities may include not registering sales, creating altered invoices, or not registering products in the inventory.

Financing

This issue of financing has led to Arab-immigrants being, as Adam puts it, "innovative in how they bootstrap their business". This mentality goes in line with what Winborg and Landström (2000) have discussed as the methods of bootstrapping. Those methods are: owner financing method, minimization of accounts receivable, join utilization, delaying payments, minimization of capital invested in stock, and subsidy finance.

When looking at the actions of immigrant entrepreneurs, they do not necessarily use the same terminology. As Mohammed and Samer along with other entrepreneurs explained, they did not take bank loans and are self-financed. During our talks with them, they have not mentioned terms we use in academia, but have implemented what literature explains on the topic.

5.2 Discussion on Strategies

Moving on to the strategies literature discussion, we provide researcher perspectives on the topic at hand. The strategies followed by Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs that we have concluded are as follows: integration efforts, customer relations, and personal networks.

Integration efforts

As we have seen through our results, being an outsider within a local community has brought up some barriers when conducting business. That is why Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs have started putting efforts into becoming part of the local community. Research by Aaltonen and Akola (2012) supports integration and the value it brings when the same moral and ethical codes are shared between newcomers and the host community.

Samer, even though he has lived in Sweden for 33 years, still supports a better integration process for a better community. Mohammed, who has lived in Sweden for only 5 years explained to us the hardships of not being well-integrated within the society. This comes to prove that proper integration efforts are crucial to the everyday life of an immigrant.

Customer Relations

The reason this issue rose is that competitors have found ways to cut costs; in the context discussed in the results section, it is through illegal activities. Nevertheless, a similar example of this result is the research conducted by Godley (2014) where he explains how Jewish immigrants were making fast moves in the market and growing by cutting labor costs. In the situation of Jewish entrepreneurs, it may be true that competitors did not use illegal means, but the result was still lower cost. Looking at our interviewees, they faced the same situation where their competitors were able to cut costs, but in this case, illegally. This leads the entrepreneur to think more about he will have to retain their customers and not lose them to illegal competition.

Samer and Ahmed are two entrepreneurs that were affected by such illegal actions. Building stronger customer relations has been used by them as a strategy to overcome obstacles such illegal activities by competitors. This has ultimately led them to work harder towards building customer relationships than others and helped retain a larger portion of their customers.

Personal networks

Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) have shown through research how immigrant entrepreneurs

use their networks to get their business moving, similar to what our interviewees have done. As an example from a global perspective, Price (2012) explains how Bolivian entrepreneurs in the United States keep ties with their co-ethnic communities and how they exploit it for their business' benefit. Shala et al. (2009) have also talked about how immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden have used their network for the benefit of their business.

There are different ways to use personal networks to your benefit. Samer, for example, used his personal network to increase his B2B sales with barbers. He also used his network to better reach his co-ethnic community. On the other hand, entrepreneurs like Feras and Rami used their network to help them finance their business and get it off the ground.

5.3 Analysis

The purpose of this research is to fill a gap in research regarding the strategies of Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden for overcoming obstacles during their entrepreneurial journey. To assess the bottom line of our personal analysis for this research, we will revisit our research question: *What are the obstacles for Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden and how do they overcome them?*

As with any problem-solution scenario, you can find ties between the factors at hand; in our case, it is the obstacles and strategies. We were able to gather information on Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden through interviews and thoroughly used available literature to link to current research and findings.

There have been patterns in the data when it came down to listing down the obstacles and strategies, which ultimately allowed us to reach our results. Similarly, we have also seen commonalities between obstacles and strategies which helped us formulate our analysis. We conclude that strategies related to integration efforts have rooted from the obstacles of Swedish culture, Swedish regulations, and language. Strategies related to customer relations have rooted from illegal activities by competitors. Finally, strategies related to personal networks rooted from financing issues as well as illegal activities.

Integration Efforts

Talks with entrepreneurs that have spent some years in Sweden have given us a certain perspective for sustaining a business and living a comfortable life as an Arab-immigrant. It has come to our attention that the willingness to accept the host culture is key to a proper

integration. With the examples of Mohammed and Ahmed, they were quick to understand how Arab customers interact with shop owners versus how Swedish customers interact.

The same goes for Swedish regulations, it is the responsibility for the newcomer to learn and understand the law. This plays a huge role when the entrepreneur is used to doing things a certain way back home and having to change those habits in the new host country. Feras had this comment during our interview with him and it was one of the reasons he faces problems with Swedish regulations.

For a proper integration process, language is also a major factor to consider as it is the main form of communication to reach out to the community. Without language, a barrier will be built and will not allow the cultural gap to become smaller. This would eventually lead to unwanted conflicts arising from poor communication.

Customer Relations

The correlation of obstacles we have seen for customer relations falls mainly under illegal activities. Even though all entrepreneurs must maintain good relationships with their customers, some entrepreneurs tend to put some extra efforts. Those entrepreneurs are ones that face loss of customers due to competitors engaging in illegal activities to help in lowering prices. As mentioned in our results, entrepreneurs that take part in illegal activities to cut tax costs have an edge over pricing. This in turn means that entrepreneurs who pays taxes tend to have higher prices, leaving them with a possibility of losing customers.

To solve this issue, entrepreneurs have taken upon themselves to find smart ways of retaining customers. Some of our interviewees have discussed some tactics they use to hold on to their customers. Ahmed, for example, educates the customer on his products and engages in meaningful conversations. Khaled helps customers pay in installments by providing easy payment plans and also provides customers with certifications of his products. Finally, with Feras, he takes the time to show his customers the actual production process to build trust.

Personal Networks

For the final strategy discussed, personal networks were the result of financing and again illegal activities. Different entrepreneurs interviewed have had different experiences when it came to obtaining external capital. Rami and Feras, for example, were not fortunate enough to be able to obtain external financing from banks. As for Samer and Mohammed, they have not gone after bank loans for religious reasons, which means they cannot pay interest on

loans.

Put together, those entrepreneurs were put in a position where they resorted to their personal network to have enough capital for their business. This network comprised of family and friends. Aside from using their network for financial reasons, they also reached out when it came to sales and marketing. The entrepreneurs would get the help of their friends and family to help them make their early sales in the business and support them with word of mouth marketing.

The Bottom Line

As the authors of this research, we felt that the strategies implemented almost always had a factor of "someone I know". We have seen a large amount of dependence by the entrepreneur on someone with more knowledge or market access.

This is not put in a context of the entrepreneur avoiding putting an effort. But rather, we have seen that Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden always seem to find the answer when they reach out to their network. One of the interviewees, Khaled, came as part of the early Arab immigrants to Sweden. He talked about how he has witnessed the Arab community grow. One batch after the other, dependence for market knowledge and paperwork has grown.

It is this co-ethnic bond that has kept the Arab-immigrant community growing in Sweden.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Implications

As we gathered the information we have gained from the entrepreneurs, along with support from literature within the field of immigrant entrepreneurship, we were able to build a framework that we think will help solve the issues we discussed that Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs are facing.

This framework, which we call the *Immigrant Entrepreneur Integration Framework*, is a step-by-step guide that can be implemented by government entities such as Migrationsverket (Swedish Migration Agency) and other independent agencies to help newcomers integrate into the Swedish society.

The first step is to teach newcomers the *Swedish Language*. A joint support between

Migrationsverket and an entity such as the Swedish Institute is enough to give newcomers a condensed course in the Swedish language. As we have seen from research, language has proven to be an important aspect of everyday life in Sweden. The second step is to teach newcomers the *Swedish Civil Laws*. Since Swedish laws are applied by the police, a crash course from the Swedish Police will help reach the desired results in terms of knowledge on legalities. The third step is learning about *Swedish Traditions and Values*. As with the Swedish language program, a Swedish Traditions course can also be conducted by the Swedish Institute. This helps newcomers understand how Swedes act and think, not to mention that it also helps in learning what values Swedes have along with their lifestyle and behavior. The final step is learning about *Entrepreneurship in Sweden*. An entity to consider for such courses is Entrim, which conducts its courses at Lund University. This step is considered a vital initiative to help those interested in launching their own businesses. If a newcomer fulfills the steps in this framework, we believe he or she would be ready to join the Swedish community.

This is an investment in people; an investment that will show value generation after generation.

6.2 Future Research

The research aim is to contribute to immigrant entrepreneurship literature. We conducted a research to help us define the business strategies implemented by Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs in Sweden. To wrap up the results, we have concluded five obstacles: Swedish culture, Swedish regulations, language, illegal activities, and financing. Looking at the strategies, they have come down to three strategies: integration efforts, customer relations, and personal networks. Our analysis has tied integration efforts to Swedish culture, Swedish regulations, and language; customer relations to illegal activities; and personal networks to financing as well as illegal activities.

As we have provided market data on the topic at hand, we hope that this information would be used by future researchers who wish to specialize in a more specific topic concerning Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs. Researchers interested in immigrant integration may find value in our work, not mention those also interested in obstacles and strategies.

The framework we proposed can also be used by government entities to help grow Sweden from an immigration perspective while ensuring that its valuable resources are used in the

most efficient manner.

Future entrepreneurs interested in the retail industry can also use our findings to understand how the market works and learn about possible obstacles and strategies. This would relatively help them prepare more and know what to expect when launching their business in Sweden, especially if they were immigrant, or more specifically, Arab-immigrant entrepreneurs.

Finally, it is important to realize that every contribution to this field will help future researchers and governments better understand how communities operate and how to best integrate newcomers to the host country. Therefore, we support continued research and knowledge sharing for the benefit of the global economy.

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