

Abstract

Forced migration is referred to as the forcible displacement of people to new regions. When highly educated professionals are forcibly displaced, they need to cope with the challenge of integrating into the host country's economic system. Unfortunately, being a well-educated immigrant does not automatically guarantee a professional job in most host countries. Barriers such as lack of work permits, unfamiliarity with the system, incomplete professional certifications, language limitations, and limited networking prevent them from incorporating into the host economy. Under these circumstances, many high-skilled new immigrants are practically forced to take low-skill and low-payment jobs, that are physically demanding. This phenomenon is known as downward mobility. This phenomenological study focuses on understanding downward mobility's negative effects among well-educated immigrants. It provides recommendations to cope with the phenomenon. A Downward Mobility Readiness Survey (DMRS) is included to create awareness about this topic.

Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the experiences and challenges faced by well-educated immigrants when they are forcibly displaced from their home countries.

From a social-constructivist paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018), the study focuses on specific contexts in which forced immigrants live and work, describing their downward mobility experience and expressing their perceived meaning about the world in the host country.

The study provides recommendations to cope with downward mobility. It fosters acculturation and integration into the host economy.

Causes of Forced Migration

Armed conflicts

Civil unrest situation

Political persecution

Environmental disasters and change

Poor economy and oppressive poverty

Threat of physical safety

Limitations of the Study

Sample size: The preliminary findings report results only from one participant.

Personal bias: Personal identification as an immigrant might have added some bias and personal views to the study.

Data: The study only includes one source of data, which limits the possibility for triangulation and validation of the findings.

Forced Migration: Tales of Downward Mobility

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Methodology

This qualitative study used a phenomenological design. The study adhered to ethical guidelines and followed the institutional review board (IRB) protocol. Snowball sampling was used to locate individuals for the study. The participant is a middle-age, male, professional, facing downward mobility. All information from the participant was masked and coded for reporting purposes. The data collection was completed through a face-to-face semi-structured interview, with open-ended questions. The interview was audio-recorded and transcribed, then coded, and organized into themes, based on the affinity of the codes. The trustworthiness of the study was ensured by cross-checking the coding and results with peers.

Themes Identified

Better education "once I finish my degree, then I will apply for a better job"	Children education "we came here for better children education"	Quality of life "we will get better time in the future"
Challenge "Everything is challenging, and you know, new country [laughing]"	Time constraints "you try to balance [activities] accordingly. Time is one constraint... it's very difficult. It's not easy"	Language barriers "I want to learn the language and getting accustomed to the culture, faster"
Multidimensional roles "I have a lot of pressure like study, family"	Skills and Experience degradation "they [actual job] don't recognize our degree from our country"	Acculturation [My actual job] "would help me to know the culture context "
Diaspora "sometimes we go with them [diaspora]"	Transitional stage "they [family] know that we are in a big transition"	Long distances and family dependence "I have to drop my son, pick my son and daughter, sometimes and I need to give ride for my wife also"

How to Cope with Downward Mobility

Use the multidimensional role such as food provider, driver, connector, and even translator to strengthen family's bonds.

Find ways of acculturation to the host economy.

Try to get a local accreditation or certification.



Understand this stage as a transitional period.

Identify, connect, and socialize with their diaspora.

Pushing children to perform well in their classes to get a college degree and a good job.

Literature Review: The Negative Effects of Downward Mobility

Low self-esteem: immigrants with higher level qualifications end up doing unskilled jobs (Bhugra, 2004).

Depressive episodes: first-generation of Latino and Asian immigrants residing in the United States (Nicklett, 2009).

Status decline: jobs are attained to social status in their home countries (Gans, 2009).

Language barrier: low-interaction jobs (Gans, 2009).

Education–occupation mismatch: education and skills of immigrants do not match the job acquired (Leontiyeva, 2014).

Glass gate: keeping immigrants from entering professional communities (Guo, 2013).

Glass door: keeping immigrants from being hired on some specific fields (Guo, 2013).

Glass-ceiling : restricting the immigrants from rising to management positions & salaries (Guo, 2013).

The devaluation of immigrant's prior learning and work experience delay their integration process (Guo, 2013).

Downward Mobility Readiness Survey (DMRS)
Could You Survive Downward Mobility?
Use a QR scanner and take the **challenge**.



References

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