



A Study on Local Employment of International Graduates in Sweden

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Abstract

This paper aims at studying on the local employment of international graduates in Sweden. By conducting interviews, the relevant factors might influence international graduates finding a job in Swede is concluded. In general, this paper focused mainly on employability of international graduates, specific in achieving employment in the host country. To some extent, it could provide some useful information to the policy-makers to consider how to improve international graduates' employability but also provide some tips for those who are intending to study abroad.

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Foreword

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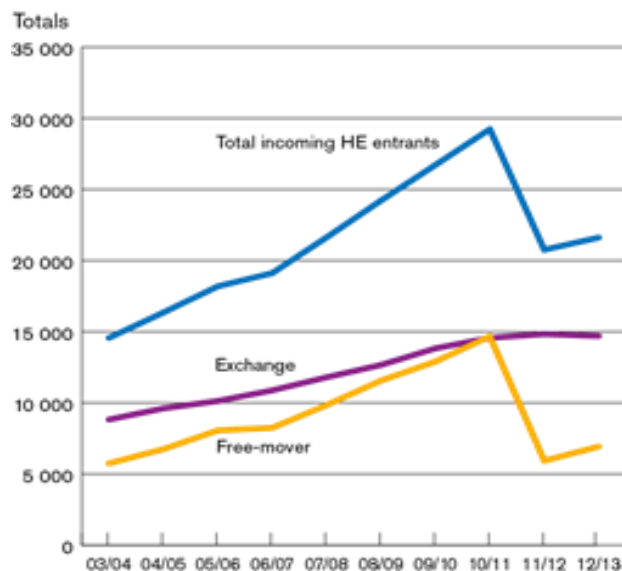
Finally, I would like to show my highest respect to Jiaxian Deng. He is an outstanding nuclear physics expert in China and contributed his life to China rise. Without him and his colleagues, China would hardly have a safe environment to develop the economy. He is my role-models; I chose to continue studying after finishing undergraduate degree just because I want to be a similar person like him. Seldom Chinese youth can remember him nowadays, but I want to say that there is still someone who is following his steps. I know this is not a good research thesis, but I still want to present it to him as usual.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Sweden faces international student crash since they introduced tuition fee to non-EU/EEA students. "The result was a fall of 79% in newly enrolled non-EU students for the start of the 2011-12 academic year – a drop from 7,600 to just 1,600, according to the Higher Education in Sweden – 2013 status report, published by the Swedish Higher Education Authority" (Mitchell, 2013). As the updated data from 2014 showed (Figure 1) , the number of enrolled international students is still not increasing in 2012/2013 academic year.

Figure 1 The Incoming HE entrants during the academic years 2003/04—2012/13 both in total and divided between free-movers and exchange students.



(Source: Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2014)

The factors that influence a student to choose his/her destination to get education might be various. There is certain argument states that free tuition that was the "signboard" for Nordic countries to attract the international students, especially those who are from non-EU/EEA regions (Cai & Shumilova, 2012). Based on the statistic from Swedish higher

education authority, it is clear that the tuition fee brought huge shocks that hit the international enrollment of Swedish higher education.

Some previous studies stated that influential factors in terms of college choice or studying choice are diverse. The previous studies had developed some perspectives aiming at studying the college choice, including “push-pull” factors (Mazzarol & N. Soutar, 2002) and the college choice models (Lee & Chatfield, n.d.). In Chen (2007)'s study on factors influencing international students to choose their studying destination, future career was categorized as a push factor while the immigration possibility listed in the category of pull factors

With the increasing concerns of attracting international graduates, Swedish government begins to aware of the importance of the employability of international graduates. Since last year on, Swedish government launched a post-study residence permit to the non-EU/EEA students. According to the information updated on the homepage of Swedish migration board (Migrationsverket, 2015) updated on their website, non-EU/EEA graduates are permitted to extend their post-graduation stay to half a year. During this period, the international graduates from non-EU/EEA countries could find a job or start their own business in Sweden (Migrationsverket, 2015). Without the doubt, this new policy is a considerable way to recover the attraction of Swedish higher education institutions to non-EU/EEA students (Bennet, Johansson, et.al, 2015). However, the employability at a state level is not only concerns a post-study residence permit. There are other countries, such as Denmark, German, and Netherland, providing the same policies to keep their international student markets. The results of the policy are not in similar kind. The previous studies aiming at the Nordic labor market for international students is rare, let alone a study that focus on finding out the relations between international graduates and local labor market in a certain country. To this extent, the study of employability of international graduates in Sweden is necessary.

Besides, employability, which interprets the value that education could produce, is becoming a hot research topic now. Employability is quite an inclusive and abroad term. In general, it is a term discussing the issues concerning objective and subjects indicators of the professional success (Shumilova, Cai &Pekkola, 2014). Besides, the

international graduates invest huge budget on education in the host countries; they are sure will care much about how much they will get back after graduation. Employment is an important indicator to measure the investment on human capital. Thus, studying employability is always an important part of the management of higher education.

In addition, there is concern significance the study with respect to employability. When the host countries invest a huge amount of budget on the high-quality international training and educations (in some country is even free), they are not intend to train the elites for other countries voluntarily. Besides, as the Bologna process is keeping developing, the mobility of students and labors among the EU countries strengthen. Thus, how to keep the elite students staying and contributing to Europe Union is another incentive regarding the study of international graduates. Sweden, where used to have most strict post-study Visa policy in Europe, faces the stress of keeping well-trained international labors for both Sweden and other European countries (Smith, 2014).

Based on this background, a study on the Swedish labor market to the international graduates is necessary. As some previous study shows, the Nordic country, such as Finland, has more difficulties in keeping the elites staying after graduation. The language barrier, the lack of training during the study, the isolation from the local information and even the size of labor market all can possibly influence the result of international graduates to be employed in Finland (Shumilova, Cai &Pekkola, 2014).

1.2 Research Gap

In recent year, the study on relations between employability and higher education is becoming a hot research direction. Truly, employability is not only an indicator to testify the quality of a higher education system, but also an important channel to complement the international and elite labors from other countries (Toma & Ianole, 2008). The countries, such as USA, UK, and Australia, which are famous host countries for non-EU/EEA students, all emphasize the trace of the international graduates. For instance, the Bureau of the Labor in the UK released their project on tracing the employability of international graduates (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011). Australia scholars had shifted their eyes on international employability in order to test their higher education quality (Blackmore, et.al., n.d.).

One of the Nordic countries, Finland, had organized a project from 2011-2012 under VALOA-Project to study on the employability of international students graduate from Finland. The studying emphasis both focus on student employment inside and outside Finland (Shumilova, Cai &Pekkola, n.d.). This project is a kind of prediction on the future of Finland higher education market, as Finland is going to be the third country to start charging tuition to non-EU/EEA students. A study on the relation between employability and studying abroad in this certain country will help to predict the possible consequences of the tuition fee policy.

However, even Sweden faces the huge non-EU/EEA student crash, and the government is trying to recover the international enrollment; there are seldom studies on the employability of international students educated in Sweden. The policies and the other higher education perspectives might finally lead the attempts to attract more non-EU/EEA students by a post-study resident permit not very satisfied. Thus, I believe that this paper will fill in the research gap on the specific study on the employability of international students educated in Sweden.

1.3 Research Purpose

The main purpose of this paper is discussing the factors that influence the international graduates to transit from host education to host workplace. In addition, as Sweden launched post-work residence permit as a tool to recover their international education market. To make the research deeper, I will further focus on how the condition of the Swedish international labor market is and what makes the Swedish international labor market differs.

1.4 Research Questions

This paper is going to test three hypotheses; these three hypotheses are going to answer the following research:

What are factors that influence international graduates to get access to the local labor market in Sweden?

1.5 The Overview

This paper includes following parts: First, literature review part will introduce relevant previous studies regarding the employability and international graduates. Based on these studies, the hypotheses to solve the research questions will be created. Second, the theory framework is the next important sections. In this part, the theory that will used to guide both the survey and the analysis will be introduced. Third, as an important component of a research paper, the introduction of the methodology is extremely significant. In this chapter, what kind of data is collecting and how to collect data will be introduced. Besides, the instrument of collecting data and the description of the participants will all include. In the following chapter, the data and the results finding from the data will be introduced. Moreover, in the final part, the conclusion and discussion will be developed according to the analysis of the data.

In general, the entire paper will follow the format of a standard master thesis. It will show every step by finding the answers to the research question by testing certain hypotheses and discussing the research proposal clearly.

1.6 The Limitations

The limitation of this paper is mainly on the previous study and the data collection. The track of the international graduates for long-term is always a big challenge for those who are doing research on the employability of international graduates. As the alumni system of different colleges is various, also, the registration is not obliged for the graduates, to ensure the size of the sample is quite tricky.

Second, due to the time limitation, there is no quantitative research conducted during the process of the research. Thus, there is a lack of generalized data to support the argument.

Besides, the previous studies on local employment in a specific country are too diversified to collect. The concentrated studies on the countries with a similar kind of higher education system are rare; it brings difficulties to conduct the literature review. The literature review is quite important, which not only provide the useful information but also could test the feasibility of the research at the beginning stage. Even there is

enough information in the literature review in the end; it is still a pity that the tracks of international graduates in Sweden were still not as large as other sophisticated research projects.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Internationalization and Globalization

The study on the international graduates concerns one important research topic, student mobility, which is a component of forms of internationalization of higher education. In order to further discuss the relevant previous study, a clear view of internationalization and globalization could help us to better understand the importance of studying the employability of the local graduates.

It is likely that people feels difficult to tell the clear differences between internationalization and globalization, people know they are two different items, but does not know in which form. The previous studies on internationalization and globalization of higher education concluded the definition of the two terms. Globalization refers to the reality made by “an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology (ICT), the emergence of an international knowledge network, the role of the English language, and other forces beyond the control of academic institutions” (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009, p7; Altbach& Knight, 2007). Internationalization is defined as various efforts (in forms of policies or administration) of the different governments and higher education institutions to integrate in the trends of globalization (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009; Knight, 2004).

Many policies concerning the internationalization and globalization include the attraction of the international students. One of the reactions on this inclination is the economic reason. Altbach (2006) and his colleagues indicated in their studies that, the economic competition and knowledge society are likely a result of globalization and internationalization. The increasing economic competition requested the higher education institutions need to consider one thing: where should the funding come from? The decreasing tax budget, the increasing investment on not only the academic competition but also the quality assurance concerning and the increasing global

competition requested the higher education institutions to solve the source of funding independently. The tuition increasingly becomes the first choice of the policy-makers in higher education institutions with respect to the source of funding. Wilhelm (2014) indicated the similar views in his report that studying what internationalization hits inside and outside the U.S.A. He stated that most of the policy-makers of the universities concerns the importance of the international students is conducive to their ability to bring the financial boon to the higher education institutions, especially those cash-strapped colleges.

Besides of the financial measure, the labor competition under internationalization and globalization also emphasizes the attraction of top elites from other countries, this competition is not only on the labor markets but also the elite academic markets. As one of the leading destination countries for study abroad, the U.S.A keeps their attention on the attraction and recruitment of international students. The U.S. accountability office indicated that importance of international students to rich the component of the labor market to improve the economy, especially those who can contribute to the top needed workplace (GAO, 2008).

In fact, in the current internationalization background, the trends in competing labors and talents are inevitable. In Abella (2015)'s paper, he explains the modern competition of brains and labors. He indicated that the international education is under a global trend in mobility of students, this trends contributed to the economic expenses. Besides, it also emerged the growing of the both domestic and international economy through the knowledge they gained. However, the tasks of attracting international graduates are not easy. Shumilova, Cai &Pekkola (2014) pointed out one dilemma Finnish higher education institutions are facing. Finnish higher education institutions are striving to keep a balance between rising more funding via a market-based higher education institutions and keeping attracting to the international graduates. The reason is that: first, internationalization needs higher education institutions to rise funding diversely to increase investment for competition. Meanwhile, as an important component of internationalization of higher education, international students cannot loose. However, in fact, when Finnish higher education starts to charge tuition to enrich

the funding source, the lesson from Sweden is already there. Sweden is likely facing the same condition, in Elken, Hovdhaugen & Wiers-Jensse (2015)'s book, they introduced the strategy of the internationalization of higher education in Sweden. They stated that Sweden aims at increasing internationalization and "positioning Swedish higher education in the world as well as the issues of recognition of qualification in professional fields" (Elken, Hovdahaugen & Wiers-Jensse, 2015, p 66). In this sense, the student mobility at a broad level is important in Sweden.

In general, Sweden needs both a broad range of student's components and a market-oriented higher education system; this is a global trend that no countries could take a risk to skip. Thus, it is understandable that even tuition-charging to non-EU/EEA students could give a shock beats on the current internationalization process; nevertheless, they still need to take this step. Thus, to find another attractiveness of the Swedish higher education is essential.

2.2 The College Choice of International Students

In fact, students will have large autonomies to decide their destination of studying. The previous studies in terms of college choice normally focus on two measures: a study based on the economic lens and the one based in the psychological lens. The current study on college choices more or less started from Hossler & Gallagher (1987)'s study, in which they developed a three-phrase steps for college choosing. This theory model proposed steps for the students to make their final decisions to choose their destination of the education. According to their studies , students will take three steps to decide where they are going to study: predisposition, search and choose. In predisposition phrase, the students would consider whether they should continue to study at a higher level. In search phrase, students would search important information on their preferred higher education institutions. Moreover, based on their searching information and their willingness, in the third phrase, they are going to decide which university or college they are going to apply or attend. In Hossler and Maple (1993)'s study, they also suggested that this three-phrase process have a huge impact on individual's final decision on college choice.

In 1984, Chapman proposed a model for college choice of a similar kind, in which he proposed the students need a process of searching information and then to make a choice. Coincidentally, Hanson & Litten (1982) raised the similar kind of view. They suggested that the students need a process to attend the higher education institutions. The process often combined with the following phrases: deciding to go to school, picking schools via collecting information and make an action to apply and attend the target institutions. Nevertheless, the core of these models is that there are information and a time process for students and their parents to make a decision. That is, the students and their families have autonomies to choose the university at the very first stage.

However, in the model, there are different opinions on what factors influences individual preferences during the respective phrase. In the earlier study, the scholars preferred to interpret the influential factors through the different lens. In general, some scholars from socialist study emphasized the social environment and individual factors (Litten, 1982). In the other hand, the economist focused more on financial and human resources factors (Jackson, 1982; Fuller et al., 1982).

The studies on the student choice of college from international students' perspective boomed under this circumstance. In the current studies, there is a most popular, which normally adopted by scholars studying international students' college choice, that is "push-pull" factors. Push-pull factors theory is original from the theory of immigration studies. In higher education studies, 'push-pull' factors refer to factors from two sides that influences students' choice. Push factors normally refer to the factors or defects in the home countries pushing the students to study oversea. On the other hand, pull factors refer to those factors attracting the potential students to come to the host countries (McMahon, 1992, Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, Geoffrey & Turner, 2002, Judith, Wayne & Robert, 2010). Besides, the push – pull factors were normally used to explain factors influencing international students' college choice in predisposition phrase and search phrase (Chen, 2007, p275). Thus, we could found out that the combination of college choice model and the push-pull factors primarily used in research on the study in terms of the motivation of mobility of international students.

The application of push-pull factors on influencing international students with respects to their choice of education destination is popular in relative topics in specific countries. In Judith, Wayne & Robert (2010)' study, they explored a new model for the international students' college choice for studying abroad. They discovered three top factors respectively influencing the final decision of international students who choose to study in the U.S.A. The most influential pull factors are physical geography, the college issues, and the culture. The most important push factors are personal growth, career prospect, and the language. Among them, college issues and the personal growth are most important factors the students considered during the process of college choice.

In Chen (2007)'s study, her main focuses are what the factors influencing the east-Asia students to make a decision to study in Canada. She also chose to use push-pull factors and the college choice model together to design the research. In her study, she found out that the important factors pulling the students from East-Asia countries are the academic strength, economic, environment and the possibility of immigration. In the other hand, she found that the negative push factors such as the undesirable-academia, the unclear future career, and the uncertain political situation are not as influential as those positive push factors and pull factors. Typically, she pointed out that the attractive image of a host country with good academic reputation, a better economy for future career and an immigration possibility are more compelling to east-Asia students to make a decision.

In Liu, Elston & Zhou (2013)'s study on a comparative study of Chinese students' choice of studying abroad, they explored the pull-push factors by comparing oversea-based studies with China-based studies. By categorizing the push-pull factors collected from the previous studies both oversea-based studies and China-based studies; they suggested a new model of push-pull factors. They cross-checked the overlapping factors in both two perspectives and categorized the factors, according to the three-phase steps. In their results, they indicated that in the predisposition phrase, educational method, lack of enrollment opportunity; desire to understand "West" and brighter future career are the common factors. Besides, they point out that foreign culture experience, employment prospects, quality of education, future immigration

opportunity, and living and study cost are the important factors influencing which universities are they going to attend (Liu, Elston & Zhou, 2013, p. 7-9).

In the studies of the previous research, we could find both from the home countries and host countries that the career prospers, which is a part of employability of graduates, becomes a core pulling factors. In Lawson (2011)'s study on why international students are choosing to study in Australia, he indicated that the pull factors might work more on influencing the students' decision. In his findings, it indicated that gaining opportunities to work in Australia after graduation are one of the important factors attracting the surveyors. In fact, other scholars also found out the desire to live and work overseas after graduation is an important factor influencing international students to decide which countries and that institutions they will go. However, Lu, Mavondo & Qiu (2009) indicated in their paper that the factors attracting postgraduates and graduates who are intending to study in Australia varied much. "The common antecedents are only the desire to work and live overseas and university ranking (Lu, Mavondo & Qiu, 2009, p5)."

In general, the possibility of working in the host countries as well as the possibility to immigrant is one of the appealing factors pulling international students, especially those who are from third countries to study in a certain host country or a certain host institution. To this extent, Sweden attempts to attract non-EU/EEA students through increasing the attractiveness of career prospects, or immigrant possibility is efficient. Nevertheless, the practical implement of this policy needs to consider the current policy and factors influencing the local employment in Sweden.

2.3 Importance of Employability and Its Relation to Higher Education

In Yorke (2004) and Yorke & Knight(2004)'s work, we could found out that they do not merely definite employability as the employment. Instead, they would rather definite employability as those achievements or academic skills that could help the graduates succeed in transferring to the labor market and keeping their career prospect last long. Hillage and Pollard (1998) defined the employability as the ability graduates gained in their education process that may smooth them to acquire the employment chance, maintain employment and obtain the employment. Knight and Yorke (2004) developed the five measurable meanings of the employability, they are: a graduate job, a

consequence of 'having' key skills, a likely effect of having had good work experience, a product of skillful career planning and interview technique , and a mix of cognitive and non-cognitive achievements and representations (Knight & Yorke, 2004, p3). Accordingly, the employability should be defined as the potential for the graduates to gain mix employable factors, through which the graduates will be easy to access to the labor market and maintain the employment.

To this extent, the first thing we should take consideration is what kind of skills and factors would benefit the employability of the graduates. European Union Skills indicated in their report that the employability of the college graduates will have the direct connection with quality and relevance of the formal education they gained (EU Skills Panorama, 2014, p11). In this report, it shows that students who graduated from higher education institutions could be easier to access to the labor market. However, what have they learned and where did they receive the education matters more. In addition, they suggested students should gain those skills that could smooth them from school to workplace during their studies, such as "developing professional expertise and general academic skills, interpersonal skills and having an international orientation" (EU Skills Panorama, 2014, p4).

Nevertheless, the relations of employability and higher education are not isolated by the one-direction influential connection. To some extent, especially when education has more connection with the high-skilled economy requirements, the employability of graduates inevitably become a part of the evaluation of quality assurance and assessment for a higher education institution. With the trends in connecting education with the market, the different nations begin to emphasize the importance of employability in higher education system. Taking European Commission as an example, in European University Association's report, they declared that the universities should see employability as a fundamental goal for educational systems in the European Union (Valenzuela, 2013).

As the development of the quality assurance, the growing emphasize has been made on the outcome of education. The researchers and scholars are gradually set up the outcome of higher education as a signifier to evaluate the higher education quality

(Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009, p56). Blackmore (2009) also indicated that the evaluation of the quality of higher education in teaching is actual an assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of the outcome. And one of the standards to evaluate is the accountability. Having a look at the definition made by OECD with respects to the measures of higher education outcome, it indicated that the current emphasis on learning outcomes focuses on four dimensions, including "physical and organizational characteristics, education-related behaviors and practices, psychosocial and cultural attributes ,and behavioral and attitudinal outcomes" (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009, p59 & Nusche, 2008). Moreover, behavioral and attitudinal outcomes include the success of employability. In a report from European Commission (2014) last year, it is indicated that there is improving emphasis concerning employability-information relating to the quality assurance in European countries. There are several countries had made employability performance directly connected with the public funding level. Besides, they found that there are institutions had implemented the regulation to request the employers participate in the quality management process. In Valenzuela (2013)'s critical literature review on the relation between employability and quality assurance, even he criticized that establish a connection of employability as a measurement of education outcomes is not solid, he admitted employability is becoming a quality signifiers for evaluating the quality.

Thus, it seems that it is reasonable that the European Union take actions to make the employability directly connected with the quality assurance. In addition, as an important indicator of benchmarking and the reputation of the institutions, the quality assurance and management indirectly emphasized the importance of employability on internationalization and globalization of higher education.

2.4 The previous study on employability of international graduates

Base on the study on the employability and higher education, it is fair to state that the current trends in studying the employability in field of higher education management are significant. In general, the previous study more or less focus on the research exploring the factors influencing the employability target on the overall graduates, which as European Commission noted in their report, conducting a graduate survey without

aiming at specific groups of students is irrespective (European Commission, 2014, p12). Precisely, the different group of students would face different constraints and strengthens in the process of achieving success transition from education to the workplace.

If targeting the entire graduates, the labor competence that graduates gained through their education would be the leading factors influencing their recruitment. The previous studies indicated that there are direct connections between the valued competences and requirements of the labor market. To some extent, these graduate competences are more attractive to those employers than higher education students gained (Elias and Purcell, 2004; Finch, et.al.,2013).

Instead of testifying if skills are crucial for employability, the focus with respect to my current research should be finding out what are the main competencies matters to employability. Finch, et.al. (2013) stated in his study that there are six categories of skills that directly have influences on the employer's decision, including soft skills, academic reputation, problem solving, functional skills, and working or internship experiences. Among them, they emphasized that soft skills is the leading elements for the employers to consider as well as the academic reputation is the least important factor those employer will consider.

In the UK's government report, they categorized the competencies for the graduates to increase their possibility to transmit to the workplace into two kinds: soft skills and hard skills. The soft skills include career identification and planning, interview practice, professional abilities, communication skills and decision-making skills, whereas the hard skills include job searching techniques, CV writing, contacting with employers, finding recruitment channel (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011, p62).

Andrew and Higson (2010) seems reaching the similar kind of result. In their research, they studied the top soft skills from the previous study and compared the importance of these skills from employers and graduates perspectives in four European countries. In the findings, Andrew and Higson indicated that for the employers, they emphasize the professionalism, including the business skills, the business qualification, and even a

mature business attitude. In addition, the self-management and time-management skills are crucial as well. From the experiences of the graduates, they found graduates thought written communication skills, team work and strategically thinking skills are elementary.

In a specific study aiming at Malaysia graduates, Bakar, Mohamed and Hamza (2013) testified the hypothesis that the graduate skills have the same impacts on employability for students graduating from different kind of higher education institutions. In their studies, they stated that basic skills, personal qualities, thinking skills and resource management valued the same emphasis on employability by graduates from different kind of institutions.

Based on the previous studies, we could find out that the importance of graduated competencies in the employability. However, just as mentioned above, if we value the employability targeting the entire group of students, the irrespective is inevitable. It is clear that international graduates meet a quite different situation in finding a job, especially when they eager to gain working experiences in their host countries. What makes my studies challenging is: the studies on international graduates' employability does not gain emphasis from the nations, let alone that there are seldom specific studies on the international graduates' local employment in the host countries.

In University Australia's study on tracing international graduates, Blackmore, et.al., (2014) interviewed both international graduates and the local employers in Australia. From the findings of the interviews, they found out that international graduates expected to gain a post-study work experiences in the host countries, but the employers prefer to employ those who are ready to work. In their studies, the soft skills and graduate competences influence the international graduates to start their career after graduation. Besides, there are some obstacles would affect international graduates to transfer from education to workplace, such as the subject differentials, language proficiency, lack of local networks, cultural differences, lack of communication skills and limited channel of recruitment information, etc.

What need to emphasize in this study is they indicated some views about hiring international graduates from the perspectives of the employers in local firms. From the findings, it is clear that employers emphasize that they prefer to hire the graduates who are 1.) best fits the vacancies 2.) ready to work. It is easy to understand these two points, it refers to that the employers' value the competence, which could help the students to get involved in the work place and understand how the workplace operates.

In fact, it is accordingly that the international graduates are facing double stress with respect to finding a job in host countries. Being one of the Nordic countries, Finland shows a positive attitude on international graduates' employability. Shumilova, Cai and, Pekkola (2013) conducted a research with respects to the international graduates' employability. As what indicated in their report, the rising emphasis on the employability of international graduates is due to the double pressure from the crisis of international students' crashes and the challenge of attracting more international students. In their studies, they found out that in Finland, the employers have an inactive attitude towards employing the international graduates. In addition to the openness of the labor market, the language barrier (Finnish is the national and living language in Finland), the visa constraint, the subject matters and the channel of recruitment information all brought huge impact on international graduates to find a suitable job in the host countries.

Based on previous studies, it can be argued that the international graduates, especially who are eager to find a job in the host countries, need to gain the useful skills and qualification. Besides, they also need to break through the visa problem, the language barrier and the recruitment channel. Nevertheless, if the labor market of the host country is not open enough, they need to compete in an extremely fierce environment.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Labor Economics

As so far as the economic crisis still shock and threaten the world, the discussion and debates with respect to which the economic theory is the most applicable to maintain and create a prosperous economy is the hot-debate issue. In fact, as a result of economic depression, solving unemployment is always a main focus for the economists.

Nevertheless, our focus on this paper is not solving the unemployment but how to raising the employability of the international graduates. Thus, our focus on the economic theory aims at Labor Economic and Human Capital. As stated above, the openness of the labor market is an important measure of the employability of international graduates who are willing to work in the host countries. To this extent, we need to first to clarify one question to analysis the hypothesis: did government play a role in labor market?

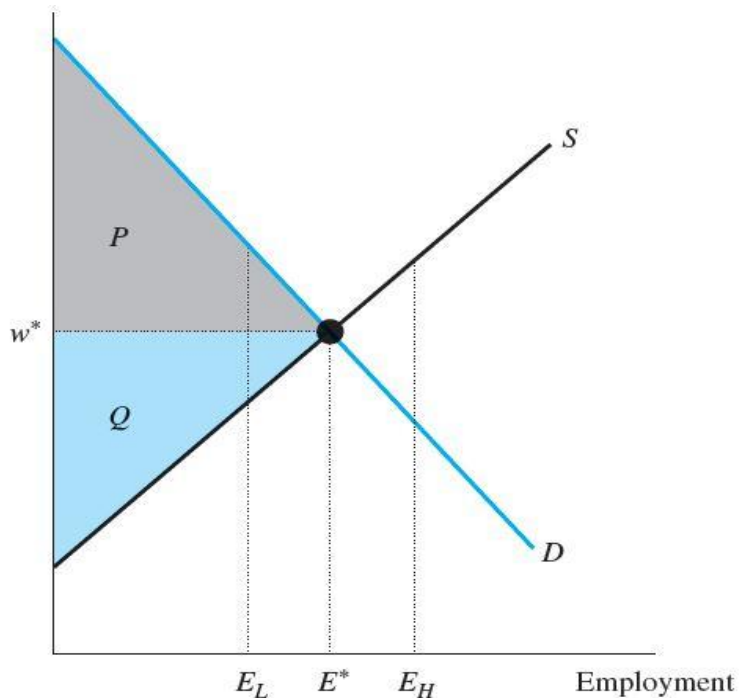
Whereas the Neo-liberalism and Classical economic emphasize the inner distortions of the market adjustment in terms of economy, Keynesians prefer to believe that the market needs government regulation to control. In Keynes (1963)'s foundation book of Keynesian, his opinion on how to balance the supply and demand relations in the economic market is solving the unemployment. Keynes stated that the level of employment and capacity of producing decided the balance of the demand-supply chain in a nation. Thus, to maintain the balance, the full employment that refers to minimize the involuntary unemployment should be the main target for the government regulation.

The main opinions in terms of Keynesians include persistence of unemployment, fluctuation in unemployment; distinguish in savings and investment and disturbances in demand (Greenwald and Stiglitz, 1987, p121). Nevertheless, the largest distinguish of Keynesians with microeconomics is the emphasis on government intervention to correct the market economy and even the labor market.

However, the further economic crisis challenges the theory of Keynesians, in order to overcome the defects in Keynes' previous studies, the new Keynesianism generated. The one of the main theories of new Keynesianism is government should take the role to control the insufficient effective demands, which measured by new Keynesianism as the trigger of the unemployment and economic depression. When extend this statement to the relation between government and the labor market, it can be detained as following: government generated distortion in the economic system. One of the methods for the government to intervene the economic system is controlling the labor market. Normally these methods include "high minimum wages, wide marginal tax wedges, regulation and benefits system that boost the market powers of incumbent workers and labor unions" (Lindbeck, 1998).

Besides, the macroeconomics proposed the theory model to explain the migration and labor flow between different regions. This model is also based on the supply-demand relations in the labor market, which is also assumed by Keynesian and its followers. In general, labor market equilibrium creates matrix to balance the supply –demand chains in the labor market.

Figure 2 Equilibrium in a competitive labor



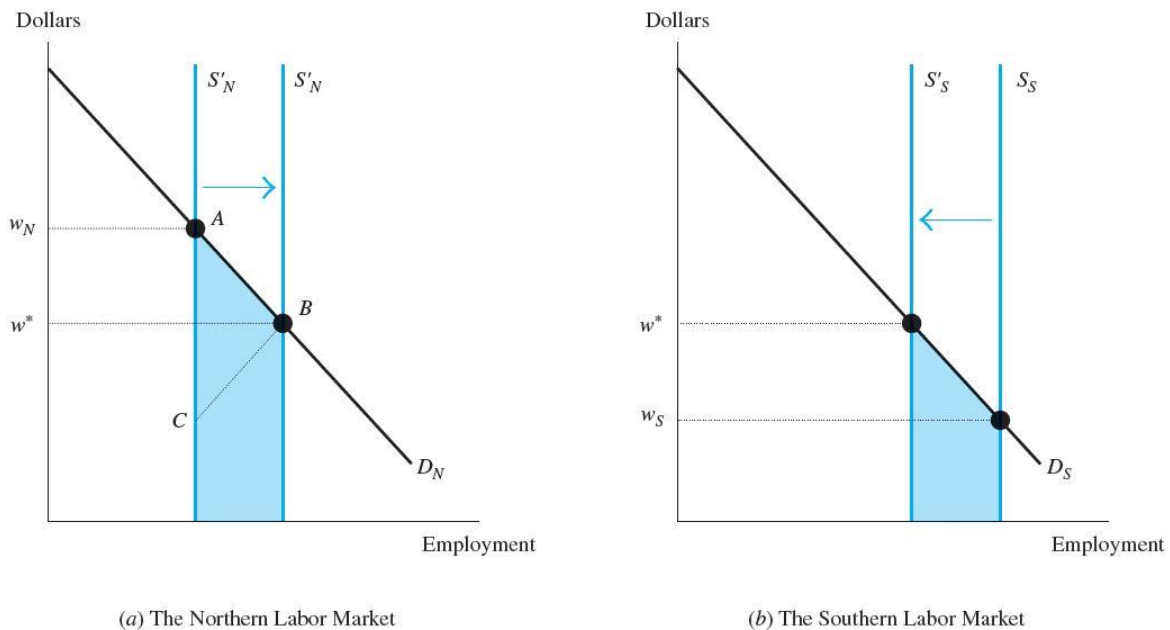
market

(Source: Borjas, 2012)

As shown in Figure 2, the horizontal axis shows the employment level, the vertical axis shows the wage level in a labor market. E^* equals to employment equilibrium; E_L refers to employment low, and E_H refers to employment high. When demand is larger supply in the labor market, the labor market displays the producer surplus, as shown in the gray triangle), the labor market has a low employment. In opposite, as shown in the blue triangle, the labor market has a worker surplus, and then the labor market shows a high employment. However, when demand is equal to the supply, the labor market will reach the black dot in the middle, which is the labor market equilibrium.

Generally, the labor market equilibrium is approaching to the situation that Keynesian economics are pursuing, the full employment in the economic system. In a situation, labor market equilibrium and the productive surplus, the wage levels will be high, and the competition in the labor market will be low. As Figure 3 shows, the different situation of labor market equilibrium would make a labor flow from one region to another.

Figure 3, Comparing labor market equilibrium in two regions



(Source: Borjas, 2012)

When there are wage differentials and the employment differentials, normally there are two kinds of labor flows. First, the labors move to the regions that have a high level of wages and employment. Thus, they promoted their average incomes and individual employment. Otherwise, firms in the better region move to the less developed region. By doing so, they hire the cheap labors in local. Thus, the firms reach a less investment in labor while the local labors enhanced their employment situation. Whatever form had been complemented by the labor and the firms, the labor migration would makes the supply-demand relations in the two regions have essential change. The labors flow to a regions are productive surplus would result in increasing the demands in the labor market while the flow of the firm would generate more supply in the labor market. It is

clear that these flows of labor that inspired by the nature of market would help to keep a balance and achieve the labor market equilibrium, nevertheless, the separate increasing of pure demand and pure supply would break the equilibrium in the end.

Accordingly, when a labor market keeps the productive surplus, their labor market is large enough to accept the labor migration. In opposite, the openness of the labor market to labor migration will face challenges. However, according to the macroeconomic theory, regulating the market by the nature of economic has its nature defects; the government needs to use intervention to guide the market to run on the right track when it is necessary.

This opinion also applied by Keynesian economists and macroeconomists to solve the unemployment. Indeed, as the general economists indicated that any macroeconomic policy made by the government would affect the labor market. The competition, the openness or even the sizes of the labor market all directly or indirectly are affected by the government policy-maker.

Besides, as the labor market equilibrium and the Keynesian implied in their opinion, the employment of a person is not decided by any independent factor. It is true that the employability of a person is of course a key factor; however, the job seekers also need to face the social, economic or cultural factors. Just as mentioned above, the international graduates who are willing to find a job in the host countries (which has an intention to migration) have to face the social factors and openness of the labor market.

To this extent, human capital can use to not only to explain the incentives of labor migration of high-educated labors but also to tell us what the social, economic or even cultural factors would influence the employment.

3.2 Human Capital

What is the human capital? This item is the origin from Adam Smith, one of the great economists in the study of economic. When trying to solve the question of economic growth, Adam Smith (1776) indicated that the power of increasing the entire economic

and the productivity can not rely on the workers but the useful ability and capacity of the entire inhabitants of the society. Just these abilities and capacities that a person gain through education or his/her previous experiences are the capital he/she can used to compete in the workplace. The latter scholars developed his theory and achieved an agreement on that the power of people, which includes their capacities, their abilities, and their competences, are fuels to the economic growth. They defined this power of people is human capital

“Human capital is defined by the OECD as the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being (OECD, 2007, pp.29).”

In the modern study, one importance of the study in terms of human capital is the increasing emphasis on education. Education, as a kind of investment, is a key factor in improving the human capital. As indicated in OCED's definition, knowledge and skills are both ranking as an elements of human capital, it is clear that education is the channel for one person to gain knowledge and skills.

To this extent, the person who enrolled in the university and graduates from higher tertiary education institutions seems destining to gain a better source to acquire knowledge and skills. Thus, education is a necessary channel for a person to gain human capital.

Schooling, which is one of the forms of education, is the one that cost more investment during the process of acquiring human capital. In the human capital, the subjects, the quality and level of the education all affects the results of acquiring of human capital. What makes the situation difficulties for most middle-class students are the increasing tuition fees. Nonetheless, the countries that were free to university students began to charge high-level tuition. It is clear that the burden of acquiring human capital through education becomes heavier in the future. However , the return paying back after graduation is not directly connected with the degree. According to human capital theory:

- The level of skills acquired through education

- The firms in developed and undeveloped countries have different attitudes toward employees
- The earnings are skewed positively, that most allocated to high-skilled and professional labors
- Age plays an important role in both income increasing and life-long learning
- “The division of labor is limited by the extent of the market” (Becker, 1975, p16).

Thus, the return of the investment in human capital would be affected by various factors, both inside and outside education, especially the short-term income and wealth assessment. Accordingly, the qualification of the education, the major subject, the scores and even the family background would influence the result of the short-term return on education investment. As one of the important form of education return, the short-term job success meets the same challenge from those influential factors.

Indeed, theory explores a skull support on the opinions what we discussed in the literature review and provides some argument support for the further discussion. Nevertheless, it is argued that employment is not a topic only relating to a person's ability and skills but also has the connection with the entire prosperity of the labor market.

In the following part, I would indicate several hypotheses to test the local employment if the international graduates. Besides, discuss how the person and the government should play their role in balancing the labor market for both the international graduates and their local counterpart.

4. Hypothesis

Based on these conclusions, it is possible to propose a hypothesis on the local employment of international graduates in Sweden as following. Both the personal competencies and the social factors from the host countries would influence international graduates finding a job in Sweden. Besides, there might be a primary and secondary relation between these two factors.

5. Methodology

The solid and valid data was necessary for analyzing and discussion. Thus, data collection is a basis for the academic research. The research method is the tool of data collection. Currently, there are three main streams of research methods; the definition of the different research methods relies on what kind of methods inquirers choose to collect data and what kind of data inquirers intend to get.

These three research methods are:

1. Quantitative research: it refers to the research method that makes use of statistical analysis and intends to answer the research questions.
2. Qualitative research: it refers to the studies qualify their findings on a hypothesis through interviews and observations (Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinge, 2005, p16).
3. The mixed research: it refers to the research methods that "employ strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to understand best research problem" (Creswell, 2002, P19). The mixed methods combined with the features of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Thus, the researchers who are willing to conduct a mixed research need to be familiar with both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

It is suggested that picking methodology relies on the strategies governing the researchers to connect methods with their assumed outcome. It refers to the nature of the research, is it a survey research or experimental research (Creshwell, 1993, p5).

The research design has a connection with knowledge claims. It is general argued that there are four main knowledge claims in the process of research, including post-positivism, constructivism, participatory, pragmatism. Knowledge claim refers to certain assumptions the researchers are going to claim, these assumptions are about the methods they preferred and the outcome they expected (ibid). Besides of knowledge claims, researchers have to pay attention to research strategies. Both experimental and non-experimental surveys are strategies of quantitative research. Ethnographies,

narratives, and case studies are belonging to qualitative research. Sequential and transformative strategies are significance from mixed research methods.

It is general accepted that the simplest way to choose research methods is determined by the purpose of the paper: Is it going to answer research questions? Is it going to test some hypothesis regarding the research topics? Or is it going to solve both of them.

Accordingly, in my paper, the research is planned to design in a way that the narrative strategies are the main methods. The narratives would collect the main data with different individuals. The analysis will be developed based on combined information gained through these narrative materials. Thus, the qualitative research is more suitable. The instrument of my research is an interview that mainly conducted by the interviewees who have experiences in finding a job in Sweden as international graduates.

5.1 Instruments

Qualitative research normally concentrated on ethnographic and narrative instruments, such as case study, field observation, and interview. The corresponding strategies and knowledge claims in terms of respective instruments are various. As my paper is going to do a strategic narrative research, it seems that the interview would be a proper choice.

One argument put forward is that the academic interview has three categories: informal conversation interview, open-ended interview, and general interview guide approach (Turner, 2010). These three instruments all have their features. As one of the most popular on in academic research, the open-ended interview can provide a condition for the interviewees to describe as detailed information as they can. Even the procedure of coding the data is difficult; the open-ended interview is still good at capturing the information at the largest extent (Turner, 2010, p756).

My personal view is that open-ended interview might suit my design of research. Thus, I conducted the open-ended interview based on previous studies and theoretical frameworks. The interviews based on two main perspectives: the individual

competences influencing employability of international graduates and the social barriers that might block the access of international graduates to the host workplace.

In Table1, it clearly shows the interview will ask several perspectives

Table 1. Factors influencing the international graduates' employability.

Employability	Social Factors
soft skills	Visa
academic reputation	Language
communication skills	Information channel of recruitment
problem solving	Openness of labor market
functional skills	
working or internship experiences	

The open-ended interview composed by four parts:

To ensure the transparency of the interview, I had claimed instructions to the interviewees and ask their permissions at the beginning part of the interview. In the instruction part, I clearly stated the identification of the interviewers, the purpose of the interview and the future functions of the interview.

In the first part, I conducted several questions with respect to the personal information of the participants, in which the personal information of the participants are collected and verified.

In the second part, the main questions are concerning the individual skills in terms of employability of the international graduates. The most of questions are asking the participants to evaluate the importance of different graduate competence, according to their experiences. Besides, the additional questions aiming at supplement other key graduate competence from international graduates' perspective.

In the third part, I conducted several questions regarding the involvement of Swedish higher education institutions with respect to the employment of the international graduates. The indicators of this section are the evaluation of the contribution made by Swedish institutions on employment channel, the training of employability and the assistance of part-time training or pre-work experiences.

In the last part, I testified the social factors influencing the employment of the international graduates. The questions were set to ask the individual participants to evaluate and tell their experiences in terms of the visa procedures in Sweden, language barrier, access to the Swedish labor market and information channels of careers. At the end of this part, the evaluation to compare social factors and the employability factors in terms of influencing the international graduates to shift from education to the workplace is also conducted.

The open-ended questions are all set according to the previous studies and the theoretical framework. The purpose of the interview is going to test the hypothesis that aims to explain the local employment in Sweden.

During the design of the interview, the reliability is our most concern. According to Bordens & Abbott (2010), a high-quality research design needs designing, administrating and testing to see if they can do their job. And a high quality /reliable research method has to show "the ability of a measure to produce the same or highly similar results on repeated administrations" (ibid, p274). During the process of designing this interview, I mainly applied the pilot interview to increase the reliability and feasibility. The premier three interviewees participated in the pilot interview. With responses from three interviewees, I revised the structures of the interview, specified the questions model on an involvement of higher education institutions and check the language and revised the language with the pilot participants. After the pilot interview, I standardized the instruction to the participants, the time lengths and the language used in the interview.

5.2 Participants

Neither the qualitative research nor quantitative research, choosing the participants is a crucial part of the design of the entire research. Regarding the qualitative research, as Creswell (2007) indicated, the selection of the participants should utilize the sampling as various as the researchers can. The most important part of the selecting participants with respect to a research interview is: how to ensure that the willingness the participants would like to share their stories and how many contents will they offer.

To make sure the feedback of the interview would be useful and applicable, my first standard of selecting the participants are those who are eager to share their stories on finding a job after graduation. Second, as China contributes to the largest number of non-EU/EEA intake students, the national range of the participants is seriously controlled. Third, before further developed the interview, I confirmed each of the participants to ensure that they have rich experiences in finding a job in Sweden. Besides, the identification as a Swedish international graduate is essential. Finally, as there are increasing refugees from their countries, I made efforts to ensure the participants were all pure students when they were studying in Sweden.

In the end, there are nine interviewees who are finally selected to participate in the interview. Among them, six are from China; others are respectively from Vietnam, India, and Pakistan. As the number of intake Chinese students took a very large range, I strived to get more interviewees from other countries except from China. Nevertheless, due to my limited research time, I finally succeed in interviewing three qualified participants respectively from Vietnam, India and Pakistan.

In order to balance the various range of the participants beside of nationality, I strictly control the other perspectives of the Chinese participants. Thus, in other dimensions, the range of the participants appears quite abroad, including their host university, their subjects, their degrees and their stay length in Sweden, etc. One thing needs to emphasize: most of them came to Sweden before academic year 2011/2012 when the tuition was still free, there is one exception. One Chinese girl who just graduated this year was enrolled during academic year 2013/2014 when the tuition was charged.

Before the formal interview, I conducted pilot interviews with respective participants. The main purpose of this small pilot interviews were ensuring that the experiences of the participants are rich enough to evaluating local employment in Sweden. Among the participants, only three were failed to find a job in Sweden. Others were succeeding in employing in Sweden as international graduates. Those who are succeeding in living in Sweden own their social interactive circle, which enable them could provide a broad perspective on local employment in Sweden.

In general, the selection of the participants in this research follows two standards: the various ranges and ensuring the participants have stories to tell. Besides, in order to abide by the principle of human right, some personal information is automatically considered as confidential.

The detailed information of the nine candidates can find in bellowed Table 2.

Table 2. The information of candidate participants

	Host university	Nationality	Destination of the job		Subjects	Comments
			Host country	Home country		
S1	Kalmar University	China	√		Media Production and Journalist	Kalmar University has merged into the new Linnaeus University
S2	Linkopin University	China		√	Language and Culture of Europe	
S3	Linkopin University	India	N/A	N/A	Computer Science	He works in Dubai at the moment
S4	Royal Institute of Technology	China	√		Media Management	She enrolled when tuition is charged
S5	Royal college of Music in Stockholm	China	√		Music	
S6	Lund University	Vietnam	√		Economics	
S7	Karlstad university	China	√		Computer Science	
S8	Linkopin University	Pakistan		√	Bussiness Management	
S9	Royal Institute of Technology	China	√		Master of Science	

5.3 Sampling and interpreting data

As the research method is qualitative research, we paid special attention on the sampling and data collection procedures.

Sampling procedures is a part of data collection. The main methods of sampling of qualitative and quantitative are different. In this research, we chose the homogenous sampling from the pilot testing. The sampling procedures helped to choose the individuals who might provide data.

The procedures of the research contain three parts: First, conducting the interview questions, which constructs the structures and main contents of the interview. Second, implementing the interview, at this stage, the main focus is the method to conduct the interview. At the moment, the face-to-face interview is most efficient one. For, the participants and interviewers will have more direct communication to share stories. Besides, the instant responses between them would contribute more contents on the topic. I mainly choose the face-to-face, due to the geographic limitation, parts of the interview were made via Email and Skype.

In the third phrase, the main work is interpreting the data. In this phrase, comparing work was conducted to find the similarities and differences between different participants in terms of the separate sections.

6. Data Analysis

In this part, the data will be analyzed. As our methods of research design are interview, I choose the narrative analysis. It is normally argued that narrative analysis helps the researchers to collect data by explore how the participants experiences on the events and the topics. Comparing with discourses analysis, narrative analysis shifts emphasis on the how researchers understand the entire picture on their experiences and lives of the participants.

In the following part, I will compare different responds from the interviewees and find the similarities and differences on the respective question sections regarding the hypothesis. First, the main analysis is based on the codes that embodied in the interview

6.1 *The Competence Perspective*

After interpreting the data, it is show that most of the graduate competences are emphasized by the participants. However, the coding results indicated that

communication skills, the working experiences and the social networking built are the most common item appears in the responds. Besides, as another common code appeared in the data, the academic reputation remarked by most of the participants as less important. In the following part, the interpreting of the data will be clearly stated.

Communication skills

In the reflection of the graduate competence section, the most of the participants emphasize the communication skills. The most reason is that the culture background and the social background is quite different in host country and home country, in order to not only get involved into the work place but also create their own networking for social information and human relations, a good communication skill is essential.

As one of the participants indicated

“.....how can you integrate the local conception and think in a way that many people can understand and agree is more crucial.”

Another respondent shared his experiences in finding a job in Sweden as a result of good communication with his local counter partners.

“I have good relationship with local Swedish through campus activities; they provided information when I was searching the jobs. It is important to integrate in the Swedish social circles. When you have lots of Swedish friends, you will find surprise everywhere.”

Besides, two respondents reflected that they benefit from their good communication skills when they finally successes in achieving employments

As one indicated that the good communication skills would clearly show the advantages and competences of the graduates

“.....I showed very clearly what I can do for my boss during the interview, you know, that is why I can work here.”

Another also indicated that

“.....and communication skill is crucial, to impress the interviewer with a good first impression may helpful.”

It is clear that for the international graduates that how to well communicate with not only the local Swedish and the interviewers are the challenges. Those three participants who are working out of Sweden had also emphasized the communication skills, however, it seems the language as a big barrier when they try to communicate and show themselves. We will discuss on language in the social factor section.

Working experiences

Another most emphasized factors those participants considering as a key factors to determine the results of finding a job in Sweden is the working experiences. The working experience shows strong power in make the participants competing with the others.

One participant said that

“Not only in Sweden, but also in all the others countries, working experiences is an important main point for apply a job. A long working experiences may let the job become more handy.”

At least three participants directly express like following

“A work experience is the second important factor.”

Or

“.....working or internship experiences are more important than soft skills and academic reputation.”

Or

“ Working experience and reference. If you have a reference person, that can provide that you are competence. It would be easier for you to get an offer.”

There is one participant shared his story

“I had 4 years of industry experience, which helped me land an interview, though not a job.”

With this expression, we could find out that even working experiences would make graduated finally win in the interview. However, as an important factor, it could work a crucial role when during the process of getting employed.

Based on the statement of those participants, it is obvious that as a personal employability, the pre-work traineeship or working experiences has as strong influences on the international graduates to get access to work place as they have on the overall graduates group.

Academic reputation

It is commonly argued by the participants that the academic reputation shows no importance with respect to finding a job in Sweden. Five participants pointed that it was not crucial for international students to emphasize where did they acquire their degree. In the previous studies, we could find out the similar opinions.

Some of the participants said as

“.....as for the academic reputation, I do not think it is crucial because the academic reputation cannot stand for the working ability.”

Some comparing the graduate competence that those international graduates gained, the participants shows their experience of non-importance of the academic reputation in their process of job searching

“Interpersonal skills, communication skills etc. are the most important factors for finding a job in Sweden. Academic reputation is less important.”

Ability to integrate with local social networking

Besides of those graduate competence concluded from the previous studies, the participants additionally point out that the ability to create their own personal networking with local person is crucial.

As for most of the international students, their identification makes their access to the local information is not too open. It is clear that the efforts to integrate in a local community or set up good relations with the local counter partners would provide not only an information network for local news but also trainings to improve the international graduates' communication skills aiming at the Swedish.

"I agree that employability factors are vital for international student. But I still think that sometimes personal network is a more important factor."

One participant pointed out that, it is important for the international graduates to have a clear understanding on the company culture, economic system, social culture, and communication rules from Swedish perspective is very helpful.

".....to learn more on the possible market of what you have learnt in local and finding more Swedish friends."

The employability skill as a whole

Considering employability skill as a whole part, nearly all participants agree that the importance of graduate competence when graduates trying to involve in the local labor market. Nevertheless, most of them implied information in their responses, that is: when there are same levels of graduate competence between the competitors for a job, language or other social factors would make the results varied. Thus, in the following part, we will analyze the social factors.

6.2 Social Factors

As conducted according to previous work on international graduates, it is argued that the international graduate will meet challenges from the social factors. The key factors influences the process of the international graduates to swift from education to work place in local are visa, language barrier, labor market openness and the information channel. Here, we will analyze the data regarding respectively on these four factors.

Visa procedures

As the new post-study working permit released since last year, it is clear that the participants who are all graduate before this year, they will had to face the problem that how to keep staying before finding a job. Among the participants, only one girl from China had chance to experiences the new Visa policy, otherwise how to prolong the stay is a big challenge in last few years.

“During my studies, the students did not have any stay back option after completing their studies there, once their visa had expired. Stay back options from 6 months to a year would be a good place to start to help retain foreign talent, and give some time for foreign student to look for a job.”

This participant also shows his evaluation of the visa policy in Sweden before launching the post-study residency permit as

“Not (friendly) at my time. It should learn from Denmark. That provides a visa for student to stay to find a job.”

However, one common argument comes from the participants how success in finding a job: once there is a job, the working permit is not difficult to apply.

“I think the visa policy when I experienced back to the time is very easy for international students to work while we study”

And

“the visa procedure is relatively fast and simple once you land a job.”

In the data collected from this part, it is clear that the new post-study residency permit will bring huge benefits for the international graduates who are eager to find a local job. Besides, the collected data indicated that this new policy matches the demands of the international graduates.

By interpreting the data, we could also find out that once the new visa policy launched, the visa policy will not become a barrier anymore. On contrast, it will provide spare time for the international graduates to "survive" as little bit.

From the information of only participant who had gotten benefits from the new visa policy, we could find out that the new Visa policy has potential to become a supporting factors for international graduated to achieve employment in local

“Yes, last year Sweden started a new policy to allow graduates stay six months longer after they have finished their studies. It really helps.”

Language

As previous studies indicated, how to achieve a high proficiency of language skills to perfectly fit in a workplace is a key factor for international graduates.

However, as the native language and occupied language in Sweden is Swedish, as not so popular language all over world. Language skills are not only a personal skills but a kind of barrier for the graduates to access to the society.

All of the nine participants agreed that language barrier (Swedish barrier) is the key factor would block the international graduates to get involved in local labor market. The language barrier are mainly embodied by the participants as

A barrier to certain job position

“Yes. Although Sweden has one of the best English speaking population in Europe, the day-to-day commerce is conducted very much in Swedish, except maybe not in the larger firms such as Ericsson.”

The language barrier to close the door to the international graduates is not only on the access to the labor market but also how to maintain a job

One participants share his friend' experience quitting from a job she already got. That girl is an elite Chinese graduate from Stockholm School of Economic and got hired by PWC Stockholm office. However, due to the Swedish language barrier, she couldn't manage to integrate with her colleagues. Finally, she quit from the PWC.

Besides, language is also considered as a barrier to job information

“The information channel is very open here in Sweden, everyone has a chance to get the information but also many of them are in Swedish.”

The data in this section indicated that the language is a social factor overwhelming the personal employability with respect to influencing the local employment of international graduates.

“The language is always a problem for international students. I have seen many good students with better skills than local Swedish but didn't get offer because of the language.”

In addition, one big challenge of the language barrier is that the channel for the international graduates to learn Swedish is limited. The university does not provide too much well-organized language course and there are fewer sources to learn this language.

“We were international students, and we did not have Swedish as a required course.”

Swedish labor market

Comparing with Visa and language barrier, participants didn't show as active responding questions regarding Swedish labor market. Regarding the openness of the labor market, most of the graduates who are already working in Sweden evaluate it as open. But they preposition is that the international graduates could fix language barrier and could integrate into the culture of Sweden.

“Yes, they are opened, but need you to be localized. Like languages, culture, and well educated.”

As one participant describe his experiences on the openness of the labor market, he indicated that

“I think the openness here has a good atmosphere if you can Swedish everything is much easier. Because the market will NOT consider where you come from instead can you be one of them.”

The interpreting data implied that the labor market welcomes the localized international graduates. Thus, it refers to that the openness of the labor market is not entirely internationalized. It more depends on the

Sweden like hood international graduates should achieve. That is, the openness of the labor market is still open to Swedish.

Information channel of job vacancies

The participants responds that they evaluate the informational channel of career is limited by the language barriers. This factor has the similar evaluation, that the most information is Swedish or most of the job websites are in Swedish, this block the international graduates who didn't acquire Swedish to the informational of potential jobs.

"Websites are very important information channel of the employment nowadays, of course in Swedish too. But, I think some more specialized campus recruitment in university will be better solution."

Besides, there are also negative common comments on the informational channel in Sweden. Several responds indicated that the information of the recruitment is not open. If international graduates have no strong Swedish local networks, it is hard for them to find the proper and useful information on a job vacancy.

"My job coach told me 90% of jobs on Sweden market were not transparent."

And

"Every legal position can be found through the online market. However, a big part of the positions is filled through personal networks and references."

As an important start pointing for searching a job, when the informational channel is closed to the international graduates, the process of achieving local employment meet huge challenges at the very beginning.

With interpreting the data collected from the graduates, it is clear that the social factors are crucial in terms of influencing local employment of the international graduates. The

language barrier, the difficulties for the international graduates to communicate and live natively in Sweden remarked as the most crucial factor influencing the results. Besides, the local market and informational channel as other social factors making the international graduates meet huge challenges to access to the labor market. This phenomenon is remarked by the most of participants as a cultural integration problem rather than economic reflection. Only one participant considers the labor market and informational channel as a consequence of the bad economic environment.

In addition, it is clear that the new visa policy makes the visa is not a barrier any more but a fuel for the international graduates to find a local job. A half year extension of residence permit allows the students to have a time alternatives to make an effort after graduation. According to both the previous old graduates and new fresh graduates, the international graduates all remark the new visa policy as a political improvement with respect to supporting international graduates on finding a job in Sweden.

6.3 Involvement of higher education institutions in international employment

As an important media to connect the students to the host country, the higher education institutions have the possible connection with the access of the international graduates to the labor market. In the previous study, some argument put forward that the higher education institutions are a part of the informational channel and bridge to connect the international graduates to local employers. In the interview, I mainly conduct interview questions with respect to the career center, the information channel for training or part-time job and the career assistance.

In the collected data, it is sometimes suggested that the different institutions have different channel. Comparing the two groups of graduates that have graduates coming from the same colleges, it is could argue that the higher involvement of higher education institutions, the easier for the graduates to access the labor market.

Linkoping University

Linkoping University located in the fourth large city in Sweden, and is named after the city. In the reflection of the data, three candidates are from Linkoping University and

they all failed to find a job in Sweden. Especially, one of them has long time working experience and studied in computer science.

S2 stated in her response like

" our university did not provide information about obtain employment for the international student like me actively."

S8 just directly remark the involvement of the university as

No, and his reflections emphasize that it is not easy to notice if the campus has training activities or job affair

"Not really. I did not notice there were such information when I was in Sweden."

S3 has the more active reflection. However, he points out that even there is some job hunting affair, but the information is limited. He studied in computer science; he still found it is difficult to get help and information on both formal work and the part-time works or internship

"Other than the opportunities posted on the exjobbs portal in the department website, there were not that many lead in this regard."

Comparing with Linköping University, Royal Institute of Technology has more positive reflections from the participants. Two candidates graduated from Royal Institute of Technology both successes in finding a job in Sweden.

Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)

S4 remarked his host institution has strong engaged in helping both international graduates and local counter partner in the future career. The institution provided career training and the career center provides effect activities.

"They had information in English on their website and they had guest lectures targeting International students. They also offer individual coach on Resumes and so on."

S8 also indicates that she had noticed and attended the career activities hold the career center

“We have a grand annual career fair at my university-KTH.”

It is worth noting that S4 is new graduates whereas S8 has been in Sweden since she enrolled at the University for over eight years. In this sense, it is arguable that the KTH has a long tradition of strength the role of career center.

However, both S4 and S8 remark that the institution has no information on the part-time job or internship during the study.

One could draw the conclusion from the comparing data from the two institutions, it is likely that the career centers and the job activities and training as potential and invisible influence on building information channel and training employability. Thus, it is worthy that the institutions have to pay attention to the construction of more international career services.

6.4 Economic and the employment

With the theoretical framework, we had discussed that the relation between economy and the employment. It can be argued in the macroeconomics and labor economics, the demand-supply chains of the labor in the economies would influence the size and the openness of the labor market.

According to the imperial data interpreting from the participants, it is notable that the students who graduate in the university located in a comparable prosperous city would have more chance to find a job. Four of the participants studied in Stockholm region and Malmö region and S1 moved to Stockholm during his fourth semester, they all succeed in finding a job. Three Linköping University graduates failed in finding a job, as comparing with Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, Linköping does not have strong competence on the economy.

This data indirectly remarked labor economics that when the economy can provide more supply than demands, it is likely that the labor market has space to open to the labor out of the region.

Also, the subject relations with the employment also indicated that what human resource suggested: the field of studying and working would influence the return of the education investment and future career.

Among the succeed international employees, S1, S4 and S5 all studying subjects relating to mass media, S9 and S7 respectively on science and computer science. It is notably the mass media and science relating subjects *per se* have strong competence in the labor market. S6 studied economics, which is also a strong subject in achieving employment. In addition, the distribution of the subjects and their connection with the labor market is not only a reflection of the human capital but also an implication with respect to labor economy.

There is the possibility that the demand and supply of the labor in industries would get influences from the prosperity of the certain industry. Thus, the subjects you chose would indicate the future value of the education in the future career competition at a certain level. By and large, when discussing the employability of the international graduates, it should try to cover the various perspectives. Personal skills, both the regional and national economic condition in the certain country and the culture encounters all influences international graduates to find a job in host country.

7. Findings

In the finding parts, we are going to contribute useful analysis and discussions aiming at test my hypothesis.

7.1 Differences between social factors and personal competencies

In the following part, I will first state the main findings with respect to personal competences, social factors and a comparison between there two perspectives.

Finding 1: There is strong likelihood that Swedish labor market prefers the international graduates having strong graduate competences

Determine the importance of employability is always important for the study on employment. In fact, it seems that the human capital guides the employability *per se*. Typically, human capital emphasizes that the education would bring the competence for

the labors. Nevertheless, it worthy note that individuals need to figure out one relative question firstly: what is the definition of competence or what education could bring to benefits those who go to higher education institutions?

At this moment, it is understandable that the employability, which includes variable skills students learned from receiving education or from their social activities, would be a mirror of the importance of human capital. It is clear that parts of the employability, such as the professional skills, the academic reputation and some soft skills, mainly acquired through education. Thus, the evaluation of the personal graduate competence matches both the theory of employability and human capital.

In the reflection from the interview candidates and the interpreting data, graduate competences could help the international graduates to be easier to access to the Swedish labor market at a certain level.

The definition of certain here refers to the certain type of skills and certain results. The graduate competences that could localize international graduates are more crucial for the international graduates. Thus, the communication skills which makes the international graduates easy to get along with the local residences and the working experiences seems to be the crucial factors for those who are keen to work in Sweden after graduation.

Besides, the employability does not show its strong influences specific on international graduates as they show when they influence the overall graduates. The influences of the employability would bring certain results, such as giving you a chance to get an interview or seems to be more competitive to the other local counter partner. However, in the end, it is not the leading factor.

Finding 2: There is possibility that some economic and social factors will influence the final result of international graduates' local employment.

Remarking by the participants as a most crucial one factor influencing the international graduates to get adapt to Sweden is the language barrier. The native language is Swedish in Sweden. However, the entire candidate studied and used English in Sweden.

As the campus of Swedish is quite international and the average level of English in Swedish is quite high. International students feel no push in learning Swedish. In addition, the source of learning Swedish for international graduates is limited that makes the international graduates feel difficulty when they try to find a job. The most of the information channel is in Swedish, most of the job position requires Swedish and working environment is in Swedish. It goes without saying that there is certain job position does not require must obtain English. However, if the informational channel to obtain this kind of job information is mostly on a Swedish website or job affair. The labor market will block the international graduates certainly.

Also, regarding the openness of the labor market and the information channel, the significance of the Swedish embodied. The labor market welcomes the international graduates. However, the possibility of integrating with the work environment that domains are Swedish, both the people and language, is the prior requirement.

Besides, the regional economies are differently developed in Sweden. Some centralized or well-located cities, such as Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö, show a larger capacity to accept international graduates. As one might expect that the international graduates studying in such prosperous region have more opportunities than those who studying in small cities.

There is another important finding makes more significance to the policy-making perspective on Sweden. As the launched the new post-study residence permit, the graduates has the privilege to prolong their stay in Sweden after graduation to half a year. That is to say, international graduates will get a time cushion. According to the reflections from both new graduates and graduates who had been in Sweden for a couple of years, a half year time cushion provide help for those graduates who are keen to find a local job. The visa has significant influences.

Thus, in general, the social factors and economic factors have strong influences on local employment of international graduates.

Finding 3: The economic and the social factors are as important as individual employability in terms of international graduates finding a job in host countries.

Comparing the two perspectives, it is clear that the social and economic factors are crucial for the international graduates in Sweden. Especially, Sweden as a Nordic country, the challenge from language barrier even makes the integrating in the society and mutual understanding needs many efforts.

The Swedish not only is a requirement for most of the job position but also barrier for the graduates to get close to the labor market or acquire useful information concerning employment. Prior to the display of the personal employability, the language barriers might already block the graduates to access to the labor market and information channel. Besides, the openness of labor marker might influence by the different economic situation in respective regions. Thus, the social and economic factors might have larger influences on international graduates who are finding a job in Sweden.

7.2 Other Findings

Besides of the findings with respect to competences and social factors, there are other remarks worthy attentions.

1. Language barrier is the utmost factors influencing the international graduates on local employment

As stated above, Swedish is the most important essence of the result of international graduates on local employment. The influences of language barriers embodied in several perspectives, including the social network integration, the information channel, the access to the labor market and their possibility to survive in Sweden working environment.

This finding reflected and indicated that the importance of the language acquirement for international students again. Most of the international students studied abroad without native language, the practical usage and the professional level of language specific in working would challenge their future career in host countries.

2. Visa policy is crucial for international graduates

The visa policy is crucial for international graduates. Some of the international graduates lose their opportunity to work in Sweden before the new post-study residence

permit launched. They don't have enough time to make many efforts to search jobs or apply jobs. Especially, when the regions block the labor market and the information channel, the more time the graduates have, the more opportunity for them to find information.

To this extent, the other nations which are also going to charge tuition from the non-EU/EEA students should pay special attention on the relevant policy on Visa for international graduates.

3. Certain employability factors that could help international graduates overcoming the social obstacle or language barriers have more value than other factors for international graduates.

Due to the complexity of the Swedish employment for international students, the first concerns for the graduates are how to find useful information and how to break the barriers made by the language.

Besides, as most of the information channel is not transparent, the importance to obtain information from local human networks becomes important. As remarked by the data, the employability factors, such as communication skills, the working experiences, and other factors would embody the potential integration in the local society will make the international graduates seems more suitable.

Especially, all participants marked the academic reputation least useful for them to find a job. It is possible that the international graduates need to train employability aiming at exploring more network, breakthrough their integration in the local and drawing attention from the employers than emphasizing the academic reputation of the school. .

4. The economy influences the openness of labor market.

The economic environment would lead to the distribution of labors variation in regions and the openness of the migration labors. Thus, the economy in the host country is also a crucial factor influencing the international graduates.

As the labor economic indicated, the demand-supply chain in one labor market determined the openness of certain labor market to the migration labor. International graduates as a part of migration labor are inevitable to face the impact of the economy.

It is general accepted that when the economic is prosperous enough to provide more demand than supply in the labor market, there will be more positions left for the migration labors. In an opposite way, even the local counter partners would face the challenge of the employment, let alone the market for migration labors. It indicated in the data that even different regions in a national follow this rule when the entire nation has a better economy; the first line cities have more opportunities for international graduates than those small towns.

In general, if international students have the intention to find a job in the host country when they decide to study abroad, they may need to evaluate the location of the university.

5. Regarding international graduates, the social factor is more influential than employability competences.

In general, the factors influencing the employability concern many perspectives. In this paper, I focus on mainly on employability competence and the social factors. It is clear show in the data that the social factors have more influences for international graduates to survive in the local labor market than the competences, such as soft skills, interview skills or the academic reputation.

It is understandable, prior to showing their competitive abilities to handle the work tasks, the international graduates peruse first to find a breakthrough to access to the labor market. Comparably, their local counter partners have no worries with respect to this issue. They are native.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, the research is designed to find out what are factors that influence Swedish international graduates to find a job in the host country. Combined with the findings and the data analysis, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the social

factors, such as language barriers, the visa policy in the host country, the understanding of the labor market and the ability to access to the channel of the local career, is more crucial for the international graduates.

Besides, the certain employability competences will influence the result of the efforts the international graduates made. Nevertheless, prior to those more valuable professional skills and soft skills, those competences made the graduates easy integrating with the local society and workplace is significant for the international graduates.

It is also significant that the different regional economies have certain influences. If the students studying in a more prosperous and international region, they will have more opportunities than those who studied in the less prosperous region. It is possible that the geographical distribution of economy is another important factor, that is to say where the host institutions locate is important.

Nevertheless, the research is mostly designed for qualitative research. Due to the limitation of time, I did not have more time to do a quantitative research to verify the findings with a large size of the samplings.

However, I still consider that this research would bring some inspirations to those who are conducting employability studies. The international graduates should distinguish from the local counter partners in terms of the certain perspectives. Thus, I recommended that the future studies on the employability of international graduates may peruse distinguishing between host employment and employment at home.

To summarized, this paper conducted a specific study on international graduates' employability with regard to local employment. Through the qualitative study, it is suggested that international graduates peruse to train or make an effort to be more localized if they are planning to join in Swedish labor market.

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Glossary

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

EU: European Union

GAO: United States Government Accountability Office

BIS: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Great Britain

Bologna Process: Bologna Process is a series of meetings and agreements between European countries made by their ministries.

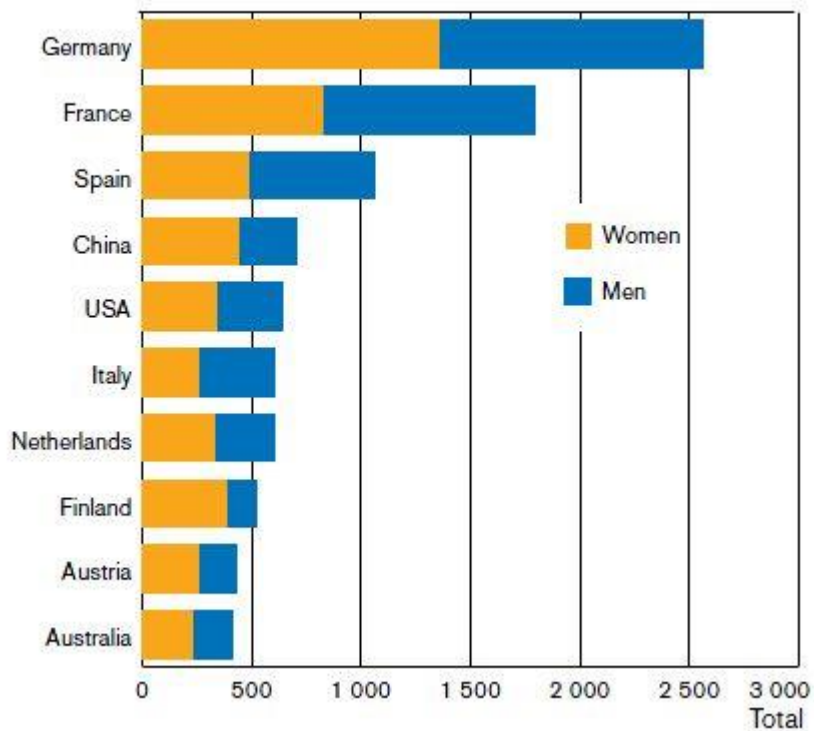
Swedish Higher Education Authority: is the national higher education agency in Sweden, its main tasks contains quality assurance and statistical analysis.

Nordic countries: refer to the countries located norther part of Europe, including Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Iceland.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Swedish exchange students by nations for the academic year of 2012/13.



(Source: Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2014)

Appendix 2. The Protocols of the Interview

An Email Interview from MaRIHE graduates' research

Greetings from Sun Qi, an Erasmus Mundus-MaRIHE student. I am conducting a research on local employment in Sweden from the international graduates' perspective. This research aims at studying the factors influencing the international graduates to find a job in their host countries. At an earlier time you indicated that you would be willing to participate in research, my sincere appreciation on your participation!

Involvement in this interview is entirely voluntary. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions you do not wish to answer. All information you provide will be considered confidential. The survey will take about 30 minutes. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please let me know.

Part one. Personal information

- What is your name?
- Where are you from
- Which Swedish university were you graduate from?

- What is your major?
- What is your education degree acquired in Sweden?
- How long have you stayed in Sweden?
- Where are you working now, in your home country or in the host country

Part two. Evaluating the involvement of Swedish higher education institutions with respect to international graduates' employment

- Is there any career centers or job centers in your Swedish university

If yes, have you ever attended the activities organized by them, such as job fairs? How do you evaluate the efficiency of the career center in helping international graduates to find a local job?

- Does your university provided information of internships or part-time job for international students? If yes, How do you evaluate it
- Have you acquired any career information specific in helping international students to find a job in the host country during your study? If yes, how do you evaluate it

Part three. Evaluating the social factors that influencing the international students to find a job.

- How do you evaluate the visa policy in Sweden, do you think it is friendly to the international graduates who are planning to find a job in Sweden?
- Do you consider language as a barrier for international graduates to find a job and live in Sweden
- how do you evaluate the information channel of the employment in Sweden, do you consider it as friendly to international graduates
- How do you evaluate the openness of the labor market in Sweden, do you feel that the labor market is as open to the international graduates as they are to your local counterparts?
- If you have any other social factors that you consider have influenced or were obstacles during your process of finding a job in Sweden, please specific here

Part Four. Evaluating the skills

- How do you evaluate the function of employability factors, such as soft skills, academic reputation, communication skills, problem solving, functional skills, and working or internship experiences? Do you agree that they are crucial for international graduates who are intending to find a job in Sweden?
- Besides of the factors indicated above, if there are other skills were very helpful during your process of finding a job in Sweden, please specific here
- Comparing with the social factors stated in Part three, do you consider that the employability factors play a more important role in terms of international graduates finding a job in the host country?

Part Five, Conclusion

In general, as tuition is charging in Sweden, do you think the career future of Swedish international graduates worthy them to invest large tuition in studying in Sweden?

Thanks for your kindly participation! My sincere appreciation!