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School integration of newly arrived immigrant children and youth

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Abstract

The aim was to study how school professionals working with newly arrived immigrant children and youth experience how these students integrate into the school.

The study is a qualitative research conducted in Sweden. The first part of the research focused on studying what factors affect the integration of newly arrived immigrant in schools while the second part focused on what strategy is used to ensure their integration. The findings of the study were thematically analyzed using the ecological systems theory as a framework of analysis.

Through semi-structured interviews, four teachers and a counsellor expressed their perception on the integration of newly arrived immigrants' student into schools. The result showed that the teachers are the core agent for integration within schools. It was shown that past experiences, family, social connections, educational background, school system, migration policies, culture are important factors that affect the integration process of these students.

Keywords: **Keywords:** Newly arrived immigrant, Integration, School, ecological system theory.

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Chapter 1- Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a major migration of people, especially from the Middle Eastern countries into Europe due to conflict breakout (Butkute & Janta 2018). This massive movement of people has affected both international and domestic practices. Especially among immigrants' children and youth, the question of Integration and education has been a major concern for policy-making agencies. According to UNICEF (2020) article 28, all member states are employed to ensure that all children attend primary and secondary education. This is primarily so because the school is said to be the primary place for integration into the host country system (Butkute & Janta 2018).

European countries have been the host for many refugees travelling from other parts of the world. The migrant crisis was at its peak in 2015-2016 where around 1.3 million people applied for asylum in the European Union countries (Butkute & Janta 2018). About 31.8 per cent of these asylum seekers were minors, and 13 per cent of them were unaccompanied (Butkute & Janta 2018). Before the massive arrival of children, the European commission encouraged the member states to promote adequate reception for the children, they were asked to ensure that there is immediate equal access to inclusion and formal education to all children regardless of their age (Butkute & Janta 2018).

Similarly, according to Statistiska centralbyrån (SCB, 2017) among the 160.000 people who sought asylum in 2015 in Sweden, 70,384 were minors. In Sweden once the immigrants arrive at a certain municipality, according to the Swedish integration policy they are being taken care of by knowledgeable professionals i.e. social worker, who would work with them to create a normal, meaningful, and stable life. After allocating them into different municipalities, the respective municipalities start integrating the youth and minors through various suggested educational programs. This is an adoption of the EU's Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) policy which suggest that inclusive education would enhance children to develop intercultural skills, integrate faster and settle well (Butkute & Janta 2018).

The schools are said to be the main platform that would easily integrate and make them fit for the labor market (Butkute & Janta, 2018), also mentioned that the availability of education would help improve the social cohesion, alleviate poverty, and reduce the stress the group of people have experienced. However, some factors affect the integration process of these children and youth in schools. Despite the legal provision and political

structure in place. Issues like language, mental wellbeing, cultural norms, permit, exclusion etc. have a big impact on the migrant children during their education

This study views the factors that affect immigrant children integration into schools from the professionals' perspective and the strategy the school uses to ensure the social, cultural, and educational integration. This is relevant to international social work because international social work deals with issues of migration. International social work address individuals on all levels, right from the macro-level (policymaking) to the micro-level (working with the individuals). Furthermore, subjects like social inclusion, integration, mental wellbeing of people especially the vulnerable ones are key subjects to international social work.

In international social work practice, one of the most common theories used for intervention is the ecological system theory because it looks beyond the individual. International social work intervention is not just limited to the individuals, it takes into consideration the factors i.e. policies in the environment such an individual is. This makes the study more relevant for international social work practice because it will be considering different factors and systems that influence integration work on an individual.

1.2 Aim

The aim is to study how school professionals working with newly arrived immigrant children and youth experience how these students integrate into the school.

Research questions.

1. What are the key factors that affect the integration of these students into schools from the professionals' perspective?
2. What strategies do the schools use to ensure a constant and efficient plan in integrating these students?
 - I. What strategies are used to ensure social/cultural integration?
 - II. What strategies are used to ensure educational integration?

1.3 Essay disposition

The second chapter explains the theory we are using (Ecological System theory) and how we are using it. The third chapter of the study starts with a literature review, an explanation of the process right from when the newly arrived youth and minors come to Sweden to when they get into schools. Thereafter a short presentation on previous research to provide the reader with an overall knowledge of some previous studies done on the newly arrived immigrants. Chapter four goes through the methodology and research design used in this study, including ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Thereafter, in chapter five, the ecological system theory will be applied as a framework to analyze and present the results. Lastly, chapter six will contain a summary of the results as well as a discussion part where we connect to the aim of the study and earlier research. This study will apply inductive thematic network analysis methods. Finally, suggestions for further research will be presented. The thesis is concluded by the reference list and the appendixes.

1.4 Explanation of concept

Newly arrived children and youths - Newly arrived children age (1-18)/youth (19-25) is someone who has lived abroad and who now resides in Sweden. Such a person should have started their education after the regular semester started in grade 1 or later. After 4 years in Swedish school, the student is no longer counted as a newly arrived (Skolverket, 2020).

Chapter 2- Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study aims to explore how the integration of the newly arrived immigrants are perceived from the perspective of teachers and counsellors. The study will also consider additional factors outside the individuals within different systems that influence their integration process.

Parrish (2010) in her book highlighted that the ecological system theory explains that an individual is influenced by the variety of factors that coincides in the systems surrounding them i.e. A microsystem- family, peers, Mesosystem- workplace, school and Macrosystem- culture, political system, society etc. This makes the authors of this study find ecological system theory relevant. The theory will help to identify the unique systems around the newly arrived immigrant children/youths and how it affects the integration process in schools. The factors discovered in each system will be pointed out in the analysis and discussion part. Since ecological system theory emphasizes the importance of always considering individuals within their environments, the theory can be used to analyse problems and find solutions to balance the interaction between the individual and the environment (Parrish, 2010).

In the context of integrating newly arrived children/youths into schools, ecological systems theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the circumstances surrounding and affecting the integration process (Härkönen, 2001). According to Bronfenbrenner, ecological system theory also shows that the different interrelated systems which constitute a whole, influences each other and the whole i.e. cultural background can influence their social integration (Härkönen, 2001). Though this study will majorly focus on the school, we will also consider other influencing subsystems such as society, family, cultures etc.

The ecological system theory was used as a framework during the interviews, as specific questions were asked deliberately to consider the different subsystems around the newly arrived immigrant children/youth. This was so we can identify subsystems and the factors within those systems that can either negatively or positively influence the individuals (the newly arrived immigrant students) (Daniel et al, 2011).

System theory recognizes five different systems which are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, chronosystem the systems (Parrish, 2010; Daniel et al, (2011)

adds that system theory ascertains that the contradictions within different systems often result in slow adjustment or development on the individual.

In the analysis, the different systems will be used to present the data gathered. The themes generated will be discussed in relation to different systems to avoid generalizing our data. Although, the ecological system theory helps understand that an individual can perform differently in different systems, i.e. an individual can perform better at work and then perform woefully in school. A limitation is that the system theory assumes that all systems are interdependent and that intervention at any system can affect other systems since they are interrelated.

Chapter 3- Previous Studies

This chapter will discuss integration and the relevant context of integration in this study. It will also provide information on policies within different systems that influences the integration of the newly arrived immigrant students and discuss previous research. To fetch relevant literature that meets our aim and research questions we sought for previous research in databases like Google Scholar, discovery search engine through our university (HIG), Ebsco and Diva using keywords such as; Immigrants, integration and Swedish schools.

3.1 Concept of Integration in Sweden- Ecological System theory

Integration has become a key policy objective in Sweden related to the resettlement of refugees and an important tool implemented in different systems in place to help the newly arrived migrants (Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden, 2009). The word integration is not clearly defined, the Eu and other international bodies have not been able to come up with a comprehensive definition of what Integration means. However, according to Wiesbrock (2013), integration has some common basic principles or elements which include; 'employment, knowledge of the host society's language and culture, education, equal access to goods and services as well as political participation' (pg.2). On the other hand, integration is a general term used to describe the process of

getting immigrants into the social, economic, cultural, and educational system of their host country (Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden, 2009).

The Swedish integration policy seeks equal rights, obligations, and opportunities for all, regardless of ethnicity or cultural background (Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden, 2009). It recognizes that there is a need for reforms and targeted measures in education for newly arrived immigrants as they feel they are not well integrated into schools (Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden, 2009). In the case of the target group in this study, the government enacted some measures like anti-discriminatory schemes, faster introduction of the newly arrived immigrants to work or social life to ensure that there is no disparity in the population (Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden, 2009).

These measures were also enacted to ensure that gaps between the ethnic Swedes and newly arrived immigrants can be covered over time. However, studies and reviews from the Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden (2009) shows that the different systems surrounding an individual must be well considered to ensure that they are well integrated into the system. To ensure proper integration among the group of people, there must be a microwork to help them.

3.11 Social integration

Social integration is relevant in all different systems, it is often discussed on a macro and meso-level, but hard to implement on the micro-level. Social integration hinges on social capital - a social network (friends, relations, family etc.) that provides groups and individuals access to support and resources (Khan et.al, 2015). Social Integration is a gradual process in which individuals and groups become participants in the political, economic, civic, and social life of the host country (Khan et.al, 2015). A key factor to social integration is education (Educational integration) - This refers to how well the immigrants have been academically integrated into their host country. It shows if the host country has been successfully able to lessen the academic gap between immigrants and citizens (Solano, 2017).

On the macro level, some policies give the newly arrived immigrants the same rights as every other citizen. However, most social integration problems in Sweden lie on the meso and micro level. There are activity centers created basically for social integration but most criticism comes from the poor integration performance when it comes to Swedish schools.

3.12 Cultural Integration

Cultural integration talks about how well the immigrants have learnt in their host country regarding issues like language, values, norms etc. According to sue et. al (2016), Culture includes patterns that show thoughts, behaviors, communications, actions, customs, values etc. Cultural integration is a two-way process- how well the host country is willing to accept cultural diversity and how well the host country can assimilate the immigrants into their culture. The Swedish multicultural policy has done well to be a two-way dialogue that is, it mostly focuses on the immigrants but it includes adjusting the structural terms i.e. allowing immigrant students to receive help in their mother tongue in school (Solano, 2017).

However, the issue of cultural assimilation- (how well the immigrants have become like their host country) has raised Identity/ identity formation questions. It is one of the major challenges of cultural integration in Sweden if the immigrants would call themselves swedes or if they would claim their home (Solano, 2017).

3.2 Integration within systems-

3.21 Swedish Migration agency laws

On the Macro level, the Swedish migration agency laws play an important part in the swiftness and ease of how the newly arrived students get into schools. An explanation of the roles of government and migration agencies in the process of getting into schools for newly arrived youth and minors helps understand the different factors that can enhance and hinder integration into schools

In the reception of the newly arrived youths and minors, various agencies are involved. The Swedish migration agency among them is responsible for many things i.e. the need for protection, decision to grant a residence permit (Migrationsverket, 2020). The Swedish migration agency does not take responsibility for the children's access to school. However, the Swedish migration agency laws also ensure that children under 18yrs with a temporary permit can study at the schools allocated to them by the municipality and have the right to complete their education even after turning 18 (Migrationsverket, 2020).

3.22 Process of Getting into schools

The Swedish national agency for education ascertains that every newly arrived child and youths have the right to education in Sweden including those who have not been granted

a permit yet (Skolverket, 2020). For the youths, provided they started the introductory program right before they pass the age of 18, they can continue to study the introductory programs at the schools in their respective municipality.

The National Agency for Education does not have a special recommendation regarding grade placements of newly arrived students. The grade a student is placed in is solely decided by the principal though children are often placed in grades according to their age in Sweden (Skolverket, 2020).

3.23 Within School

Within schools, Sweden has tried implementing different things to improve the integration of the newly arrived immigrants into schools (Solano, 2017). For example, Sweden implemented a multicultural policy that supports the right of these kids to have support in their mother-tongue (ibid). However, the teachers are tasked with ensuring social integration and cultural integration- teaching them the cultural norms, values, and ethics of the society.

The teachers are key factors when it comes to integration within schools, most schools have their integration scheme written out, but these integration schemes focus on the overall and not the individuals. In a multicultural society like Sweden, the teachers have a huge role to play, the teacher's role is to integrate them within classrooms, mingle them with natives' kids and as well as to teach (Solano, 2017).

3.24 Individuals and families

On the Micro level, the integration of individuals and their family encompasses social, cultural, and economic integration. To ensure that the newly arrived immigrants develop under safe and healthy conditions, the local social committee ensures the provision of basic amenities (Migrationsverket, 2020). They offer financial assistance, care and services to individuals and their families.

3.3 Previous research: Employment and Education:

There are quite a few quality types of research available on this subject but while most of the research shows the same or similar results, Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö (2019) showed a different perspective in their study regarding this subject. They conducted a study on unaccompanied minors in the Swedish education system and the labour market in Stockholm. Just like other previous research and statistics such as SCB (2017), their

results affirmed that unaccompanied minors in Sweden have problems in completing secondary school (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2019).

According to Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö (2019), one of the major causes for this high rate of dropout is the socio-economic problem among this group. It was shown that some of these minors turned youths (mostly men) between the age (19-25) work and study at the same time. Since they are over 18, most of the men decide to combine work and studies to reduce the economic problem and to be prepared for the market world. Nevertheless, they end up dropping academics for their work. The findings suggested that interventions used within the Swedish education system are useful in helping unaccompanied youths integrate well and in the long run help them secure a good job. Nevertheless, it was highlighted that this is not the reality as some of these youths do not even complete the 3 years of secondary education (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2019).

3.4 Previous research: Migration policy:

Another influencing factor shown regarding unaccompanied youths and education is the long waiting process at the migration, this was also said to be a major influence on their academic dropout. During their waiting process, they are made to go through different supplementary education without often considering their previous academic level. Moreover, after a long wait, some of them have grown older in age, therefore they consider going into the labor market instead (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2019).

3.5 Previous research: Mental Wellbeing and Integration:

Another study was conducted by Björkenstam et, al. (2020) among young (19-25) refugees in Sweden to find out the risk of CMD (Common mental disorder) in comparison with the Swedish born youths. The results showed that the refugee youths have a lower risk of being treated for CMD- anxiety or depressive disorder compared to the Swedish-born youths. However, the refugee youths in Sweden have a greater risk for severe stress and adjustment disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the refugee youths have 8 fold risk of PTSD compared to Swedish youth (Björkenstam et, al., 2020). The study also investigated the role of education and residency duration which according to the results it was shown that the longer the youths stay in Sweden the lower the rate of PTSD becomes. It was also shown that the young refugees have a lower educational level, and unemployment was more common among them which affects their wellbeing (Björkenstam et, al., 2020). Furthermore, the study showed that a low level of education is a factor for CMD, that both the Swedish and refugee youths who had low education had a higher risk for all forms of CMD (Björkenstam et, al., 2020).

The experienced trauma combined with the long waiting process often causes uncertainty about the future. It has a major effect on their everyday life, influences their wellbeing and the ability to cope with issues (Ibid). These factors do not only affect their education-academic performances and health, it also influences their social integration (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2019).

Chapter 4- Methodology

4.1 Research design

This study is based on the perspective of individuals working every day with unaccompanied minors and youths in different schools. The research method used for this study is the qualitative method as we find it to be the most suitable method that for this study since the aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of the chosen topic. This method helps one to be flexible during the research process, we could edit our aim and research questions as interviews were going on while data were gathered (Rubin & Barbie. 2010). According to Rubin & Barbie (2010), qualitative methods are good for describing, interpreting, and gaining in-depth insight into specific concepts.

Our data were collected through four semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and a written answer. Semi-structured interview reduces the risk of error in our study, for instance, when the respondent does not understand a question, the authors were able to clarify such questions (Rubin and Barbie, 2010). It also gave us the advantage to get a deeper understanding and answers from our respondents (Rubin and Barbie, 2010).

4.2 Sampling Method

Based on our intention of gathering as much and genuine data as possible regarding newly arrived immigrant students in school, we instinctively thought that the school teachers would give us the desired data as long as they are working and involved with the academic integration of the unaccompanied youth in Sweden. We managed to get four teachers

from different schools and a school counsellor. We used a snowballing sampling method to get participants for our study, for example, after calling and sending several mails, a teacher answered a mail and gave valuable tips in the form of another teacher then the other participant gave us tips for another willing participant. However, our selection criteria remained strictly qualified schoolteachers with a desire to participate in our interviews.

4.3 Interview process

Our sampling targeted five participants as follows: four teachers and a counsellor, the basic criteria was they should be qualified and legitimated working in a school. Therefore, our final participants consist of two teachers from Jämtland County. One teacher from Gävleborg County, one from Västragötaland County and finally the counsellor is from Gävleborg county. Due to the corona pandemic crisis, we could not conduct our planned interview on the eye to eye fashion, instead, we had to conduct interviews through video conferencing method as a precaution. However, this gave us the opportunity to interview teachers from other counties.

Our interviews lasted the duration of 45 mins-1hr and they were audio-recorded using the zoom and skype app and stored through mobile phones with consent. One of the participants answered the questions in written form and sent it to us through mail address. Out of the interview, we retrieved our desired data where we could identify themes that we are going to discuss profoundly under the result and analysis section:

4.4 Data transcription

The interviews were conducted and recorded through zoom and skype app, in addition to that, notes were taken throughout the whole interview. The interviews were conducted in a way that one of the researchers conducted the interviews while the other took notes. This made it easier for us to concentrate fully on the participants. After each interview was completed, the interviews were transcribed manually as soon as possible by listening to the recording and typing it to the letter then they were stored on a separate word document. After the completion of the transcription, the information generated was compared with the notes taken during the interviews. The participant's name was represented with code during the transcription to ensure their privacy, no participant's name workplace was mentioned (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

4.5 Data Analysis

After transcribing the interviews, the analysis process started immediately after. The authors while transcribing the interviews individually already noticed recurring patterns, these recurring patterns were coded classified into themes. The form of analysis used was thematic analysis, thematic analysis is a process of finding patterns and themes within a qualitative data (Patton, 2015). Thematic analysis helps identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

After the recurring patterns in data were identified and codified, the authors sought for themes from the codes, the themes generated were later reviewed and defined. The authors found similarities and differences in the participant's answers, the data were read repeatedly so the authors could become familiar with the text and to ensure that the findings were accurate. After these, the findings were classified into different units that were considered relevant and meaningful in relations to the research questions and aim. During the process of coding, classifying, and making themes, the authors constantly referred to the previous research and the research question so that the themes would be in line with them. The authors found some information that was not relevant for the study, however this information was kept as a reference in case needed for future study.

The analysis was done in such a way that both authors used the same thematic analysis model to analyze the data separately, then they met to compare the findings. The themes the authors considered relevant were similar so they there was not a need for lots of changes

4.6 Limitations of the study

With the Coronavirus crisis outbreak, the authors had to be flexible in the sampling method and the interview process for this study. Most people were not willing to participate due to the pandemic and some who were willing were not comfortable having an interview through an app. So, they requested that they have access to the interview questions beforehand, before deciding their participation. We adhered to their demands since there was no chance of getting more participants. In this sense, the authors fear that the results of the research might be affected in a way, because most of the answers gotten from the participant were premeditated answers. One of the participants answered the interview questions in written form, the participant was not willing to have an interview but rather chose to send the answers in written form. The authors used the data obtained

from this source but since there was no chance to go in-depth or come up with open-ended questions. To reduce biases when interpreting the text, the authors analyzed the written answers differently then came together to compare their results. The authors tried as much as possible not to read meaning into the written text, rather they were analyzed based on the context of the study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Additionally, the fact that the researchers in this study are bachelor students with little experience is a limitation. Due to one of the authors' limited working proficiency in Swedish, academic research published in the Swedish language was left out; only research literature published in English is used. Secondary sources from Sweden were used because they were available both in English and Swedish.

Another limitation of this study is the scope of the participants, four teachers and one counsellor participated in the study. Since the participants of the study are few, the results of the study cannot be generalized. Finally, the questions were asked in English. We felt language barriers in some of the informants as they could not express themselves freely. According to Ożańska & Ponikwia (2012), it is difficult to express oneself emotionally using a foreign language especially if one does not speak it, hear it, and read it daily. For this reason, the authors fear some significant pieces of information might have been missed.

4.7 Essay Credibility

4.7.1 Reliability

The reliability of this study is difficult to measure because the study is based on individual's interpretation, thoughts, and opinion (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Since the interviewee's answers are based on their thoughts and view on the current situations, the reliability of this study can be questioned. The limitation is that the participants' thoughts and views can be inconsistent from time to time. For example, if the same interviewees are to be interviewed in two years or a few months, their answers would probably change. The study reliability can be affected because the interviewees' answers could have been influenced by their matters, bias, and feelings at their moment of answering or premeditated thoughts since they had access to the interview questions beforehand.

To improve the reliability of the study, the interview questions were structured and edited for each participant based on the feedback we got and based on our observations from every interview conducted with participants. The consistency of the study might be valid

since the two researchers were involved in the interviews, transcription and analysing of the findings (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Also, there was constant cross-checking with each other during the transcription and analyses which improved the consistency of the research finding and reduced bias in our interpretations and results presentation.

4.72 Validity

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) discuss validity as strength, truth, and correctness of a statement. Validity checks if a method investigates what it proposed to investigate. It is a verification process necessary for each stage of the research with constant checking on the plausibility of the research steps and the findings (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

Validity can be hard to prove for this study since the only tool used were the authors. Due to the author's lack of experience the validity of this study can be scrutinized (Patton, 2015). The authors are aware that the answers gotten from the participants were premeditated thoughts since they had access to the interview questions before the interviews were conducted. However, the feedback gotten from the participants showed it helped them to prepare and give accurate answers to the questions which can improve the validity of our data. Nonetheless, at the end of every interview we summarized what had been said; to confirm that the participants' answers were clearly understood. It was an added advantage that the participants were able to speak in detail and to speak freely. All interviews were conducted in English with no translator used, however since English was not their first language the validity can be limited.

Furthermore, to reduce biases, the authors ensured that the process and findings were reflexed on constantly (Robson 2007). The interviews were recorded through the apps and stored on our phone and we plan to perform the analysis separately then compare our interpretation of the findings.

4.73 Generalization

Our basic aim is not generalizing but to give a true contextualized understanding from the respondent's perspective. As stated by (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015, p. 261) there is a uniqueness in every individual, situation, or phenomenon, hence the prospect of generalizing this study is small due to the small number of participants. Only 4 qualitative interviews were made, and one participant answered in the text, so the results can only show patterns consistent based on the participants' perception or understanding of this topic. Even though this study cannot be generalized it is relevant to consider the importance of the knowledge gathered and how it can contribute to social works intervention plan when working in a similar situation

4.8 Ethical Consideration

As a researcher, it is one's responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines required for a research study and to ensure that they are adhered to throughout the study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). Therefore, in adherence to one of the ethical guidelines, the participants in this study were informed about the study beforehand including the purpose and use of their information (Grinnell, 2001). They were as well informed that this is research conducted by students from the University of Gavle, Sweden and that it is only for educational purposes. It was known to the participants that their participation is voluntary and that they could withdraw any time (Grinnell, 2001). They were assured anonymity and confidentiality- that is their names and the names of the schools they work in would not be disclosed and that the data gathered would be destroyed at the end of the study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015).

It was noted that the awareness of that helped the participants to be more open and was able to give critical comments during the interviews based on their opinions. Also, informed consent was sent to all participants before they agreed to participate in the study. Informed consent is important for research as it benefits both the authors and the interviewee (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). Sending out informed consent before the interviews helped not to cause misunderstanding which could affect the study's credibility. The informed consent was in English, it contains the aim, purpose of the study and their rights as the participants. A sample can be found in the appendix. Additionally, the participants had access to some of the interview questions before the interview date and at the beginning of all interviews, the authors asked for permission for the interviews to be recorded and notes were taken.

Whatever recording or data collected were carefully kept and stored, it was ensured that none was lost. The collected data has therefore been only shared between the authors and the supervisor. References were done regarding any other research work or source used in this study using the APA referencing guide and it was ensured that questions that could create confusion during the interviews were not asked (Robson, 2007). Ethical consideration according to Robson (2007) regarding interviews translations were observed. Each word was carefully reflected on to ensure that the participants' intent was not lost in translation. During the analysis, both researchers of this study participated in it to reduce biases.

Chapter 5- Result and Analysis

There are lots of important factors to discuss when it comes to the integration of newly arrived children/youths into schools in Sweden. Through interviewing four teachers and a school counsellor who has years of experience working with newly arrived immigrants in schools, a pattern emerged as well as different opinions. Using ecological system theory as a framework, our findings are separated into three themes which are individual integration (Microsystem), school as the home of integration (exosystem) and societal level (macrosystem). Individual integration talks about factors within the microsystem that affects integration into schools among newly arrived students while school as the home of integration deals with factors within the school that influences their integration and lastly the societal level talks about policies and culture.

The system theory helps to better understand the perception of the staff (teachers and social workers) regarding underlying factors such as governmental policies, family, culture, social relationships etc. that influences integration into schools.

Results

5.1 Theme 1: Individual Integration

According to Parrish (2010), an individual is at the micro-level. The microsystem in the ecological system theory is the direct environment of an individual i.e. classmates, family etc. (Parrish, 2010). At the micro-level, the individual relationship and development are influenced by different factors. Härkönen, (2001) points out how the pattern of activities and interpersonal relation affect an individual in the microsystem level i.e. A good example is a child might be influenced by the behaviour and beliefs from the parents and the child can in return influence the parents' beliefs and behaviour (Ibid).

The subject of integration on the individual level is different per person, how well an individual integrates depends on the circumstances surrounding the individual. Therefore, we will examine how the participants interpret the factors that influence individual integration in schools.

5.11 Past experience

One of the consistent responses gotten from the participants is that among many other things, experience often determine how fast or how slow an individual integration into school is. It was said that integration into schools can depend on how traumatic their previous experiences are, some kids migrated to Sweden swiftly with no traumatic

experience while some have seen killings, wars etc. These experiences make them emotionally different compared to their Swedish peers. They are a lot older emotionally and their expectations or view of life is different, a teacher said

“most of them are older, in the sense that they have to deal with adult-like issues. Just moving to another country is traumatic”. Another teacher said

“many have had to grow up too fast, due to their life experience, seeing people hurt, dying, the adult world became a place where they could not trust people or the government or people in their family.”

Within the context of ecological systems theory, their previous experiences and how they got to Sweden (Chronosystem) has a lot to say on their integration process academically and socially. Some of the students could not feel secure or trust due to the influence of trauma, from the counsellor’s perspective, it was shown that sometimes they are not open, nor do they trust the teachers and counsellors working with them in schools. The chronosystem (life events, past experiences) was said to influence their interaction within schools and friends, as some of them do not pay attention in classes due to worrying, anxiety especially those with families left abroad.

Other participants pointed out that although not all the newly arrived students they have worked with have experienced wars, killings etc. but they have seen poverty, injustices, they have experienced sadness in different ways. The fact that most of these must leave their country to reside in another makes them emotionally mature, they left their language, climate, friends etc. The participants also mentioned that Individuals have had to overcome their past experiences by their motivation, and their duration period in Sweden helps them overcome and adjust, how long they have been in Sweden helps them overcome their trauma and experiences.

Past experiences are part of the makeup of an individual's environment. However, Social connection and relationships is an important key for integration, from the ecological system perspective (Härkönen, 2001).

5.12 Social Connection

In our study, we discovered that the participants emphasized that the newly arrived children/youth who integrated successfully socially, educationally well, were often those who came at a younger age and those who had external social connections with Swedish friends.

The students who come at a younger age get integrated better and faster because they easily have social connections. According to a participant, the social connection is “*a support system they need and a support system that they don't have*”.

The participants considered this to be a positive factor and some of the participants interviewed have tried to incorporate this into their methods of working however, it has not been productive. The ecological systems theory perspective outlines the possibility that the impact of the experience, educational background etc. can be minimal if a healthy relationship in the microsystem is present because that is mostly where they spend their time (Parrish, 2010).

According to a teacher getting Swedish people to be part of the microsystem is important for socially integrating them

“it is not easy to get Swedish people to become part of a young person support system. Also, when anything is happening, I try to show them, for example, a theatre company is looking for people, why don't you go there or like the choir is singing why don't you join etc.”

Other participants confirmed that the students who have connections outside school are more likely to develop faster. The social connections could be built through engaging in external activities e.g. playing football, music, theatre etc. How often they meet Swedish people often determine how their integration is, they get to learn Swedish faster, they understand how the society and the system works. Bronfenbrenner explained that healthy contact in an individual's environment is necessary for development. The relationship in the microsystem of an individual has a huge impact on their development (Daniel et.al, 2011). Härkönen, (2001) also argued that although the nature of relationship in the microsystem is bi-directional, meaning the child is influenced and influences his/her immediate environment such as home, peers, school. An individual is still mostly influenced by the social connections in the micro system (ibid).

An advantage when it comes to microsystems is that, if these newly arrived immigrants have people around them willing to help, it can be a positive factor for their development since relationships play an important role in an individual's life. Relationships can provide support and security.

5.13 Family

“I also want to add that the students who succeed at integrating are the ones who got a Swedish family when they got here”.

From the data gotten from our participants, the family is an important factor in the lives of the newly arrived students. The family is part of an individual's microsystem; however, the family can be a hindrance or boost to their integration. The students with a stable family get to integrate steadily and get to experience less trauma or show any symptom of it. For some students, their family might be a pulling factor

"The ones that come with their family have a much harder time to get integrated, but they experience less trauma"

This is so because the students get concerned if their family is not integrating, they are worried about their family, therefore do not participate well in class or spend much time with friends. The ecological system perspective clarifies that the family as a subsystem can be a positive influence and at the same time a negative influence (Härkönen, 2001). The newly arrived students are sometimes torn between their families (microsystem) and the culture of the society (macrosystems), this conflict in the system causes a slow integration for the students. Most of the participants in our study affirmed that those newly arrived students who are unaccompanied, who get placed in Swedish homes get to integrate faster than those placed in group homes.

The ones placed in a foster family have been seen to always integrate well more often than students placed in group homes or those who come directly with their family. However, a sense of family is important to the students, *"it is empty without family"*, it might not be their immediate family, but it is easier when they have someone they can trust. Most of the students have the need to feel loved beyond their experiences, pressure etc.

The ecological system theory gives us the knowledge that although the family might be the closest system to an individual, it does not necessarily guarantee that it is the safest place for their development. A family setting that provides safety, love and security helps individuals to develop healthily (Härkönen, 2001).

5.14 Educational background

Another consistent factor the participants emphasized is the fact that previous education plays a huge role in the integration of students into schools. A participant quoted

"Of course, you have before they get to Sweden whether they have school experience, some of my boys have come directly from war-torn countries and have had no schooling whatsoever and can barely read and write."

Though there is a bit of inconsistency on how the participants perceived this to affect the integration of students. Some participants mentioned that students who have poor

educational backgrounds often struggle in school. They often get stuck in a class and end up dropping out due to discouragement and a sense that they cannot cope.

The participants claim that a lot of time is spent on students who have little or no previous education to integrate them academically, the school holds extra classes for them sometimes. Other participants pointed out the need of having to retrain even the students with previous education when they get to the Swedish schools, some of them have learnt differently from the Swedish style. The participants mentioned that the students with previous education also often struggle in school because of the different teaching style. It sometimes takes the older student a long time to adapt to the new teaching style *“some of the students feel they have learnt nothing because I didn’t get them notes to write or because I took them out to learn practical”*.

When working to integrate these students, the participants mentioned that the educational background is a factor that often slows down their academic developmental process.

5.15 Mental health

The mental health of the students was a consistent thing the participants mentioned. All participants mentioned that the state of their mental health tells on their motivation and willingness to participate. For those without a permit, one of the major things that affect their mental health is the uncertainty about their stay.

“The fact that they do not know the outcome from the migration board is a difficult situation, even worst they do not have any adult or guardian to talk to. It is difficult to encourage them to study when they do not know the fate of their future”.

Another Participant added; *“I can see sometimes they are in the classroom physically but I notice they are thinking of some other things, I understand it is difficult to come to school and do stuff if one has not slept well and it is too bad that they do not have a responsible adult at hand where they can meet and talk to”*.

The participants expressed their concerns on the health of the children and youth. A person with depression experiences sleep deprivation and mood disorders, simple daily routine tasks such as classes, working can be difficult to maintain. As a result, the person struggles, and it might come to a point of failure or hopelessness. In the situation of the newly arrived immigrant student where there is no hope of achieving security for the future, the participants think that the students may have a sense of life being disastrous, pointless, or meaningless, even the future feels like an unbearable bleak prospect.

5.2 Theme 2: School as a home of integration

The school is considered as a home of integration since the newly arrived students spend lots of hours in school. Within the school, there are important factors to consider according to the data obtained from our participants. The school is an important part of the student's microsystem, it serves as the primary platform for integration work both socially, culturally, and academically (Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden, 2009). However, there are interactions on the meso level (parent-teacher relationship) and exolevel (school system) that influences the integration of these students. Subjects underneath this theme are.

5.21 Teacher's role

The participants mentioned how the school's primary way of integrating the newly arrived students into schools is through the teachers. One of the teacher's primary roles is to teach the students. Apart from studies, the teachers are to teach them normative behaviours and cultural values in Sweden. The teachers as a function of school are responsible for the integration work with these students (Solano, 2017). A teacher said,

"A role of the teachers is to try to create opportunities to share from a human level among the students, like what type of music do you like? What is your favourite sports team? Not all the differences but the thing that brings people together".

The participants mentioned that they have the flexibility of using the strategy they deem fit. That is, the teachers do not have a common strategy in working with these students, some teachers engage them in extracurricular activities like skiing, sport etc. while Some get them to join other groups outside school since they feel the school hours are not enough to work with them. The methods can be impactful because the ecological system theory shows that building external connections can be an important key in development. Nevertheless, the teachers mentioned that the quality of the teacher determines how impactful their role is. A participant emphasized this by saying this: *"depending on the teacher, their influence can be of help or hindrance"*. Although all the teachers interviewed are educated and qualified, only one of them had a special course on how to work with immigrant students. It was mentioned that getting a special course on working with immigrant children is not important for teachers although few do.

Additionally, the relationship between the students and their teacher is often disrupted by their cultural values (Solano, 2017), the participants mentioned that lots of these kids have

respect for their teachers and due to the difference in their previous schooling experience, they do not have the boldness to speak when they don't understand a subject or freely ask question

One of the inconsistent information we got was when the participants mentioned that the teacher's style is important, A participant mentioned *"Another method is that many immigrant students demand a stricter teacher style"* another participant mentioned, *"well I understand it is hard on them so I give them some slack"*. Three of the teachers emphasized that the teacher's style is important but how that plays out depends on each teacher's method. In addition, it was mentioned that the teacher's role in integrating these students is limited since there are about i.e. 24 other students who need their help. There is not enough time to work with each student independently as much as some would have preferred.

5.22 School system

Although the teachers are mainly responsible for integration work in schools. All participants complained about the limitations they face in their work of integration based on the school system. A teacher said.

"A big problem is an experience I have in schools; we don't integrate them anymore".

The school system (exosystem) is said to be a determinant factor that influences the students. For instance, the Swedish language is the key to getting integrated quickly, and this is the responsibility of the school (Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden, 2009). However, the school system has made most of the newly arrived students stuck in the language introduction program, which is not helpful for their integration, but they need it to get on the national program.

The participants talked about how they think the pressure from the school is much for the students, majority of the students get discouraged and end up dropping out due to the longer time it takes to complete the introductory program. The school method was described wrong and unhelpful for these students compared to how it was in the earlier years when there was a *"preparation class- förberedelseklasser"* in most schools.

In addition, the school also serves as a mesosystem for the students, part of the school role is to involve the parents or guardians of these students. A participant mentioned that the school is not doing well in involving their guardian, the participant believes that the

connection between the school and the student's guardian can be a positive factor in academic integration.

5.23 Class integration

From the interviews, it became clear that most of the students are put in a separate class, some are stuck in the language introductory program. As described by the participants, the language introductory program is meant for foreigners to improve their Swedish, however, they do not get the chance to mingle with Swedish kids when in this introductory program. The students are sometimes put in a separate building different from the Swedish students.

“There is a common problem in many schools where they separate immigrants from Swedish pupil”

The participants said this has a huge role to play in their integration process. When it comes to school, having the same newly arrived students placed in the same class is not considered healthy for their development since they all need to be integrated. To enhance safe development, the participants believe that having the students placed in the same class as the Swedish students help them integrate faster. The best way for the immigrant children and youth to integrate fast socially is to constantly with their peers who are indigenes (Solano, 2017). Moreover, since these students spend a lot of time at school, it is important and helpful for them to get in touch with Swedish students as soon as possible for better integration.

Furthermore, students who come at a younger age and get to be in the same class with the Swedish students get to integrate faster because they get to learn the language faster, they learn correct pronunciation and get to interact often with Swedish students.

A participant mentioned that *“the best way for me is we need to be genuine and be in a normal Swedish class, being in a group of 25 students where none speak good Swedish”*. Which shows that from the professional's perspective, class integration is an important key.

5.3 Theme 3: Societal level

5.31 Migration Policy

In the societal level, the Swedish Migration Board is the authority responsible for the residence permit, citizenship, work permit or deportation, and for the asylum seekers, they offer accommodation and monetary support (Migrationsverket, 2020).

Most participants mentioned that the Swedish migration policy is an important factor that affects the newly arrived immigrants' integration. For the students granted a residence permit, the integration goes a bit smoother for them however, the migration policy has been a stress factor to some. One of the teachers indicated the stress some students go through. *“I honestly feel pity and understand how difficult it can be for a student to get into the gymnasium, they still need to get a permanent job to be able to stay in Sweden after they finish”*

It was also mentioned that some of the students become homeless because they are without a permit. The ones that are not granted a permanent residence are at the risk of deportation although they have the right to complete their secondary education. This increases their stress which affects their concentration and integration process. From the counsellor's perspective, it contributes greatly to their mental health

“As a social worker I see their mental health is not very stable, to be honest, to be integrated in Sweden society you have to be a happy and cheerful person.”

The uncertainty of their migration status for those who do not have a permit makes it so difficult to focus on schoolwork and often cause social exclusion. As the children grow older the situation becomes more difficult, as they turn 20, instead of joining the komvux some of them voluntarily drop out of school and enroll themselves at the employment agency. A participant sharing their experience said that the students often say *“I can always come back to study later, now I have to secure my place in the society”*

5.32 Culture

Language as part of a culture

All our participants agreed that learning the Swedish language is crucial if one wants to integrate and assimilate in society. The language is considered important to continue their studies into the national program, it is also important in getting a job hence the participants think it is a huge problem if they are not getting the language. Language is

considered part of the culture, since culture includes patterns that show thoughts, behaviors, communications, actions, customs, values (Solano, 2017).

The teachers mentioned how language interferes with their performance academically, the teachers expressed that it is more difficult for the children to learn the Swedish language since they are separated in a different class. In addition, a participant goes ahead and gives us a good example when he came to Sweden as a nine-year-old, he narrated that:

“I came to Sweden when I was 9 years old, it took me a year to learn Swedish and the pronunciation, I also learned how stuffs works and how to form and build sentences, I was surrounded only by Swedish children all the time, this is not the case today where immigrant children are kept in a class of around 25 children all talking different languages from all part of the world. Another teacher adds that.

“The immigrant student’s Swedish isn’t good enough to get into the gymnasium programs, so they get stuck which is a major setback in integration. They used to be part of a Swedish class, doing all sorts of activities but now they are stuck, and we are also in a separate building. We are not even in the main building of our school which is a huge setback”

To be culturally and socially integrated, the participants think the language is a must. Since, language is seen as a primary tool in cultural, social, and educational integration (Solano, 2017).

Cultural assimilation

The issue of cultural assimilation was mentioned to be an issue among the students, most participants mentioned that sometimes the students are torn between their own culture and the Swedish culture. *“The society views them from the lens of Swedish men or women but sometimes they are obligated to keep to their parents’ culture”* which often cause conflict.

The participants also mentioned how a lot of these students find it difficult in an independent system like the Swedish system, most of them come from cultures where they are told what to do, but now, they have to be independent. One of the teachers emphasized the importance of teaching them the cultural norms and that it is okay for them to be free with their teachers. Some stated that although everyone has the right to keep their culture, however, when it comes to the extra teacher who helps them with

subjects in their mother tongue in schools, the school should put more caution; first to the quality of the teachers; second to the fact that it could slow down their cultural integration.

Cultural assimilation was a problem that arose from the interviews, it is a major hindrance to cultural integration among the newly arrived immigrant children and youth since they are torn between two different culture (Solano, 2017). The individual cultural background was said to determine how their relationship with the teacher is. Most are respectful and cautious so they would not be free with their teachers, unlike the Swedish students. The fact that the immigrant children and youth must balance between their parents' culture and the Swedish culture is hard on them. However, the adjustment must be made for proper integration. The adjustment according to Solano (2017), would be proper if it is both ways; from the school, society and also from the immigrants and their families.

Chapter 6- Discussion

6.1 Brief summary of the results

This research studied how school professionals working with newly arrived immigrant children and youth experience how these students integrate into the school. In this study, the authors have focused mainly on the professionals' perspective on factors that affect the integration process and the strategy the school uses to ensure educational, cultural, and social integration. Our theoretical model has been the ecological systems theory which served as a framework for our analysis and helped classify our findings into different structures. The result showed that the teachers are the main agent of integration and that the school plays an important role in integrating the newly arrived immigrant student. However, it is important to acknowledge that the results interpreted are colored by the authors' background, the participants' background, and the variation in interpretation.

To summarize the main findings concerning the research questions, it was found that the schools do not have a core strategy used to ensure integration into school. The key

strategy used is the teachers. The teachers are solely responsible for the academic, social, and cultural integration of these students into schools. From our findings, the teachers are the core agent of integration in the schools. They can use their own methods and strategies when working with these students to get them integrated. However, they are restricted by the school system. The school was found to be the primary home for integration, but this is not often the case due to different factors. Some factors are individual while others are external i.e. teacher's role, policy etc.

There were criticisms from the professionals regarding the school system. The authors understood that the professionals were put in a dilemma where they were made to function in a system they believe is not working. The school system is built in such a way that most of the students get to be in a separate class of their own according to the participants. The authors understood this to be a concern that the students will not get integrated quickly in the school and might end up getting frustrated. In addition, the language introductory program consists of most kids from the same country, the participants believe that for a swift and steady integration of the newly arrived students, class integration is important.

Regarding the first research question about key factors that affect the newly arrived immigrants' integration into schools, what the authors found was that there are different factors within different systems that influence the integration process of these students. These factors could be both negative and positive. Having social connections and participating in outside school activities were important factors that positively affect the integration process of these students into schools. Those who have Swedish friends outside school, participate in sport, theatre etc. were said to integrate faster. Apart from the age of arrival, class integration was also said to be a determinant factor.

Individual's previous experience, educational background and family situation are other factors found that affect the integration process into schools. The students who came with their family were said to have experienced less trauma but have a hard time integrating due to concerns and pressures that emerge from their family. From the participants years of experience, the unaccompanied students were said to have experienced more traumatizing situations but those placed in a Swedish home tend to quickly recover and integrate faster than unaccompanied students placed in group homes or students who came with their family.

In addition, there are certain uncertainties that affect the motivation of these students. Due to the migration policy that some need to get a job in the long run so they could stay. The students are less motivated to integrate because they are uncertain about their future. This serves as motivation to some while it serves as a discouragement to some. The individual motivation was found to be a decisive factor on how the limitations affect them

The result shows that there is an overlapping in the different systems surrounding the newly arrived students. The authors noticed that at different levels, the impact of factors affecting integration is interconnected. Therefore, it is hard to say what is the root cause, the participants seem to think that issuing a permit and making the procedure easier will go a long way in making the integration process easier. The authors agree on this note, however, as social workers, it is important to note that the effect of other factors i.e. language, family etc. can be equally limiting. Issuing a permit might make things easier but it does not solve other issues. The connectivity seen between the factors affecting the integration of immigrant students makes it a bit complex for social work intervention. However, the interaction between the systems reveals that although micro social work is needed when working with these students, macro social work intervention is equally important.

6.2 Comparison to previous studies

When compared and discussed with the Previous studies. Like it has come up earlier in this study, the newly arrived immigrant students among other things are affected by the Swedish migration agency policy. This is in line with the study conducted by (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2019), their study showed that the long waiting process at the migration coupled with the supplementary education they have to go through kills the motivation of the students. The authors agree that the Swedish migration policy can be a hindrance to integration. One of the criticisms is that the agency responsible for making regulations seems to be double-faced. On one hand, the Swedish integration policy claims to focus on properly integrating immigrant students into schools regardless of the race, culture even those without a permit (Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden, 2009), but on the other hand, there is the uncertainty that comes from the migration agency regarding their permit. This uncertainty causes them to integrate slowly.

The same study conducted by Celikaksoy & Wadensjö (2019), also talked about employment and how that most unaccompanied immigrant students when they turn 18 tend to focus on employment to get their stay and fix their lives. This point of view also came up during our interviews, a lot of the newly arrived immigrants especially those unaccompanied tend to stop their education to get a job to fix their stay. Apparently, given the Swedish job market nature, it is much easier to get a job with an education, but these students out of pressure and uncertainty opt-out of schools to get a job which not all end up succeeding. The authors can only present this from a professional perspective since the study is based on the professional's point of view.

The study conducted by (Björkenstam et al., 2020) showed that the immigrant student has a higher risk of PTSD, however, there was no way to measure this in our study since we didn't have contact with the health sector. The participants mentioned that the teachers cannot say much about trauma or the effect of PTSD since that belongs to the health sector and the psychologist. The study by (Björkenstam et al., 2020) further discussed that there is a relationship between the mental wellbeing of these students and the integration outcome which is consistent with the findings of our research. The stress, the trauma, the uncertainty has a major effect on their everyday life. The participants mentioned how these students are not able to cope in class because they are worried or anxious about a family member abroad or their current situation. Björkenstam et al., 2020, showed that these factors do not only affect their education- academic performances and health, it also influences their social integration and cultural assimilation.

The authors agree to the point raised by Solano (2017), that the question of cultural assimilation is a major hindrance to cultural integration. Solano (2017) stated that making the immigrants accept the host culture could raise a question of identity. He argued that cultural integration should be a two-way act. This is confirmed by some of the answers obtained from the participants, the participants mentioned how that there are clashes between cultures among the immigrant children and youth in schools, they are torn between the society's expectations of them to be like the Swedish men or women and their families expectation of upholding the cultural beliefs. These conflicts cause slow integration.

In similarity with solano (2017), the result from this study shows that the teachers are the agent of integration in schools. However, our findings furthered showed that the teacher's role is influenced by other things such as the school system etc. The participants of this study similarly confirmed that the Swedish national integration policy in line with the

Ministry of Integration, and Gender Equality Sweden (2009), is actively used in schools but some factors hinder efficient integration.

6.3 Critical discussion of methodology

We planned our research carefully, the questions were skillfully written down beforehand, convenience sampling was to be carried, but we encountered some challenges. The ongoing corona pandemic crisis made our project very difficult that none of the participants contacted in the first place was willing to assist. After many struggles, one person answered our mail and gave tips of a person willing to help,

the person gave us another person whom we contacted and got positive answers, suddenly we got a snowball method going. Not all were willing to answer verbally as one of the participants chose to answer our research questions in written form, we could not go in-depth by posing more questions. Not all participants knew about Zoom video conferencing software, since some preferred skype some google class. Despite that, we met all the expectations and made our interview possible. All our participants work in a school environment with different levels of class but they commonly worked with immigrant or unaccompanied youth/Children, for that reason our research questions generated different data than expected, some of the participants mentioned about not having any idea if the immigrant children were unaccompanied or not. The participants' answers met our expectation regarding the ecological system theory used. For instance, the participants raised concerns on all level from microsystem where children need to have family or guardian to create a sense of security in child development, to macrosystem where they express their concern on Swedish political system. They believed the policies are sometimes used to make unfair decisions. A good example according to the participants is youth having to get a permanent job or start a business before granted a residence permit.

Both authors had chances to interview, however when one is interviewing the other noted down important points. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants, we remained unbiased and focused throughout the interviews and we could ask a more in-depth question to get more facts out of the participants, our transcription was done immediately after the interview to reduce uncertainty, which we then coded and created themes out of them, we believe these steps increase the credibility of our paper.

6.4 Critical discussion of theory

The authors chose to understand how school professionals working with newly arrived immigrant children and youth experience how these students integrate into the school using Ecological systems theory. The ecological theory is helpful as it creates a framework throughout the research. However, the ecological systems theory has its limitations and boundaries. A setback is that the ecological systems theory can make us narrow-minded. The ecological system theory assumes that all systems are the same and interdependent (Siporin, 1980). It focuses less on the subjective experience and motivation of the individual. Another limitation is that we had to force our findings into different systems. Also, the systems theory is specific as it just considers the interaction between an individual and its environment (Siporin, 1980). Although it takes into consideration different systems that affect a whole, the authors think there is a lack of depth that comes with using the theory. The theory can make the data complicated than it really is.

Overall, the systems theory allows seeing things at a broader view, it assumes that intervention in a system automatically affects other system but as we saw from our findings intervention on a system does not automatically affect other systems.

6.5 Suggestion for future research

The study is only based on the perspective of five professionals who has years of experience working with the newly arrived immigrant student. The authors saw from the findings that the data gotten are one-sided as the participants could only tell what they perceive and give suggestions based on that. The authors think it would have been more holistic to get the perspective of the newly arrived immigrant students. Therefore, we would suggest future research in this manner. Many of the interviewees stated that they could only speak based on their perception and interpretation. To get more holistic information, the newly arrived immigrants' youth could be interviewed.

Another suggestion is to interview professionals at the migration agency, many of the participants made it clear that they have little or no idea when it comes to the way the migration agency works or the criteria's the migration agency uses to make a decision. Hence, since the migration agency came out all through the interviews, the authors think it would be worthwhile to involve professionals from the migration agency in similar research. This would be helpful to understand things from the macro-level (The legal system).

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Appendices

Interview guide and Informed consent

Consent form

Topic: School integration of newly arrived immigrant children and youth

We were inspired to do this project because we came across some articles regarding the integration process of newly arrived immigrant youth into schools, hence we thought it would be interesting to conduct a recent study on this topic. We want to explore this topic through the lens of counsellors and teachers in private/public schools.

The aim of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding on how individuals working every day with the newly arrived immigrant children and youths experience integration in schools. We are students from the university of Gävle, and this is our bachelor's thesis, As a participant in this research,

1. It is completely voluntary to participate in, and at any time can you withdraw from the interview or decline to answer a question for any reason.
2. Students from the University of Gävle will be conducting this interview. For research purposes, it is advised to record the interview however with your consent.
3. Names of the school and participants are completely secured and will not be used in the research due to ethical reasons.
4. The thesis will be published but personal information such as name of the participants, name of the schools interviewed will be kept anonymous and confidential.
5. All materials from participants will be retained in a secured arrangement with no access to unauthorised individual until the exam board confirms the results of our dissertation, furthermore the materials will be terminated once we are through with the dissertation.
6. I have read and understood the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Signature

Questions

Interview questions

What are your roles in school?

What is your background as a teacher or a counsellor?

How long have you been working in schools?

Can you tell us a bit about your experience of working with unaccompanied youth?

Do you have any special training required to work with these youths? What?

Can you describe what you do/did with them?

How would you describe the newly arrived in integration process into schools?

How would you describe the role of the school when it comes to helping unaccompanied youths integrate into schools?

How do you help them integrate socially into schools?

What methods and strategies do you use for the integration process?

What are the major factors that influence their integration process?

What are the major challenges you and the school face when trying to work with these youths in schools?

How do you handle these challenges?

How would you describe the actions taken by the school regarding a high number of unaccompanied youths not completing their education?

Students conducting the interview

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