Experiences and challenges of international migrant students: at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College).

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Durban, South Africa

2019

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Abstract

Globalization and internationalization has played an influential role in increasing the number of international students studying in foreign institutions. Over the last couple of decades the number of international students studying at higher learning institutions worldwide has been growing steadily. However, there is still limited literature more especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, hence this study saw it fit and appropriate to try and fill this gap by outlining and highlighting the perspectives and experiences of international students at a tertiary institution in South Africa. Students migrate to integrate into a new academic environment to pursue higher degrees in fields of interest. However, the process of integration is punctuated not only with opportunities but with challenges as well. Therefore, this research explores in-depth the various challenges and experiences of international students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard college.

The overall aim of this study is to shed insights into the challenges facing international migrant students. The study adopted a qualitative research paradigm and it was guided by the push and pull theory. The sample comprised 20 international students, both males and females. The data was analysed using thematic content analysis. The findings of this study indicate that students encounter both positive and negative experiences in their process of their academic journey. The major challenges include language, financial constraints and the difficulties of obtaining study permit. The study found that the language difficulties affect students in different ways more especially for students who are non-native English speakers. This included understanding lecturers and students, participating in class discussions, doing oral presentation and writing assignments and also to communicate and socialize. Financial pressure is another big problem international students have to face, especially those who do not get financial aids and have to pay tuitions and living expenses all by themselves. Participants also mentioned that they struggle to obtain study permit on time and this pose challenges for their academics. In terms of positive experiences, the students highlighted the benefits of being at the university including learning a new language, new intercultural experiences and feeling validated, obtaining prestige, status and international recognized qualifications.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to Thank Thee Almighty God for his grace and mighty hand over me; for giving me the strength, courage and wisdom in completing this study. Through his mercy he has guided and granted me patience throughout the study. His love, protection has taken me up this far. You are indeed the Alpha and the Omega.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the following people:

My sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Pranitha Maharaj, thank you for your explicit constructive criticism, valuable feedback, patience and excellent advices. Your support and encouragement have not gone unnoticed. This study would not have been complete were it not for your assistance, guidance and encouragement.

To my mother Mrs Buyisile Biyela, thank you so much for your prayers, financial, emotional support and unconditional love. You were an important source of empowerment. Thank you for the countless ways you have encouraged me to hold on and push harder. I really appreciate all your support.

To the entire family thank you for your warmth love, care, support and always being there throughout my studies.

My most sincere gratitude to my participants, Howard College International students who took their time to talk to me and contribute their knowledge to the study. I appreciate you, God bless.

To everyone else, my friends and classmates, I am grateful for the friendship and support.

I remain humble and forever grateful; may you all find my expressed feelings of gratitude and appreciation with love from my heart. God bless you all.

List of Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
EFL	English Foreign Language
ESL	English Second Language
EUROSTAT	European Statistical Office
FFPS	Full Fee-Paying Students
HC	Howard College
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HSSREC	Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
IEASA	International Education Association of South Africa
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SRC	Student Representative Council
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
WITS	University of Witwatersrand

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Chapter one

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Travelling for the purpose of education is not a new phenomenon and it can be traced back too many centuries. Since the beginning of a democratic society in South Africa in 1994, the government of South Africa has begun to promote and emphasise the importance of education in the country by increasing access to education to all students, including students from other countries around the world (Riaño and Piguet, 2016). Over the past 20 years, growth in educational industries has provided new opportunities for international students, as well as local students. The numbers of students choosing to partake in abroad educational programmes has grown steadily with students actively encouraged to travel abroad in order to cultivate personal capabilities and to develop new skills. Lately, attracting students from around the world and equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to compete in international markets has been used as a strategy for many countries to develop their economy and reputation.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2018) defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border, or within a country, away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) the causes of the movement or (4) the length of the stay. A migrant student can therefore be defined as any student who has moved from their place of origin to another place (districts, county, state or national boundaries) to fulfil their educational goal.

There are various types of migration, namely internal migration (e.g. within a country); external or 'international' migration, emigration (leaving one country to move to another); immigration (moving into a new country); return migration (moving back to where you came from); seasonal migration (moving with each season or in response to climate conditions); economic and labour migration; family migration (moving to join family members); forced, impelled and reluctant migration; retirement migration and many others (Barclay, 2010). For the purpose of this study, only those migrants who crossed national boundaries were considered, the interest of the study being on international migration.

The definition of international student varies in each country in accordance to their own national education system. International students are defined differently by different scholars in varying contexts. Verbik and Lasanowski (2007) asserted that, in Canada, an international student is defined as a temporary resident who is residing by gaining or obtaining permission from an immigration officer to study a course for the duration of longer than six months. While in the United States of America (USA) international students are individuals studying in the United States on a non-immigrant, temporary visa that allows for academic study at the post- secondary level (Hazen and Alberts, 2006). Any pupil who is without a permanent residence or does not have a long-term status is regarded as an international or foreign student in the USA. In the United Kingdom (UK) however, international students are distinguished by their domiciliary address. Therefore, a British passport holder is classified as an international student if they live in any country outside the European Union. In Australia, to determine whether a student is international or domestic, their citizenship and residence status are used. A domestic student is defined as an Australian citizen who holds a permanent Australian status. In the African context, an international student is defined as *"one who undertakes all or part of his/her higher education experience in a country other than the home country*" (Kwaramba, 2012, p.5).

An international student, according to the Institute of International Education, is defined as an individual who has moved from one country to another primarily for the purpose of study (as cited by the Council of Higher Education, 2006). Bessey (2012) noted that these are individuals who are referred to as 'foreign students', overseas and full fee-paying students (FFPS) in their host countries who have left the shores of their home countries in order to gain international knowledge, experience and qualification. International students are generally defined as having left their country of origin and moved to another country for the purpose of study and are usually divided into two groups: those who move abroad to complete a degree (degree mobility) or a short-term study exchange (credit mobility) (Riaño and Piguet, 2016). Internationally mobile students typically hold a non-resident visa status (sometimes called a student's visa) to pursue a tertiary degree (or higher) in the destination country. These individuals are also called "degree-mobile students", to emphasize the fact that they would be granted a foreign degree, and to distinguish them from "credit-mobile students" on short exchange or study-abroad trips. Drawing from Waters and Brooks (2011), international students are potential global citizens, cosmopolitans and ambassadors of inter-cultural understanding.

There is confusion over international students' status in relation to their definition of who they are in the host country. UNESCO (2013) recognises that there are many overlapping definitions of international students. The above descriptions have tried to illustrate the inconsistency of definitions, and potential complexities of comparing international students and the identity of who they are. There have been attempts to improve the documentation or identification of international students. In 2015, a number of organisations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and European Statistical Office (EUROSTAT), the European Union's statistical office, agreed on the term of "internationally mobile students" definition, which defines migrant students as having crossed a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin. UNESCO (2014) affirms that their given explanation captures the most important group of international students, those in a foreign country for educational purposes. As asserted by UNESCO, the focus of this description is also on students who are enrolled for a tertiary degree where the length of stay is more than one year but up to seven years (2014).

The international mobile student definition was proposed in 2006, with host destinations or countries being urged to use this term to refer to international students and to differentiate them from domestic students. UNESCO describes an international mobile student as any individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin. (UNESCO, 2013). The organisation further advocates for a better distinction and recognition of international students, with a clear emphasis that the use of a proper term still depends on the host country. While there is a clear multiplicity of definitions for international student terms, this study will adopt and use the broadest definition by UNESCO.

The movement of students from their home countries to other countries has been one of the top priorities of international institutions (Riaño and Piguet, 2016). Many countries attract international students because they offer extra and different benefits to the host country, i.e. extra income, higher labour market participation and economic growth (Gribble and Blackmore, 2012). As the sector continues to grow, it has become an important source of income for countries leading to fierce competition to attract students (de Wit, 2008). An influx of international students into a country influences the academic, cultural and financial growth of that country over the years and this leads to serious competition for international

students, which continues to date (de Wit, 2008). In order to attract international students, it is important that international student's priorities and specific needs with regards to their education are identified and satisfied.

According to Dwyer (2004), global education is an effective learning experience that promotes exposure to outside occurrences and practices and this experience usually lasts for a very long time in the human mind. Their experiences are likely to influence their pre-existing beliefs and attitudes about their education in their host university as well as enable them to build more semantic realisations for themselves about their experiences before, during and after their academic programmes (McKeown, 2009). Unfortunately, it has been noted that international students experience difficulties in their host country. For most students, the idea of studying abroad evokes visions of exploring new cultures, languages and educational opportunities, as well as of making new friends in interesting locations. However, the experience is not without its challenges, and sometimes, they encounter the unexpected. It is therefore the purpose of this study to investigate the challenges faced by international students in their host country.

1.2. Background

Migration into South Africa is not a recent phenomenon and is rooted in the country's economic history dating back to the nineteenth century when slave labour was brought to the Western Cape to support early agricultural development in the then Cape Colony (Vandeyar, 2010). Due to modernization which resulted in globalization, the internationalisation of higher education has increased dramatically, and it has become a market-driven activity. With the rapid rise of international education, more and more students are seeking higher education in foreign countries. There were over 13 000 international students enrolled in South African universities in 1996, and in 2007 that figure rose sharply to over 53 000 (IEASA, 2009). The number of students travelling internationally continues to grow, with 4.5 million international students studying worldwide in 2013/2014 (IIE, 2015). It is predicted that by 2025 there will be up to 8 million international students globally (IIE, 2015). As nations are becoming more interconnected, the movement of students from their countries of origin to another country for the purpose of higher education is dramatically increasing by the internationalisation of higher education (UNESCO, 2013). The increase in international students worldwide is attributed to factors such as accessibility to travel, young people remaining in education

longer, higher living standards and a greater disposable income with parents willing to spend more on education and travel (Chew and Croy Glen, 2011).

Since South Africa's independence in 1994, there has been a steady growth of international students attending tertiary institutions in South Africa. The demise of apartheid brought about renewed hope, not only for South Africans but for other African countries that perceive South Africa as the solution for their social and economic woes (Laughlin, 2016). An influx of international students into a country influences the academic, cultural and financial growth of that country over the years and this leads to serious competition for international students (de Wit, 2008). As a result, many institutions in South Africa must cater to students from wide-ranging cultural and national diversities. According to MacGregor (2011), South Africa is the most popular destination for African students on the continent. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that South Africa is the preferred destination for various categories of migrants including educational migrants. Reasons for South Africa being a country of choice include the economic stability, low-cost tuition fees and the promise of a unique academic experience (Mudhovozi, 2011). MacGregor (2011) asserted that international student numbers at South Africa's 23 public universities have quadrupled since 1994 from 12557 to 53733 in 2006. Furthermore, according to Mudhovozi (2011) in 2007, there were some 60 000 international students studying at tertiary institutions in South Africa.

The increase in the number of international students and the advancement in higher institution education maybe linked with globalization and internalization. Globalization is defined as *"the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas, etc. across borders"* (Nabih, and Riad, 2017, p.178). It is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and a multi-faceted process with economic, social, political and cultural implications for higher education (Shahidi, and Seyedi, 2012). Globalization has a great effect on every aspect of human life including higher education (Nabih, and Riad, 2017). Internalisation denotes the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education which is teaching and learning, research and service functions of a higher education institution (Knight and de Wit, 1997). It is well known that the internalization of higher education is not a new or a recent phenomenon globally. Likewise, internationalisation of education has been a goal for student movements for decades.

According to Brown (2009), lately almost all institutions of higher education both public and private are rapidly evolving into global actors following a trend found in many other industries. Similarly, Enders (2004) emphasises that the influence of globalization and internationalization on the character and behaviour of higher education institutions has become a key theme in recent research. Due to the increase in these two phenomena lately, scholars have described the twenty first century as the century of educational mobility and global schooling. Internationalisation is a remarkable trend in higher education argues (Lee, 2006). The current improvements and changes in international education industry are notable in three respective aspects (Chew and Croy Glen, 2011). Firstly, there has been a double increase in student mobility in the past decades. Secondly, programme mobility including distance education has also led to new forms of cross-border education. Lastly, institution mobility through such commercial deals as franchises and twinning arrangements are becoming an increasingly important feature of cross-border education, even though they are on a limited scale. These are the recent developments that have been noticed as leading to the emergency of a new marketplace for the international education sector (Chew and Croy Glen, 2011).

1.3. Problem statement

There has been a noticeable rise in the numbers of international migrant students travelling abroad, with the purpose of fulfilling their educational journey in foreign high learning institutions. Surprisingly, there is still limited literature on the international student's experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically at a tertiary level. According to Bessey (2012), despite the growing importance of internationalization in higher education, the amount of research that has been dedicated to the topic up to now is quite small. While there has been significant literature on international students globally most of these studies are on international students' experiences and challenges in other countries rather than South Africa. For instance, most studies focus on the experiences of international students in developed countries like United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australia. Therefore, the researcher saw it fit and appropriate for one to try and fill this gap by outlining and highlighting the perspectives and experiences of international students at a tertiary level within the South African context. This study aims to add to the scarce existing empirical evidence on international student migration by exploring and investigating the underlying issue of international student's challenges and experiences.

International students are likely to experience a wide variety of challenges in their host countries, which might have a negative impact on their functioning academically and on their well-being. According to Ward et al. (2001), international students are an important component of many higher learning institutions and research has found that they encounter more problems than host or local students. Therefore, it important to research the experiences of international students and therefore the purpose of this research is to better understand the educational challenges they experience.

My intention to conduct this study was motivated by my daily experiences as I am one of the students who is currently a postgraduate student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal which has a diversity of students from different countries. Since my first year as an undergraduate until now, I have noticed how international students encounter difficulties within the campus and in residences. Throughout the period of my study, I have interacted with a number of international students. Therefore, this study focuses specifically on exploring the perspectives and experiences of international migrant students. In order to explore, the experiences of international students, it is essential to understand international students' reasons and aspirations to study abroad (Bartram, 2009 and Dwyer and Peters, 2004), as well as the problems that they face with regards to their academics, pedagogy and enculturation in the new environment.

1.4. Aim of the study

The overall aim of the study was to shed insights into the challenges facing international migrant students in Durban, South Africa.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To gain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives and experiences of international migrant students
- To assess the barriers international students face in completing their education
- To ascertain opportunities and constraints for improving the situation of international migrants**.**

In order to address the research problem, the study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- What are the perspectives and experiences of international migrant students?
- What are the challenges faced by international migrant students in completing their education?
- What, if any, are the existing support systems for international migrant students and how do they function?

This study employed a qualitative research approach which has allowed the researcher to explore the experiences and challenges of international migrant students in-depth. Using this approach was seen as relevant as it allows the researcher to engage critically with students' direct experiences from their own perspective. In addition, Polit and Beck (2008) assert that a qualitative approach is scientific in nature because it ensures clarity of ideas and adequate probing, which usually provides well-grounded data. Thus, qualitative research usually yields more resourceful results than other methods of inquiry. Through a qualitative approach, the researcher was able to develop rich and in-depth responses from participants.

1.5. Theoretical framework

In order to attempt to explain and understand the research phenomenon investigated by the study the push and pull theory was used. The push and pull theory is the most commonly used theory amongst many others in relation to migration studies. The push and pull theory of international migration is a classic model that is commonly used to explain student migration, as it allows for the identification of push and pull factors that work in conjunction to affect student decision-making (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). Ernest Ravenstein, the migration theorist who devised the term push and pull process and established this theory in the 1880s explained that this framework still forms the basis for modern migration theory (Ravenstein, 1976). He concluded that unfavourable conditions in one place push people out and favourable conditions in another pull people in. This comprehensive theory was later revised by Everett Lee in 1996.

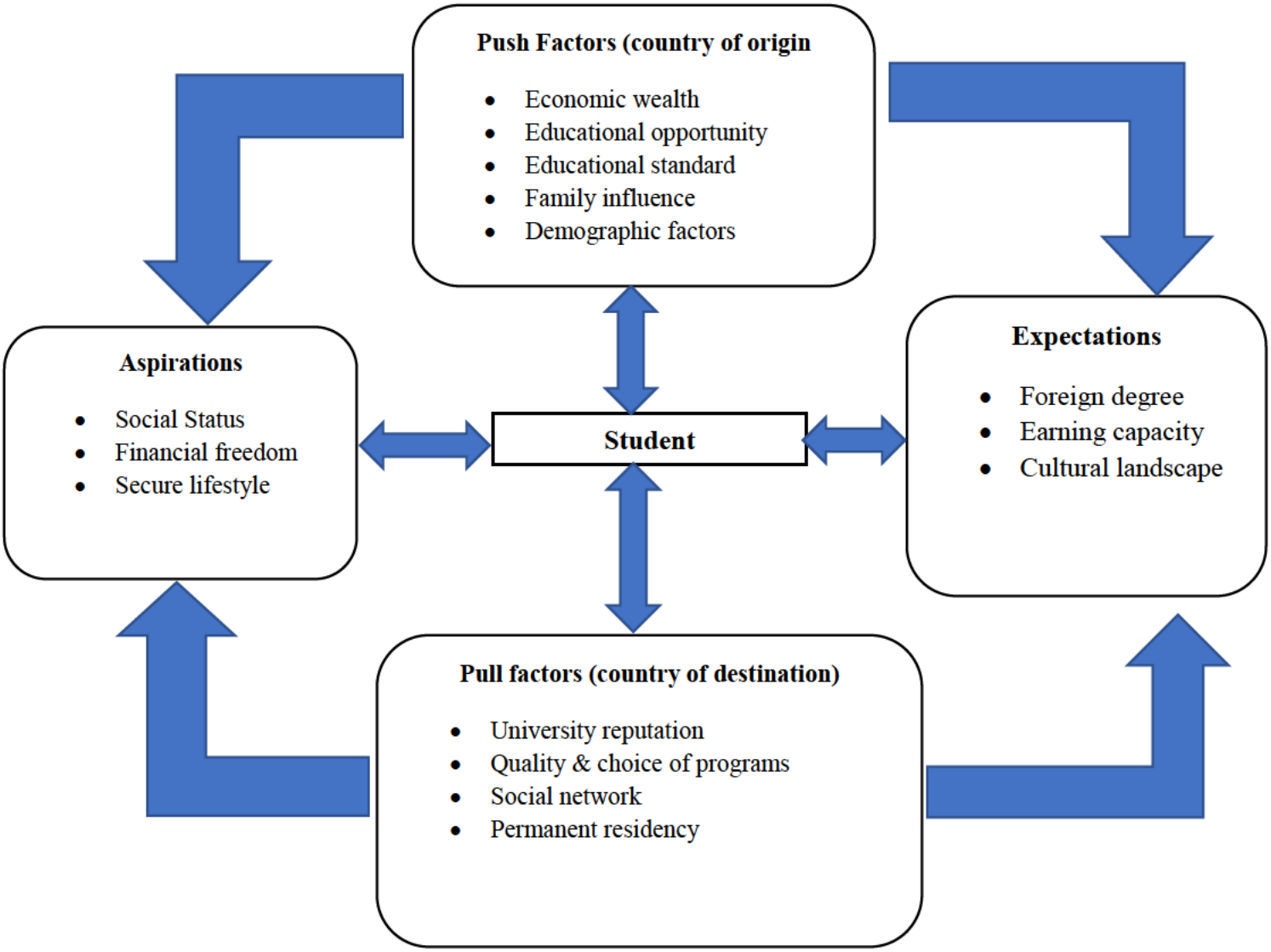
According to Lee (1996), there are four factors which lead to spatial movement of population in any area namely; factors associated with the place of origin, factors associated with the place of destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors. Each place holds a set of both positive and negative factors. "*Positive factors are the circumstances that act to hold people within it or attract people from other areas; negative factors tend to repel them"* (Lee, 1975,

p.191). Lee asserts that individuals who tend to move have undergone a perfect and intensive assessment of factors in their place of origin due to their long association with the area (Lee, 1996). They know the positive and the negative factors of their place of origin in depth, however, it necessarily not the same thing with the area of destination as they do not know about them. An individual may know most of the positive factors and little of the negatives. If not, they tend to ignore the negative side and consider the positive side more; hence their desire to migrate is the controlling aspect.

Todaro (1969 cited in Mangalu, 2012) explains that the push and pull theory implies that people migrate from one place to another because of demographic, environmental and economic factors. Two main forces, namely the unsatisfactory condition in the home country of the migrant and perceived or imaginary satisfactory condition in the country of destination are the sources of the push and pull (Todaro, 1969). In relation to the above for the context of international student's migration, it can be said that international student migrants move from their place of origin to a new environment, because they are pulled by certain educational opportunities as well as other fascinating factors. The pull factors that draw a student to a destination are multifaceted and are influenced by many factors including: knowledge of the host country, language, educational programmes, alumni, proximity and access to home country, post-study benefits, home institutions collaboration with host institution, tutors, family and friends and prestige (Mazzarol, Kemp and Savery, 1997).

Thus, this theory explains that the unfavourable circumstances in a home country are the push factors that force individuals to migrate to where they perceive life to be offering better conditions. Kraler and Bilger (2005) explain that immigrants are pulled and attracted to the new land by opportunities and better living conditions obtainable in the host country. These could be education, social and economic circumstances and so forth. Much of the push and pull factors that influence migration of students will be further discussed in this study. The diagram below illustrates the push and pull factors for international students plus their aspirations and expectations in the host country. The push and pull factors of international students will be discussed in-depth in the literature review.

Figure1.1. Theoretical framework diagram.



Source: Lee (1996)

1.6. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation has been divided into five chapters, with the first chapter essentially introducing the study by offering background information and discussing the problem statement, providing the aim and objectives of the study, key research questions, and the theoretical framework that underpins and guides the study. Chapter two presents the literature review which examines relevant studies that have been done regarding international students' experiences and challenges. Chapter three of the dissertation comprises the research

methodology; basically, it deals with the chosen methods that were used to carry out the research. Chapter four essentially discusses and presents the analysis of the data obtained from the study. Chapter five synthesises the main findings and outlines the major conclusions drawn from the research findings and recommendations in relation to the study.

Chapter two

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of selected scholarly studies relevant to the experiences of international migrant students. The chapter starts by providing a brief understanding of migration; it then reviews the reasons for students selecting the host country. It explores the push and pull factors that influence student migration. In addition, the chapter discusses some of the challenges facing migrant students. Little research has been done on the international migrant student's experiences and challenges in South Africa (Mokau, 2012). Mostly literature reviews the learning experiences of international students in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australia (Forland, 2006; Klomegah, 2006; Özturgut and Murphy, 2009; Mori, 2000).

2.2. Understanding migration

The globalisation of higher education has become fashionable in many countries (Maadad, 2013), resulting in students finding themselves being drawn to studying in different parts of the world rather than in their home countries. Increasing globalization has resulted in people moving around the world in search of new opportunities and experiences, including students, for financial, academic and various other reasons. Wilkins and Huisman (2011) noted that during the second half of the 20th century, the forces of globalisation encouraged increased student mobility across national boundaries. Migration is a global phenomenon caused not only by economic factors, but also by social, political, cultural, environmental, health, education and transportation. It often takes place as a result of push factor in the home regions, such as few socio-economic opportunities, and pull factors that exist elsewhere that results in the desire to move. Zanker (2008) noted that migration refers to a temporary or permanent movement of individuals or groups of people from one geographic location to another for different reasons ranging from better employment possibilities to persecution. According to Barclay, the meaning of migration is at once publicly engaging and highly contested, internationally important and context specific, deeply embedded in rational policy calculations and the subject of emotive narratives and personal stories (2010). Human migration commonly signifies the movement of people from one place to another,

particularly over national borders, in order to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence (Dirk, 2012).

2.2.1. International education migration

Education continues to serve as a catalyst for globalization efforts around the world (Darby, 2015). To build a more global economy, many countries are realizing the need for internationalization as a part of their higher institution education systems. The emergence of international education as a discipline may be attributed to previous international and intercontinental initiatives, which aimed to achieve education, learning, and intellectual exchange. This is demonstrated in the formalized academic relations between countries in the form of bilateral and scientific agreements (McGrath, Simon, Gu and Qing, 2015). International education is considered as a mechanism of international cooperation and in some cases, stems from the recognition that different cultures offer varying outlooks and styles of learning and teaching, in addition to the transfer of knowledge (Wessala and Georg, 2011).

International education refers to a dynamic concept that involves a journey or movement of people, minds or ideas, across political and cultural frontiers (Moran and Holly, 2002). According to King, Roger et al. (2011), it is facilitated by the globalization phenomenon, which increasingly erases the constraints of geography on economic, social and cultural arrangements. Wiseman and Alexander (2018) assert that the concept involves a broad range of learning, covering areas such as formal education and informal learning (e.g. training, exchange programs, cross-cultural communication). Moran and Holly (2002) suggest that it could also involve a reorientation of academic outlook, such as the pursuit of world mindedness as a goal, with a school or its academic focus being considered international. According to Cambridge and Thompson (2004), international education is seen as one of the ways of developing international-mindedness, or of enhancing international attitudes and awareness amongst students.

They further explain it from a pragmatic approach, contending that international education can relate to economic and cultural globalization (Cambridge and Thompson, 2004). For instance, there has been an increasing demand for education qualifications to be transferable between schools and education systems. Tate (2013) views international education as a factor that promotes international understanding or international-mindedness and global awareness all at once. It assists in increasing inter-cultural understanding and respect for the difference

and uniqueness of cultures (Tate, 2013). International education may result in student's gaining knowledge of other world regions and cultures and becoming familiar with international and global issues. Thus, skills in working effectively within global or cross-cultural environments, and using information from different sources around the world, are also gained. Additionally, it constitutes the ability to communicate in multiple languages, and engenders respect and concern for other cultures and people.

Students contribute significantly to the migration phenomenon in South Africa and globally. Due to globalization, the internationalization of higher education has increased considerably and has become a market-driven activity. Gribble (2008) indicated that with the rapid rise of international education, more students are seeking higher qualifications in foreign countries, with many international students now considering studying in abroad as a stepping-stone to permanent residency within a country. There has been an increase in the number of international students, which has to a large extent been facilitated by the globalised world. Bessey (2018) compared groups of migrants and found that international students are the fastest-growing group of migrants. In support of this, Chiu (2015) reiterated that in recent decades, the number of students travelling abroad to study in unfamiliar cultural environments had increased dramatically. More recently, the number of international students has grown considerably in the early 21st century (Bessey, 2018).

According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (cited in Harrison, 2011), 11% of the UK's undergraduate student population, approximately 153 000 people, consisted of international undergraduates in 2008/2009. The Institute of International Education (cited in Harrison, 2011) asserted that there was a similar trend in the USA, with 690 923 incoming and 260 327 outgoing students. Dreher and Poutvaara (2011) contend that the number of foreign students in the total student population is higher in Switzerland (17%), Australia (14%), Austria (12%), UK (11%) and USA (3.5%). However, there was a noted decline in international students studying in the UK and USA due to greater national security and obstacles related to obtaining visas (Lee and Rice, 2007). According to Smith and Khawaja (2011), on a globalised level, there were more than 3.3 million tertiary level international students in 2008, which rose to over 4.8 million in 2016, and being higher than the 2 million in 2000 (UNESCO, 2018). More than half of these were enrolled in educational programmes in six countries: the Australia, France, Germany, UK, USA and the Russian Federation.

Prominent sending countries of international students include China, France, Germany, India, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and several Central Asian countries.

Drawing from the study by Macgregor (2007), by the end of apartheid in 1994, South African universities attracted foreign students from all over the world. According to Macgregor, from 1994 to 2007, the number of migrant students into South Africa's public universities had increased from 12,557 to 53,733. The International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) and Higher Education South Africa (HESA) (2008) assert that, by 2007, there were approximately 53, 733 international students, of whom 51,717 (85%) were students from other African countries. These increasing inflows into South Africa are mainly from neighbouring countries and the rest of the continent, with a relatively small proportion from Europe and North America. Macgregor (2007) asserts that two out of three international students, equating to 36 000, are from the 15 members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Zimbabwe has the highest number, constituting18% of international students, followed by Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, which are neighbouring English-speaking countries. According to Macgregor (2007), the large number of SADC students is due to factors such as geographical location, historical connections, use of English as the primary language of instruction, cost of education, and internationally recognized qualifications that give employment prospects, which are points that this research explores.

In recent years, internationalization has become more of an economic driving force, whereas in the past it was an opportunity for diversifying knowledge and research (Darby, 2015). As asserted by Andrade (2006), international students have a considerable economic impact on their host country and make a major input into the academics. Drawing from Frunham (2004), international students not only benefit the host country, but they gain many opportunities and experiences by studying abroad. The contributions that foreign students make to their host nation, both culturally and financially, has encouraged major players to implement further initiatives to facilitate the arrival and integration of overseas students, including substantial amendments to immigration and visa policies and procedures (Varghese, 2008). In 2002, more than one-fourth of the nearly two million migrant students contributed $12 billion to the economic production of the USA (Yepes, 2006). Institutions in the UK are also noted for specifically targeting international students, which has become their prominent source of revenue in the face of budget cuts. Institutions are competing hard to

attract international students, but while there is considerable investment and effort devoted to attracting international students, far less attention is paid to the experiences of international students once they arrive at the host institution (Lee, 2006). Thus, institutions take little accountability and responsibility once they have successfully attracted the students, they worked so hard to recruit (Lee, 2006).

The international student's expenditure (transport, accommodation, food, luxuries and leisure as well as other services) throughout their stay generates revenue in the host countries (Zhai, 2002). According to Naidoo, in the broadest context, the international student's presence assists in sustaining the economic development of the host country at both regional and national levels (2006). International student's fees also constitute considerable income revenue that the educational institutions use to provide the best quality and highest standards of education to both international and local students (ABS, 2011), the interest or profit earned from international students' fees also get used to subsidies the local student's education (Davis, 2009).

International students are an important source of income for local institutions, and they usually pay much more than intuition fees and additional levies than the domestic students (Maundeni et al, 2010). Consequently, the host country's economy is enhanced through the income gained from charging international students higher fees. The Academy of Science of South Africa demonstrated that international students tend to finish their doctorates faster in a period of approximately 4.5 to 4.6 years than that of local colleagues, who take an average of 4.9 years (Academy of Science of South Africa, 2006). Consequently, the institution benefits from government subsidies due to their completing a post-graduate degree at a faster rate. International students also assist in countries such as South Africa, which have a shortage of skilled labour. Therefore, by recruiting international students to post-graduate university programmes and making immigration easier for highly skilled professionals, the country earns skilled labours. Not only does the state benefit, but the students have job opportunities and experience working abroad. The study showed that 48% of doctoral students from the SADC region and 37% from the rest of Africa intended to stay on in South Africa after completing their studies (Academy of Science of South Africa, 2006).

According to Gribble (2008), through international education, mutually beneficial relationships with relevant countries are formed. Gribble (2008) outlines that international

students play a central role in creating and maintaining close diplomatic and trade relations between the host and their home country through education ties. The host country's reputation, global connection and international networks are amongst other affiliations that lead to increased economic competitiveness and provide them with a strong foundation in foreign trade and outside relations (Marlarnd, 2007). Likewise, global partnerships for the host country are achieved by recruiting international students (Castaneda, 2008). The benefits for the host country of international students include ethnic and cultural diversity, which is part of nation building, and the internalisation of universities (Russell, Rosenthal and Thomson, 2010). Moreover, international students increase the interconnectedness of various cultures and countries through educational advancement and exchange of information (Russell, Rosenthal and Thomson, 2010). In addition, domestic students get the opportunity to increase their knowledge and attitudes towards people from other countries and cultures.

2.3. The rationale of selecting the host country

Reasons for international student to select the host country are influenced by many factors. Geographic proximity of the host country, commonality of languages, and perceptions of the quality of institution or education system available in the host country are some of the influencing factors. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) examined the factors motivating international student's choice of selecting the host country, their findings being obtained from four countries (China, India, Indonesia and Taiwan). According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), international student undergoes three steps in the process of deciding to study abroad. First, they must decide that they want to study abroad, and then they select a host country based on the push-pull factors, and lastly, decide which institution to attend within the host country.

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) asserted that the scarcity and difficulty of getting into certain exclusive programmes (medicine, veterinary sciences and other) has justified the migration of students. Some developing countries do not offer such courses, with those that offer them having limited spaces available, which affects their admission criteria (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). They further outline that certain programs are not available in the home country, while the potential host country offers them at a better distinction, which leaves students with no option but to go abroad. Countries such as India, due to their increasing population, do not

have enough institutions of higher education to accommodate everyone, which requires students to migrate.

Drawing from a study conducted by Mazzaro, Kemp and Savery (1997), six factors need to be considered when selecting a host country. Firstly, the student must have knowledge and awareness about the host country (Mazzaro, Kemp and Savery, 1997). The student must know and be aware of all the relevant information about the potential destination. Secondly, the host country's reputation, quality of education and recognition for its qualifications and best standards also plays is a factor. Thirdly, recommendations or referrals made by parents, relatives, friends and the media also contribute to the decision. The more recommended the host country is, the greater is the likelihood that the student will study there. Fourthly, they need to consider the cost issues as an important aspect, which may include frees, living expenses and travel, and need to be affordable and reasonable. The fifth is the environmental conditions, which includes the climate of the potential country correspondingly to geographic proximity. Lastly, the student must establish if they have any family members, friends or mutual friends that live in the designated destination as a form of social support (Mazzaro, Kemp and Savery, 1997), or anyone who has studied or lived there. Once the decision as to which host country to choose has been made, they must decide which institution to attend. Students' selection of institutions is based on a variety of complex issues, as discussed later on this chapter.

2.3.1. Reasons for international students selecting South Africa

South Africa has become a popular academic destination within the African context for a variety of purposes (Mudhovozi, 2011). South African universities have attracted thousands of students from across Africa and globally. In 2011, more than 68 000 international students were enrolled in South African universities, and of those, nearly 40 000 studied on-campus while the rest were distance education students (Monitor, 2013). According to Hughes (2014), the current state of South Africa's higher education system is richly informed by its turbulent past, dynamic present and promising future. When tracing it, Hughes asserted that the past decade has seen remarkable transition in the wake of 2004 legislation overturning years of racial segregation, and universities have also undergone sweeping change to replace the racially based system of years past (2014). Consequently, South Africa is home to 23 public universities that compromise a mix of the traditional, vocational and hybrid models (Hughes, 2014). Macgregor (2006) equally agrees that each institution now accepts a range of

students from all segments of the population. As asserted by Hughes (2014), the number of students who choose to study in South Africa is increasing, and they are uniquely positioned to gain a high-quality education while participating in making history, with the experience of studying abroad also enhancing their competitiveness in the global labour industry.

South African higher educational institutions hold a prominent place on the world stage, with four of its universities claiming high positions in the World University Rankings. The University of Cape Town is South Africa's highest finisher at number 145, while the Universities of Johannesburg and Stellenbosch are both within the top 400. Their campuses have become multi-cultural hubs of academic, social and civic activities, with diversity now being an integral part of the national ethos of this modern-day 'Rainbow Nation'.

The use of English for tuition in most of South African Universities attracts international students to South Africa. Chimucheka (2013) contends that the use of English attracts many students from other countries to study in South Africa, as they will not be forced to learn other languages, as is the case in some other countries. In addition, the academic qualifications obtained at South African institutions are internationally recognized and are perceived to be of a high quality, and have the resources for local research and training, as well as the availability of supervision and expertise (Marko, 2009). The reputation of the South African higher education system and the quality of education offered at the institutions that the international students chose to study is also another factor (Sehoole, 2015).

South African institutions offer exclusive programmes to international students that are not available in their home country (Sehoole, 2015). The duration of the South African undergraduate degrees is another factor, as it typically takes three years to complete, although some programs take four years. Moreover, most South African universities follow a two-semester calendar, running from February to June and July to December, with four quarters holidays division. Studying in South Africa also offers some financial incentives due to favourable international exchange rates. The currency of South African qualifications, flexible admission policies, a stable and peaceful academic environment, and diversification of the academic experience are amongst other factors that influence students studying in South Africa. The favourable and comfortable climatic conditions and diverse landscape also offer opportunities for exploration and discovery.

While some international students enrol for distance learning courses within South African institutions, others relocate to South Africa for full-time instruction. According to Singh universities in South Africa are attractive for various reasons including the fact that it is located close to neighbouring countries (2013). Sehoole (2015) stated that it is a popular choice for students from the SADC, namely: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. This is due to the SADC education protocol, which prescribes that 5% of South Africa's higher education places are reserved for students from member states (Sehoole, 2015). According to Marko (2009), South Africa is an educational centre for Southern African students due to factors that make higher education services in the country more attractive than their neighbours.

Sehoole and Lee (2015) conducted a survey to find out more about what attracts international student to South Africa amongst 1 685 international students enrolled at seven universities in the 2012 - 2013 academic year. The findings revealed that students from SADC were most likely to choose South Africa for three reasons: it has the potential to help them secure jobs one day; its geographical location being closer to home, and the opportunities it presented for future research. Some students said they valued the chance to experience South African culture. Similarly, international students from other parts of the world also counted research opportunities and an interest in the country's culture among their reasons for studying in South Africa. Some students, particularly those from Europe and the USA, indicated the lower cost of living as a pull factor (Sehoole, 2015). These reasons were also endorsed by the Higher Education South Africa and International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) (2009).

2.4. Factors influencing the migration of students

There are many factors contributing to the growing numbers of students who migrate, with the literature identifying various reasons behind international students' studying abroad. Drawing from Gribble (2008), many developing countries have an under-supply of university places to satisfy the demand, and as a result, students have no other choice but to study abroad. Students seeking cross-border education tend to migrate to countries with more developed education institutions than their own for better educational opportunities, the betterment of their level of knowledge and for new life experiences. Sight-seeing and country visitations are also some of the things that excite international students, as they can meet new

people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Hyland et al., 2008). Thus, much pride is attached to international students by the prospective student's friends, family members and community at large. According to Gribble (2008), one reason for student migration is the desire to study in another language. Furthermore, Gribble (2008) notes that the flow of students from developing to developed countries is often due to the belief that the quality and standards of education offered in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries are superior to what is offered in the country of origin.

Stroud (2010) states that American students' decision to study abroad lies in their interest in improving their understanding of other cultures. With reference to the language learning motivation, short-term courses undertaken by USA students, language fluency, being career oriented and the opportunity to learn different cultures were the three factors that encouraged them to study abroad (Allen, 2010). Lee (2010) argues that the justification for international students studying abroad in the USA is the specialised fields at their home institutions, to escape political repression, to benefit from a higher quality education, have greater educational opportunities, as well as a chance for a better quality of life in the host country. For some students, studying abroad increases their likelihood of working in a foreign country by approximately 15% (Parey and Waldinger, 2010).

The decisions for international students regarding which host country to select is dependent on and influenced by 'push' and 'pull' factors. Pull factors are those that attract people to move to a certain area while push factors are conditions that force people to leave their homes (Adepoju, 2010). Barclay (2010) argues that migration causes may be attributed to several conceptual pull or push factors. Adepoju (2010) points out that people tend to be attracted to countries where the following pull factors exist, namely: better standards of living, possibilities for employment and perceived opportunities for professional growth in the country of destination. Push factors can be defined as the conditions that force people to leave their homes. Economic and demographic push factors include poverty, unemployment, low wages and a lack of basic health and educational services in the native country of the potential migrant student (Barclay 2010). The push factors can include unstable political and ethnic situations in a country as the basis of involuntary migration. Political push factors include conflicts, such as the 2015 violent clashes in Burundi, insecurity, violence, poor governance and the abuse of human rights (Barclay, 2010). Environmental push factors

include events such as harvest failure, the depletion of natural resources as well as man-made and natural disasters, which pose a threat to the lives of individuals (Barclay, 2010).

Lee (2010) notes that push factors are forces within the home country that pushes an individual to seek education elsewhere other than their home country. Forces within the host country that entice an individual to consider education abroad are referred to as pull factors. Similarly, push factors are the less favourable conditions of pursuing higher education in a given country, very often in pursuing advanced research (Varghese, 2007).

2.4.1 Push factors

The following factors are some of the selected conditions that are regarded as pushing students away from their country of origin to another country to pursue their academics.

Education

Education has become a factor for international migration, especially at the university level, which has resulted in student moving abroad to attend better universities (Browne, 2017). The condition of education in a home country determines the choices about migrating. For people in less developed countries, low quality and limited access to education is one of the factors that influences them to move from their own countries to more developed countries with better education. Over the second half of the 20th century, the lack of access to higher education among many countries in Asia and Africa was a key driver and led to an increase in the number of students travelling abroad (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). The lack of spaces in quality higher education institutions and the unavailability of certain exclusive course is also a major factor pushing students away from their home countries. According to Varghese (2008), students from developing countries often move to developed countries due to their belief that the quality and standards of education offered in OECD countries is superior to that in their country of origin. With reference to the study by Darby (2015), participants from African countries mentioned a lack of program availability as a reason for them to go abroad. In the study conducted by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), it was found that certain programs in the home country were too difficult to get into, due to limited seats being available, which in turns inflates the admission criteria, making it easier to get in to similar course abroad. Bohman (2009) outlines that some students are prevented by their grades or marks to continue with higher education within their home country. Moreover, in countries such as

India and China, there are not enough institutions of education to accommodate their growing population (Roberts, 2012).

Browne (2017) argues that developing countries often have many learning institutions, but that the student considers them to be a providing poor standard of education that will not propel them into good careers. Less developed countries often do not have enough educational facility to accommodate the number of students who want to study, which means that they cannot easily get a higher education qualification. According to Kotecha (2008), higher education requires enough funds to ensure access, equity, quality, efficiency and sustainability in the sector, and to strengthen its connexion with development. Should the institution lack or have insufficient funds to cater for its students, it becomes very difficult for them to acquire a quality education. Many of the higher institutions in Africa in general, and in SADC in particular, are under-funded (Macgregor, 2009). In addition, many qualifications obtained in developing countries are not recognised in developed economies (Browne, 2017). Therefore, students from developing countries may enrol in a host country's education in order to convert their abilities into recognised qualifications (Banerjee and Verma, 2009). Thus, in such cases, education may not have been the driver for their migration but becomes important once they have moved. In addition, education and skills acquisition play an important role at many stages of an individual's migration. Other than that, for some young people, studying abroad is the easiest route to getting a visa, although further education is not always their main motivator, but it provides simple and legal access (Rutten and Verstappen, 2014).

Economy

An unstable economy motivates people to move to other countries so that they can have a better standard of living. The African economy is generally very weak, with many young people migrating to seek greener pastures in order to make their lives better. Countries may face challenges relating to fiscal consolidation and financial sector stabilization; which results in them stimulating growth and investment to increase revenue collection and foreign exchange generation; protecting social gains; and improving governance outcomes through continued legislative and institutional reforms (Khuphe, 2018).

Many African students are Zimbabweans, as their economy is not stable, and their currency is considerably weaker than the South African Rand. The country's poor economic status

presents many challenges for people trying to make a living, as the lack of a stable economy results in poverty, and those who are family providers are forced to leave the country to look for a better life in countries in which they can provide for their families.

Politics

Socio-political factors are amongst those aspects that are regarded as the main forces driving migration. Politics is also one of the biggest factors that results in people migrating to other countries to look for better living conditions, the three main political push factors being war, oppression and instability. During times of political instability, or when there is war, people tend to move to where they will find peace. Political instability leads to people emigrating from their country as they do not feel safe (Browne, 2017). Furthermore, politics control the social welfare systems, which determine the lives of citizens, and affects people's ability to employ and be employed, as well as investors' confidence.

2.4.2. Pull factors

This section outlines the factors that attract students coming into a particular host country, or what 'pulls' them. With increasing competition in the higher education environment, a clearer understanding of why and how students choose universities is important to help the institutions develop their marketing strategies. The following factors are some that draw student from their home country into the foreign country, namely; academic reputation and quality of education, cost of education and the geographic proximity.

Academic reputation and quality of education

A good academic reputation is an extremely important factor influencing prospective decisions when selecting a host university (Egan, et al, 2013). Munisamy, Jaafar and Nagaraj (2014) asserted that the prestige or reputation for quality of an institution is often more important than its actual quality, as it represents the perceived excellence of the institution, which guides the decisions of prospective students to enrol with it. According to the study conducted by Darby (2015) the reputation of the institution and prestige of a USA degree were factors mentioned by most participants as pull factors. Similarly, in a study by Roberts (2012), the institution's reputation and prestige were seen to be highly important in deciding on which university to attend by international students.

Institutions that are well reputed, highly ranked and offer a good curriculum or quality education pull in international students. These universities not only provide students with sufficient knowledge but also empower them with the necessary skills for the job market and social status. According to Munisamy, Jaafar and Nagaraj (2014), institutional reputation is intertwined with rankings, with students' tending to select those that are highly ranked (Darby, 2015). Rankings help students to select institutions even if they have never heard or seen them, and they perceive these grading to be methodologically sound and accurate (Darby, 2015). In the South African context, the international rankings give some higher educational institutions a prominent place on the world stage, with five of its universities claiming the highest places in Africa. In the first place is the University of Cape Town, followed by Johannesburg, then Stellenbosch, the KwaZulu-Natal, and lastly Pretoria (Seehole, 2015). Their ranking suggests that they are the best in the country and on the continent, providing quality education in English, offering internationally recognized academic qualifications, and being highly rated in terms of local availability of research and training institutions, quality of scientific research and infrastructure (Darby, 2015).

Cost of education

Cost of education is one of the most important factors that act as an influencer when selecting a destination. Cost of education includes fees rate, living cost and scholarship opportunities. Cost of education can also push away students if it is much higher than what they can afford (Darby, 2015). Nevertheless, in most cases international students select the host institutions that have a reasonable cost of tuition. Prospective migrant students invest their time in comparing the academic fees of different institutions, and their modes and structures of payment to enable them to decide on the most convenient and affordable institution (Sawyerr, 2004).

In some countries, fees for international students are higher than domestic students, such as in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and USA. Sawyerr (2004) points out that studying overseas has become difficult, especially for Africans, as the fees charged to foreigners studying in these and other European countries have increased. In addition, the generous scholarships previously available from China, Cuba, Eastern Europe and Soviet Union have been considerably reduced, thereby decreasing the number of Africans studying in those countries, as they have to finance their own study or get government scholarships (Sawyerr, 2004). Some countries make no distinction between international and domestic student fees,

including those from other SADC countries, who pay the same amount as local students (Kotecha, 2008). Tuition fees remain the same for foreign and domestic students in France, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Japan.

According to Muthuki (2010), international students come to South African universities due to the affordable costs of education, and government subsidies for students from the SADC countries. International migrant students chose to pursue higher education in some universities as it offers lower fees than to other universities. In addition, some of the international students get sponsors and donors if they do very well in their studies.

Geographic proximity and social links

Geographical proximity appears to be another pull factor, with closer countries creating conditions for the easy exchange of education, information and culture. The social links and other ties facilitate and enable the movement of individual student and enhance their knowledge (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). Migrant students are significantly more likely to apply to an institution if they live near it, as the cost of travel will be low, this is being seen as an advantage (Weiler, 1994). Students and parents prefer to select an institution that is close to home, as it enables them to make regular trips home (Weiler, 1994). Most international students are also pulled to a host destination that has a friendly climate, interesting places for adventure (Wong et al., 2012) and is safe in terms of security and crime.

With reference to SADC migrant students, they usually choose South African higher institutions as they are close to their countries; the institutions have English as their language of instruction. Zlotnik (2006) outlines that migration in Africa is shaped by its colonial history and the imposition of arbitrary borders by the colonial powers, which divided people of the same tribe or culture into two or more independent countries. African international students in South Africa find it easy to adapt when there is a common language, similar culture and history (Mda, 2010). Shared borders make it easy for people to move between the countries, as there is often ample affordable and regular public transport.

Family members and friends who had a good academic experience in a certain institution can refer it to others. Their good experience and knowledge are used as a tool and a powerful form of promoting institutions. They constitute a strong network, which can facilitate student's integration as they are familiar with the institution. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002)

found that strong recommendations from friends or family can be a valuable source of referral for education institutions. "*All the good information that students heard about the university was gotten from parents, friends, media, loyal alumni, proud staff members, and fellow students*" (Mlhanga and Ojo, 2009, 79). When a student is looking for a good institution, all the horizons are explored, even if it means consulting people beyond the borders of the country where that institution is located. A broader search is conducted involving people who are studying or working far away or abroad. This remote networking is instrumental in determining how far the reputation is real.

2.5. Challenges faced by migrant students in the host country

Being a student is a challenge, and being an international student is even bigger one. It is easy being a student in the home country but being a student on their own in a different country can be challenging. In a student's life, studying abroad is exciting and regarded as a great opportunity; however, such students face various challenges. Despite it being the perfect opportunity to travel abroad, meet new friends, learn a new language, and explore new culture and environment, for some, moving to another country is not an easy transition. Nonetheless, the obstacles they face should not hinder them from achieving what they travelled abroad for. There is a high possibility that the challenges that the international students face may result in failure to cope. According to Yeh and Inose (2003), international students' challenges may lead to rising levels of psychological distress. Their personal concerns range from academic and financial difficulties, language barriers, racial discrimination and a lack of social support (Mori, 2000). All these problems or issues have the potential to result in mental distress, which consists of depression, homesickness, isolation and loneliness (Leong, 2011). This affects the student's psychological and physical health and increases their level of dissatisfaction in the host country. Leong (2011) asserted that if these issues are not addressed in time, international students' ability to socialize and perform academically can be affected.

Borrett and Zysk (2007) outlined that educational, social and cultural challenges await international students, who encounter more problems than host or local students (Ward, et al., 2001). International migrant students often face additional challenges in relation to their education, which may have a negative impact on their studies, and can be categorized into two categories: life and educational challenges. According to De Haan (2000), migrant

students have various risk factors in common with other disadvantaged students, such as poverty and poor health, and they also face additional challenges exclusive to their situations in the form of disruption of education, cultural and language difficulties, and social isolation. With regards to life challenges for migrant students, this may include poverty, their undocumented status, health issues, low economic status and social isolation. These factors are compounded by the mobile nature of their lifestyle, which may lead to gaps in education and loss of school credits. According to De Haan (2000), these characteristics are the barriers putting them at risk of dropping out or failing school and deserve to be explored in more detail. In the USA for example, the main problematic areas faced by international students when they first arrive were communication, social, cultural, psychological, personal, housing, financial, food and health areas (Lu, 2001).

Studies conducted on international students both globally and nationally have similarities with regards to the challenges faced by international students, which will be explored below, namely: adjustment problems, language barrier, financial hardships, culture shock and prejudice and discrimination.

2.5.1. Adjustment problems

People who travel to a new environment face adjustment challenges, regardless of whether they are a student or not, which differ from person to person, and surface at different time (Dorozhkin and Mazitova, 2008). The adjustments that an individual may experience can be categorised into three areas: psycho-social, psychological and socio-cultural (Ward and Kennedy, 1993). The psycho-social refers to an individual's psychological wellbeing and is influenced by their experiences in the social arena (Zhang and Goodson, 2010). Psychological refers to the emotional wellbeing or satisfaction of an individual in a new environment and includes factors such as perceived social support and coping strategies (Baba and Hosoda, 2014). Socio-cultural adjustment refers to an individual's ability to fit in with the hosts cultural, social and behavioural aspects, and includes factors such as the individual's general knowledge, length of residence and social contact (Zhang and Goodson, 2010). It is essential that individuals are satisfied cognitively and emotionally in their subjective perception of the new environment in order to successfully adjust (Nolan and Morley, 2014). The inability or failure to satisfactory adapt and adjust to the new environment may inherently lead to maladjustment (Israel, 2013).

It is evident that international students encounter a variety of adaptation difficulties and mal-adjustments when coming to study in a host country (Wang, 2008). According to Zhou, Frey, and Bang (2011), when moving to a new environment, international students face a series of transitional difficulties that impact on their behaviours and psychological well-being in learning. During the initial transition, they experience changes such as geographical location, weather, food, language, dressing and social interactions (Wang, 2008; Bentley, 2008). Due to international student's geographical relocation, they are forced to adjust to a variety of cultural, linguistic and social challenges. While still trying to adapt, they may have difficulties with feelings of isolation, loneliness, homesickness, fear and alienation. Similarly, Smith and Khawaja, (2011) asserted that international student adjustment is associated with increased psychological, socio-cultural and language related stressors, such as loneliness, depression, culture shock and acculturative stress

Most studies that have documented international student's challenges and hardships in adjusting to a new environment have framed these problems as stemming from their inability to successfully adapt or cope, which presumes that they bear the sole responsibility to overcome such challenges, and then blend into the host country (Lee, 2006). Drawing from Lee (2006), host institutions are impartial and without fault, the primary burden being on the international students to navigate their ways through various cultural and institutional barriers.

2.5.2. Language barrier

Language difficulties can be a major issue for international students, specifically when they are not used to learning in the new language, despite the fact that they might be socially competent. With reference to the study conducted by Robertson et al. (2000), it was found that language was the main problem encountered by international students. Similarly, Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) explain that in the studies of international students, language has always been identified as a major problem. According to Chen (cited in Smith and Khawaja, 2011), second language anxiety is a stressor that interacts with other stressors in both academic and socio-cultural domains. The anxiety of speaking another language is reported to be one of the most serious problems for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as Second Language (ESL) international students (Moslehpour and Chou, 2004).

The language barrier mainly affects international students who come from countries that have a different medium of communication to that of the host international university. For example, students from French or Portuguese speaking countries find it difficult to start learning and communicating in English or Afrikaans in South African universities. In the academic domain, drawing from Kuo (2011), the lack of English skills is likely to impact on international students' academic performance. Language barriers can impact on assignment writing, understanding lectures, oral and written examinations and the ability to ask questions in class (Smith and Khawaja, 2011). Other studies have also reported that international students often have trouble in understanding lecturers' expectations and grading style, taking lecture notes, articulating their knowledge on essay exams, reading textbooks in a timely fashion, comprehending lecturers, and giving oral presentations, asking the lecturer questions and interacting in seminar discussions (Gebhard, 2012).).

Erichsen and Bolliger (2011) state that students' lack of knowledge of the English language often causes uncertainties, anxieties and confusion while engaging with class tasks, presentations and other aspects of the content of the programme. International students experience problems with writing, comprehension and reading due to limited language skills (Poyrazli, 2003). Lin and Yi (1997) observe that international students experience anxiety related to understanding academic and grammatical jargon, as well as the overall process of adjustment to the Australian classroom climate. A study conducted by Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson and Pisecco (2002) also showed that the challenges of adjusting to a different educational system can result in students receiving lower grades than previously achieved, which can lead to a loss of academic self-efficacy, and in turn lowers their general adjustment.

According to Marginson, et al (2010), language proficiency has an important role in student security in English. Not being able to participate in class due to language difficulties, and lacking the skills to interact in class, means that some international students may be seen or perceived as academically docile. Skills such as autonomous learning, critical thinking, confidence in communication and problem solving are very valuable and cannot be overlooked in an academic setting, as they help to challenge any pre-existing information and literature. However, language barriers may lower the ability of such skills and result in them easily losing confidence (Sawir, 2005).

Most international students find it hard to adjust to the new academic ways and expectations of the institution in the host country. The institutions have different expectations for assignment, deadlines, citations, workload, paper format, writing style and communication in general from what they are used to. Their academic and learning ability may be affected as they find it difficult to adjust to the new academic format, and the workload may be too much for them. Thus, it can take time for some students to become accustomed to the way in which things are done academically (assignment format, when and how to be done as well as their length). Furthermore, the language barrier hinders their ability to understand things efficiently and to quickly grasp information in class. Their potential to participate and share their information with other students and lecturers may become difficult and obstructed (Sawir, 2005).

Robertson et al. (2000) explored the difficulties experienced by international students studying at an Australian university, with the students experience a lack of confidence with English. They had an incomplete understanding of the lecturers' who spoke in English and were unhappy with their oral performances in the presence of Australian classmates (Robertson et al. (2000). Research in Australian universities by Bretag et al. (2002) found that, according to academic staff, international students from a non-English-speaking background (NESB students) were unable to contribute as effectively as required in tutorial discussion, and that due to poor grammar, their written work was often hard to read and assess.

According to Domville-Roach, language is considered as one of the tools that international students must use to bring about interaction and sharing with others (2007). Most universities in South Africa use English as the medium of communication for teaching, learning and socializing, and for some international students from non-English speaking countries, language becomes an issue. Language barriers hinder their attempts to make friends and to interact with locals (Smith and Khawaja, 2011), who tend to use local or native languages that the international students do not understands. According to Wright and Schartner (2013), international student's inability to easily communicate effectively in the host country complicates their ability to socialize and integrate with local students. Most international students have the desire to build friendship with domestic or local students, but due to language barriers, stereotypes and attitudes towards them, these become difficult and challenging. Likewise, international students who are confident in speaking English adjust

more quickly and easily by making friends. Thus, when local students engage with international peers who communicate effectively in English, it becomes easier to interact with them and form friendship and social groups. In the study conducted by Mark et al. (2013), they indicated that the less the language barrier between international students and domestic students, the more possible it was to build interpersonal relationships that would make them feel at ease.

Language is also used as means of discrimination against international students by domestic or local students and lecturers. It was found that at the University of Venda in South Africa, the research language was used by domestic students to socially exclude international students from the university experience (Singh, 2013). In the study by Singh (2013) at the University of Venda, a significant percentage (42%) of foreign students said that they were excluded from class discussions because they were conducted in a local language, which they did not understand. One of the respondents in Singh's (2013) research stated that lecturers spoke in the local languages to make example of foreign students and excluded them when they were aware that they were in class. Local students use slang in their native languages that the international students are unfamiliar with in order to gossip and exclude them from their social groups. In South Africa, dominant groups, especially Black Africans, use local words that are abusive and inhumane when referring to international students. This is not only to discriminate against them but is oppressive and shows a dislike of them by making comments to irritate them and pass abusive remarks about them (Singh, 2013). International students, as with immigrants in South Africa, are stereotyped and called various inhumane and abusive names, such as 'amakwerekwere', which is a term, used in South Africa by Blacks to refer to foreigners especially those from African countries, 'foreign Africans' (Singh, 2013). Name calling of international students makes them loose their self-esteem and dignity, which might exacerbate the stress that they encounter in trying to adapt to university life. Moreover, it makes them feel unwelcome, socially excluded and as if they are invading the domestic students' space.

2.5.3. Financial hardships

The main challenges faced by international students are that of finance, especially those who do not get financial aids and have to pay their own tuition fees and living expenses. According to Smith and Khawaja (2011), studies have shown that financial problems are experienced by the majority of international students. Financial problems for students are

caused by exchange rates, lack of support from parents and over-spending habits (Smith and Khawaja, 2011). In most institution, international students have to pay higher fees than the local students. Many international students come from developing countries, where the exchange rate between the host and home country are high, which results in a small amount for the local or domestic student being a significant amount to an international student.

Financial problems relate to the prospects of part-time student employment and access to financial aid for international students (Baba and Hosoda, 2014). Regarding international students trying to acquire extra cash in order to maintain living, this becomes very difficult and challenging, as they are not legally permitted to work off campus due to various labour laws (Lee et al., 2004). It is also not easy for international students to acquire bursaries, loans and donor funds for academic purposes. In addition, there are limited scholarships opportunities for international students in South Africa, and they are not eligible for the government's student loan program. While few bursaries are available for postgraduate international students, their research is often applicable to South Africa and benefits the same country that denies funding them. However, the country's major banks do offer student loans to international students with valid study permits. Other international students find scholarship funding through their sending institutions or organizations in their home countries.

This therefore increases their financial challenges, as they often have very limited means to meet and fulfil their financial needs. While they are permitted to work on campus, there are limited jobs and not everyone can be employed, these positions being in high demand by both local and international students. Financial constraints also limit international students in getting decent accommodation, and they may be forced to take cheaper accommodation that is not in good condition to cater for student needs. According to Nicholson (2001), international students who face financial difficulties may fail to afford paying rent, buy essential textbooks and food, and meet their healthy need and travel costs. Nicholson (2001) assert that keeping up with the fashionable life-style of young university students is expensive. Purchasing trendy clothing, going out on excursions, partying and spending on social occasions are common activities among university students, but difficult for international students whose finances are unstable (Pedersen and LaBrie, 2007).

2.5.4. Culture shock/ Acculturation

Wang (2008) asserted that there are cross-cultural problems for international students that appear to be associated with the transition. It is evident that they may also experience a cultural shock in the host country, as they are faced with a different culture to that of their own, which might have a negative impact on their adaptation and adjustment. Mudhovozi stated that presumably, many students experience culture shock upon entry into a new country and culture (2011). Culture shock refers to the feeling of disorientation experienced by an individual when they are suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes after moving to a cultural environment that is different from one's own due to immigration, a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply transitioning to another type of life (Berry, 2017). Culture shock can be expressed through homesickness, irritability, sadness, fear and frustration (Mudhovozi, 2011). It can result in confusion, anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms and identity confusion (Berry, 2017). Such stressors may unwittingly lead to high levels of stress that will impact negatively on their academic performance. According to Gebhard (2012), the mental anguish that people, including students, feel when they live in a new culture often comes from a barrage of small cultural differences that can have a powerful emotional impact.

Culture shock is associated with acculturation, which occurs when difficulties arise from the interaction between different cultures (Greenland and Brown, 2005), and may result in cultural conflict and acculturative stress (Berry, 2017). According to Berry (2017, 473) acculturation is defined as "*phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups.*" According to Greenland and Brown (2005), not all individuals adjust to new environmental conditions easily, and those who fail to assimilate their cultural values with that of the new environment tend to face consequences concerning their physical and psychological wellbeing. Edwards (2008) asserted that failure to achieve similarity between the individuals' values and those of the new environment results in misfit and thus maladjustment. The mismatch between the international student`s attributes, the new environment and the requirements of the university could lead to consequences such as dissatisfaction, decreased performance and poor health (Gilbreath, Kim and Nichols, 2011).

2.5.5. Prejudice and discrimination

Discrimination against foreigners in the host destination or country is not a recent phenomenon, being a global issue. In this context it is discrimination against international students in particular. Singh (2013) asserted that international students face discrimination due to their nationality, race, ethnicity and cultural difference rather than physical appearances, which negatively impact on their psychological functioning and well-being. They experience unfair treatment, racial prejudice, social exclusion, being called in names, and recipients of negative attitudes and stereotypes. Amongst the different types of discrimination that international students experience, racial discrimination has been noted to result in social withdrawal (Hosoda, 2014). According to Smith and Khawaja (2011), feelings and experiences of discrimination impact negatively on international students' adaptation and have been linked with poor psychological well-being and depression. The target of discrimination is generally minority populations, with international students being regarded as experiencing more prejudice and discrimination compared to domestic students in Asia, Africa, India, Latin America and Middle East, whereas none of the students from Europe, Canada, or Australia experienced any discrimination (Smith and Khawaja, 2011).

In a recent study in the South-Western University of the USA, international students commented on experiencing neo-racism beyond traditional racism, which justifies discrimination on the basis of cultural differences or national origins (Lee, 2006). According to Lee, "*underlying neo-racism are notions of cultural or national superiority, and an increasing rationale for marginalizing or assimilating groups in a globalizing world*" (2006: 4). In the case of international students, their experiences of discrimination are largely based on stereotypes and negative perceptions about their home countries, rather than solely originating from the colour of their skin (Lee, 2006).

Many international students not only feel unwelcome, but also encounter incidents of insulting jokes and statements about their home country, particularly those from developing countries, which are perceived as lacking basic resources. Moreover, international students encounter reactions of frustration and contempt, not only from students but administrators due to their language accents, with some classmates being reluctant to befriend them. In terms of securing academic job opportunities on campus, international postgraduate students complain about how domestic students are favoured. In some countries, international students

encounter sexual harassment and even physical attacks. According to the study by Muthuki (2013), it is said that in South Africa, African international students are not regarded as African but as only foreigners. The term foreigner is used as a distinct category and serves to exclude the foreign students of African origin from identifying themselves as Africans and confines the African identity to Black local South Africans (Muthuki, 2013).

South Africa's universities have gone through political and economic upheaval that have been characterised by student protests and boycotts in which international students get caught up when all these disruptions take place. When universities are forced to shut down for safety measures, international students get stranded and have no place to go to, as their homes are far away, nor do they have money to travel or know how long it will take to end. They also experience discrimination in relation to other factors, such as accommodation and transport. Some students have complained that they are being harassed by local taxi drivers when commuting from campus to their lodgings. One reported that a local had told her "*If it was not for former president Nelson Mandela, you would not be in South Africa and now that he is dead, you'd better go back*" (Hughes, 2014). Discriminative rental practices by some rental agencies require an upfront rental payment for the whole year for foreigners, while locals are on a month to month payment plan. Crime remains a very real problem in South Africa and in some areas; international students are amongst the vulnerable groups, as they do not know their way around the new environment.

2.5.6. Xenophobia

The negotiation of being a foreign African national in a South African tertiary institution is further problematized by the phenomenon of xenophobia (Muthuki, 2013). Xenophobia is defined as a strong and unreasonable dislike, prejudice and fear against people from other countries (Cross and Johnson, 2008). In the South African context, international students, especially those from African countries, generally complain about xenophobia, which mainly affects Black African students (Baba and Hosoda, 2014). These students tend to face prejudice and discrimination even from fellow students in the host country (Baba and Hosoda, 2014). Many South Africans see internationals as a threat to their life opportunities and contend that 'Internationals are taking over'. With reference to a study in England, it was found that home students perceive threats to their academic success and group identity by the presence of international students on campus and in the classroom (Harrison and Peacock, 2010). The research suggests that international students are perceived to be taking resources

away from local students. During the recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa, foreigners were accused of taking jobs from locals. According to Cross and Johnson (2008), xenophobia has serious repercussions and makes South Africa a very intimidating society for migrants to live in.

It is usually minority groups that experience abuse and violence due to xenophobia, as they are perceived as inferior. According to Mullaly, this violence includes physical attacks and harassment, ridicule and intimidation, all of which serve the purpose of stigmatizing group members (2010). *"International females in South Africa face double jeopardy, as they are at the intersection of the two groups (foreign and female) that are vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and violence"* (Muthuki, 2013, p.119). In addition, international students encounter xenophobia even from government officials, mainly the police and immigration officials, who are supposed to protect and keep them safe. Consequently, their academic performance may be disturbed as they face difficulty in coping with such issues. Singh (2013) asserts that xenophobia amongst students is more subtle and can only be uncovered by establishing the individual experiences of students who are willing to share these experiences. Moreover, the students are not exempt from the xenophobic behaviour that has been occurring in South African communities (Singh, 2013).

2.6. Positive experiences in the host country

International students may have both negative and positive experiences related to studying abroad, the above challenges motivating them to be strong, giving them strength and coping capabilities for success in future, and enabling them to have a sense of belonging (Moores and Popadiuk, 2011). With reference to the study conducted by Moores and Popadiuk (2011) in the USA, which explored the positive learning aspects, experiences and resources, the international students mentioned that during their transition they developed personally, their perspective changed, they observed academic growth, had a supportive living environment and support from the international environment. Engaging in general cultural learning gave them cultural guidance, recognised their academic differences, involved them in extracurricular activities, and enabled them to receive academic and personal support from faculty and staff of the school.

Wu et al. (2015) asserted that the transitional difficulties faced by international students when they arrive in their host country motivates them to develop strategies for problem solving and made them become independent leaners as they develop new learning strategies to deal with difficulties. Campbell (2010) and Kelly (2010) agree with Wu et al. (2015) and claim that international students generate diverse perceptions and personal growth to become independent thinkers and change agents. Warring (2010) argue that international students gain more confidence and become independent in their learning. In addition, Kumi-Yeboah (2014) revealed that the international students' adjustment to transformative learning was embedded in their gaining self-confidence and their ability to develop self or inner awareness from their experiences.

According to Campbell and Li (2008), many international students appreciate the high-quality education they receive, the practical programmes, favourable learning environments, friendly, helpful, supportive and highly qualified lecturers and tutors, good teacher-student relationships, development of language and intercultural communication skills, and personal and intellectual growth in the host destinations. Similarly, Bistak (2013) identified that Asian international student' relationships with peers, faculty and administrative staff resulted in different positive learning experiences, such as personal development, acquiring knowledge in science, technology and general education, as well as vocational preparation and the development of intellectual skills.

2.7. Conclusion

International students face a variety of challenges when studying in a host country including language barriers, financial difficulties, accommodation, discrimination and prejudice and lastly, xenophobia. Likewise, these challenges seem to not only affect their wellbeing but their academic performance. The inability of individuals to easily make friends and socialise makes it more difficult for them to adjust. Universities face challenges caused by an increase in the mobility of student's worldwide and are expected to overcome issues such as cultural diversity, differences in learning styles, changing demands of students provided with a greater choice of study destinations, educational programs and study environments.

A number of universities have adopted strategies to try and help international students adapt in South Africa. However, adjustment is largely left up to the student to make an effort to

engage positively with the adversity encountered, which might not be the direct responsibility of the university to initiate such strategies. While the university should have the responsibility to help international students adjust, in reality, many international students in South Africa struggle to survive. As international students face different problems, universities need to understand the challenges they faced and to provide the right kind of support.

There is also a positive side for international students to study abroad, such as developing English proficiency, achieving internationally recognised qualifications that advocate for better jobs and experiencing culture diversity. Not only to the international students benefit, but also the local students, host country at large and host institution from their enrolment. There has been limited research documenting the experiences of international students, specifically in the South African context, the above literature has tried to fill in the gap of the missing information. This knowledge gap indicates the need for more research to be done to better provide for international students' needs by informing their host countries and institutions about what needs to be done to improve their services to care for this growing population.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

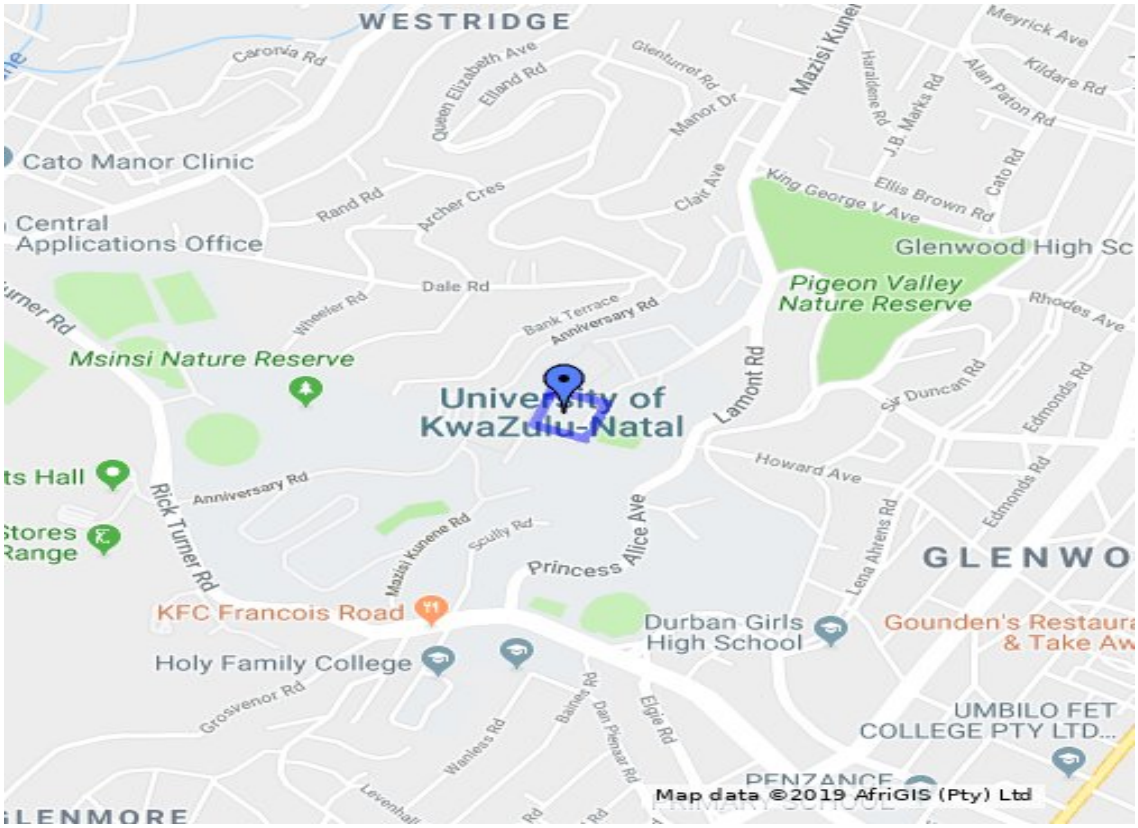
3.1. Introduction

This chapter gives a methodical outline of the way that the researcher conceptualised this study in an attempt to answer the questions set for this inquiry and attain the objectives assigned to it. The study draws on qualitative data from in-depth interviews to explore the challenges and experiences of international students. In more details, in this part the chapter starts by providing an overview of the research setting and study area. The chapter then outline the research design and methodology, examines the data collection process considering the sampling procedures used for the study. Thereafter, it describes the techniques of analysis to make sense of the data. Lastly, it highlights the main ethical considerations as well as the limitations of the study. The researcher has tried to clearly indicate the choices that were made in investigating the phenomenon in the study.

3.2. Description of the site of the study

The site that was used to collect data for the study was an institution of higher learning which is the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College). The Howard College campus is situated in the vibrant coastal city of Durban, renowned for its beaches and coastal resorts (in Glenwood). The Howard College campus offers a full range of degree options in the fields of Engineering, Law, Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, and Nursing. Howard College is a truly South African university that reflects the diverse society in which it is situated (Alabi, Seedat-Khan, and Abdullahi, 2019). As an institution of higher learning, it is committed to academic excellence, innovative research and critical engagement with society. It has an international reputation for academic excellence, outstanding research output and African scholarship. Furthermore, it has links with over 250 international institutions, which facilitate ongoing collaborative academic partnerships (Alabi, Seedat-Khan, and Abdullahi, 2019). Thus, it does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, sex, disability or any other protected class and possesses students coming from different backgrounds. This institution was therefore seen as a best site or case study as there are many international students enrolled due to the above reasons and others. Besides, the researcher felt it was convenient to use a campus that she is learning at, since she is familiar with it and it was easy to collect data from there.

Figure 3.1. Location of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College.



Source: Google Maps, 2019

3.3. Research design and methodology

This study employed the descriptive research design. This design helped the researcher to describe, explain or rather validate some sort of hypothesis or objective when it comes to the research participants of this study. The study was not really interested in hypothesised relationships between independent and dependent variables but rather in describing the experience and challenges of international students. Thus, it was adopted to help find the answers to the research questions.

This study was conducted using a qualitative methodology which was used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations of the participants. The researcher used qualitative approach to explore, describe and analyse the meaning of international students lived experience and challenges on *"how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it and talk about it with others"* (Patton,

2002:104 cited in Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Thus, with this approach the researcher was able to understand the given research problem from the viewpoint of the population being studied (McNeil and Chapman, 2005). Qualitative methods enabled the researcher to explore and understand international students' lived experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings about their stay in South Africa as students. This approach was used as it, informed the behaviour and instruments used in selecting and constructing the research techniques, and the analysis of the data.

The qualitative method was viewed as suitable for this study as McNeil and Chapman (2005) indicated that this method relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives and it seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. As per Cooper and Schindler (2008), the qualitative approach involves an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern human behaviour. For the mere fact the qualitative research aims at understanding a person's experiences in a specific context and how they manage the situation or circumstance (Willig, 2001) was one of the reasons this approach was utilized. The researcher believed that qualitative methodology and its techniques were ideal to her research, as it is characterised by an in-depth and subjective approach. Thus, this study was investigating the challenges of international migrant students which is a direct experience and in quest of understanding these challenges in a comprehensive manner. This methodology also helped to understand the experiences of international migrant students from their own perspective. Through the use of in-depth interviews and the open-ended type of questions participants were able to provide an in-depth explanation with freedom and in a broad way while sharing their experiences.

3.4. Sampling strategy

The study was conducted at Howard College Campus with registered international migrant students. The researcher selected a subset of the population from the target population as a result of their fitness to take part in the research (Sekaran, 2006). The sample was obtained from the university's population consequently; the sample location was the University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College. The sample size comprised of twenty international migrant students from the university. The sample criteria exclusively consisted of enrolled international migrant students both undergraduates and postgraduates, males and females ranging from 18 years up to 32 years of age regardless of the degree, faculty nor school.

This study adopted the non-probability sampling also known as non-random sampling, a sampling method where the likelihood of any member being selected for a sample cannot be calculated. Through this strategy, the researcher relied on her subjective judgement to select participants and not every element of the population had the opportunity for selection in the sample (Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durkheim, 2006). Non-probability sample was convenient for this study as it seeks to understand human issues in deepest rather than general usability of results (Marshall, 1996). Using non-probability sample, the researcher targeted the easiest population who provide the information that she needed (Ranjit, Kissoon and Jayakumar, 2005). With reference to the above pointers the researcher employed these two following sampling strategies.

Through non-probability sampling, the researcher used the purposive and snowballing sampling to select participants. These sampling methods were employed in this study because they eased the selection of the respondents whose qualities or experiences permit an understanding of the phenomena in question. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher the opportunity to select and pick participants who would best serve the purpose of the study trusting on her judgement. The researcher identified the participants using their obvious characteristics (language accent, skin colour) also those she already knew. These were members that were knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. Most participants were recruited through snowballing/chain-referral sampling method; this is a sampling technique, in which existing subjects provide referrals to recruit samples required for a research study (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). After selecting the initial subject, the researcher asked for assistance from the participants to help identify other students with a similar trait of interest. The researcher then interviewed willing subjects and continued in the same way until she obtained a sufficient number of participants. Through their referrals the researcher gained more participants, and this is because the available participants knew more international students than the researcher.

3.5. Data collection technique

The data in this study was collected using interviews. Specifically, in-depth interviews were used, as one-on-one method of data collection to obtain valuable information from international migrant student. As per Marshall and Rossman (2011), studies that are about or that focus on individual life experiences are usually based on the in-depth interview strategy. In this method the researcher and the participants discussed the given phenomenon (the

challenges and experiences of international students) in-depth. The main aim of using such interviews was to explore the perspectives, feelings and viewpoint of the respondent and it is in this way that participants produced relevant information. Thus, the researcher conducted these interviews with the purpose to seek and gain insight concerning the given phenomenon. Moreover, these interviews allowed the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding of the issue as both the interviewer and interviewee construct meanings (Rossman and Rallis, 1998). In-depth interviews were useful to the researcher as they provided the researcher with the opportunity to explore the circumstances of respondent's experiences.

The interviews helped the researcher to gather more information on challenges the international migrant students encounter as an individual in an in-depth manner. Likewise, these interviews were of benefits since they provided a quickly wide range of data with very detailed information (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Thus, the data was collected in a more relaxed atmosphere which made it easy for participants to engage and interact with the researcher. A better technique than focus groups, where participants may feel uncomfortable responding in front of many people about personal issues, here it was one-on-one. Through these interviews the researcher found it very easy to probe and ask for clarity. The in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to promptly rectify any misunderstanding whilst still conducting the interview (Amisi and Ballard, 2005). Unlike in the questionnaire, where the research cannot probe or get clarity from the participants response. More open-ended questions were used, which allowed for a discussion with the participant rather than a straightforward question and answer format.

The researcher conducted the in-depth interviews with 20 international students who were studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College). Interviews were held in different dates, times as well as different venues, depending on the participant's availability and venue preference or recommendation. The venues were either at lecture venues, cafeteria, library, UKZN residences or private accommodation. The researcher had to make prior arrangements via phone or email to remind and confirm appointments. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes or an hour long. It was really not easy to book and get participants for interview session. Since they were students and obviously busy with their academic work now and then. Sometimes appointments got delayed or even cancelled due to participant's academic deadlines and attendance. The whole process required understanding, patience and perseverance throughout.

A digital voice recording tool was used and a notebook was also utilised in order to write down the important details. The interview sessions were tape recorded with the permission and consent from the participants. The tape-recording technique worked at the advantage of the researcher since it was a lot faster than writing transcripts. It helped the researcher to not miss out on some important details, also to concentrate even on the non-verbal body language without getting distracted with writing down notes. It allowed the researcher to refer back to the interview and take a look at the interview data. In addition, it ensured the accuracy and validity of the collected data also helped in data analysis. The recordings were then transcribed, and the texts analysed were for content and discourse.

3.6. Data analysis

The purpose of data analysis in qualitative research is to manually organise and arrange information; it is a fundamental and the most critical aspect of the qualitative research process (Govender, 2011). Through data analysis the researcher was able to examine the generated data so as to derive an explanation regarding the topic at hand. As mentioned above the in-depth interviews were used to collect data, after data collection the writer transcribed the data. Transcriptions were useful in analysing data and findings. It is worth mentioning that transcribing was time-consuming, frustrating and at times boring, but it was an excellent way to start familiarising with the data. Through transcribing the interviews, the researcher was able to make sense of the collected data, got familiar with it while recognizing other aspect that she was unaware of.

Once data had been gathered from the in-depth interviews, thematic analysis was then applied to the study which is one of the widely used forms of analysis in qualitative research. The thematic analysis approach was seen as suitable for the study since it focuses on examining themes within the data and organising data sets (Boyatzis, 1998). The researcher made use of the recorded interviews by listening to all 20 of the interviews and also the written notes to analyse the data.

In using the thematic analysis, the writer organised the transcribed data in a meaningful and systematic way by marking different sections and coded them. Once the transcription had been completed, codes were generated. The process of coding involved organising data into meaningful groups tags and labels (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The writer coded the data by writing notes on the texts analysed, using highlighters or coloured pen to indicate potential patterns to identify segment of data and emerging patterns or themes. This was done

thoroughly, ensuring that the most important and relevant information is selected and not left out. After all the coding and outlining she then worked systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data item and identifying interesting aspects in the data items that may form the basis of repeated patterns (themes) across the data set. Codes identify predominant themes from the raw data (Boyatzis, 1998); consequently, the researcher identified initial themes. According to Boyatzis (1998), themes are developed from the generated codes and during the process of coding themes are developed.

The researcher ensured that the themes are coherent and distinct from each other. Considering this the researcher focused the themes in relation to the research questions so in order to not lose the context and track of what the research is about, and to ensure that the themes are linked coherently, the research questions and the main aim of the research. The data was then sorted by themes. Some initial codes may go on to form main themes, whereas others formed sub-themes, and others still were discarded and lastly themes were then reviewed and defined (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.7. Trustworthiness

3.7.1. Credibility

Credibility allows readers to recognize the experiences contained within the study through the interpretation of participants' experiences (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). According to Krefting (1991), this study can be considered as credible because it presents an accurate description or interpretation of the international student's experiences within the institution, thus people who also share the same experience would immediately recognize the presented phenomena. For this study, to ensure trustworthiness, triangulation and member checks were used as they help in establishing credibility as well as contributing to trustworthiness (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011).

With triangulation the researcher asked the same research questions of different study participants and collected data from different sources through different methods to answer the same questions. Using member checking or informant feedback the researcher returned back to the participants from whom the data was generated in order for them to review the data collected and for her to ensure that her interpretations are recognized as accurate representations of the participants' experiences. These two strategies had benefits, especially the member checking as it gave the participants a chance to verify their statements and fill in any gaps from earlier interviews and for the researcher to correct her misinterpretations and

in this way filling in the missing data (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). In addition, after the researcher had transcribed the generated data, copies were made and given back to each individual that participated for them to confirm and approve that what was written down is exactly what they said during interview session and the information was not distorted. Furthermore, with reference to Thomas and Magilvy (2011), through interview technique, transcripts and writing the final report using word of participants were the strategies that were used to strengthen the credibility of this study.

3.7.2. Transferability

Transferability generalizes study findings and attempts to apply them to other situations and contexts. Drawing from Thomas and Magilvy (2011) transferability is the ability to transfer research findings or methods from one group to another, or how one determines the extent to which the findings of a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects/participants. Researchers cannot prove that outcomes based on the interpretation of the data are transferable, but they can establish that it is likely. In order for the researcher to establish transferability for this study, a compact description of the studied population was specified. This was done by providing descriptions of demographics and geographic boundaries of the study, of which it made it possible for the research methods to be likely to be used when transferring to other setting.

3.7.3. Dependability

Dependability happens when another researcher can be able to follow the decision trail used by the researcher (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). To ensure dependability , the researcher followed the audit trail as explained by Thomas and Magilvy (2011). The initial purpose of the study was described right from the beginning; the recruitment of the participants was outlined not forgetting the reason why they were selected. Thus, the researcher also explained and illustrated how the data was collected and the duration of data collection process. Furthermore, the researcher expounded the data reduction and data analysis procedure of the study. She also outlined the interpretation and presentation of the research findings or outcomes. Lastly, communicated the specific techniques that were used to determine the credibility of the data generated. In addition, a detailed description of the research methods was done to further establish dependability.

3.7.4. Confirmability

Drawing from Thomas and Magilvy (2011), confirmability occurs when all the above three components have been established which are; credibility, transferability and dependability. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) noted that, to construct validity in quantitative research requires a self-critical attitude on the part of the researcher about how one's own preconceptions affect the research. Using the process of reflexivity the researcher reflected her own biases and assumptions in order to achieve confirmability. This was done by following each participant's interview; writing and tape audio tape recording specific notes in regards with personal feelings, biases and insights. In addition, the researcher made a conscious effort to follow, rather than lead, the direction of the interviews by asking the participants for clarification of definitions, slang words, and metaphors (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). Moreover, reflective research allows a big picture view with interpretations that produce new insights, allowing for developing confirmability of the research and, overall, leading the reader to have a sense of trust in the credibility of findings and applicability of the study (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011).

3.8. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are concerned with whether the behaviour conforms to a code or set of principles (Bless, et al, 2006). It was the researcher's responsibility to ensure and always be cautious that the participants are not subjected to any harm being it discrimination or abuse (Neuman, 2007). Ethical considerations helped to prevent research abuse and assisted the researcher in understanding her responsibilities as an ethical scholar (Solomon, 2001). Participants were aware of the general agreements about what is proper and improper for this study to avoid any misunderstandings. To ensure that the study was ethically conducted the researcher considered the following ethics; informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, doing no harm, gatekeeper's consent and ethical clearance.

For this study, the researcher provided a full disclosure of facts that were needed to be known by the participants, for them to decide whether to participate or not. A written informed consent letter was given to them prior to the beginning of data collection. In summary, the researcher assured the participants that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw anytime and made them understand the extent of their commitment to the study. Additionally, an outline of the overall purpose of the study was provided. The participants were made aware of any potential risks and benefits of participating and were not be coerced

into participation; instead, they were notified as to their right to decline if they chose not to participate. Thus, in case of any harm or need of psychosocial support if needed, the participants will be referred to the nearest public health facility for further assistance or any alternative assistance will be provided. In relation to interviews, participants consent was also required before tape recording the session.

In this study, confidentiality was achieved by ensuring that any information that was provided by the respondents was protected. Only the researcher and supervisor had access to the information given by the participants. All the generated data including electronic data was encrypted or password protected through a flash drive that was only accessed by the researcher and the supervisor

When using direct quote, participants' names were kept a secret to protect their identity and reduce the chances of secondary traumatisation. The researcher used participant's identification number to classify them. No identifying information of participants was used. This was done to ensure that the researcher and the supervisor or anyone would not know the identity of the respondents and any information which they provided to the researcher would not be traced back to any of the respondents who participated in the study.

During the data collection process that involves interaction with the participants the research participants can get harmed in a physical or emotional manner (De Vos, 2002). The researcher ensured that she does whatever she reasonably can to ensure the participants are not harmed by participating in her study (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). Should it happen that they got harmed either physical or emotional, the researcher was willing to provide assist in providing them with required help or referring to them to a healthy facility.

Before the commencement of this study, the researcher obtained the gate-keepers letter of permission from the Registrar of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College where the study was conducted.

In accordance with the requirements of the University Higher Degrees; the researcher made an application for ethical clearance to the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal on the 5th of June in 2019. The ethical clearance was granted or approved on the 27 of August in 2019.

3.9. Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study were that the sample size was small to represent the whole population and the questions asked from participants were limited. The limitation of the sample noted in this study was the representation of the student population within the university. Thus, the majority of the student sample was made up of African international students. In this regard, this may bring about bias in the nature of problems that the international students faced at the university. There are almost 30 or so universities in South Africa, however the study was only limited to one university which was the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The ideal would have been to include the other international students studying at other universities within South Africa. However, due to time and financial constraints it was quite impossible to include other universities. Another limitation to the study was the mere fact that it was time consuming, and the researcher waited a very long time to get ethical approval from HSSREC.

3.10. Summary

This chapter has provided an outline of the methodology utilised to gather data. The approach used to analyse data, the sampling method, and in-depth interviews were all discussed. Ethical considerations together with the limitations of the research were also explained. The study employed qualitative methods and used a relatively small sample size to gather data from.

Chapter Four

Results

4.1. Introduction

The overall aim of the study was to shed insights into the challenges facing international students at a university in Durban KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This chapter outlines the key findings from the in-depth research interviews with international students. It starts firstly by giving a socio-economic and demographic profile of students. It then outlines some of the major themes that emerged from the in-depth interviews. The themes that emerged in this study were inclusive of challenges faced by international students at the university in South Africa. The themes were: reasons for selecting the institution, challenges encountered, coping strategies, existing support systems in the institution, and lastly the positive experiences. The results of this study were based on the views of twenty participants.

4.2. Demographic representation of participants

Twenty international students participated in the study: 14 males and 6 females. Most of the international students interviewed were males. The ages of the participants for this sample ranged from 21 to 32. The level of education for the participants was very high, with most registered for masters and doctoral degrees. They were from different schools and colleges, they also presented different kinds of degrees. It was noticeable that most of them were postgraduates; there were 6 who were doing their PhD, 10 doing Masters and 4 who are still undergraduates. It was evident that most of the international students come from the neighbouring African countries and there are very few that came from European countries. In the interests of time as there are a large number of students at the university, the study was restricted to HC campus. The following table below illustrates the demographic characteristic of the twenty international students that participated in the study. It contains the participant's identification code, gender, age, where they come from as well as their current status in terms of their education level.

Table 4.1. Demographic characteristic of the study sample

Participant Identification (PI)	Gender	Age	Country of origin	Level of education
1	Male	23	Nigeria	Postgraduate (Masters)
2	Male	30	Nigeria	Postgraduate (Masters)
3	Male	29	Zimbabwe	Postgraduate (PhD)
4	Male	30	Zimbabwe	Postgraduate (PhD)
5	Female	28	Zimbabwe	Postgraduate (PhD)
6	Male	23	Rwanda	Undergraduate
7	Male	25	Zimbabwe	Postgraduate (Masters)
8	Male	24	Zimbabwe	Postgraduate (Masters)
9	Female	23	Zimbabwe	Postgraduate (Masters)
10	Male	25	Nigeria	Postgraduate (Masters)
11	Male	30	Zimbabwe	Postgraduate (PhD)

12	**Female**	**23**	**Germany**	**Postgraduate (Masters)**
13	**Male**	**19**	**Zimbabwe**	**Undergraduate**
14	**Male**	**19**	**Zimbabwe**	**Undergraduate**
15	**Male**	**18**	**Zimbabwe**	**Undergraduate**
16	**Female**	**26**	**Nigeria**	**Postgraduate (Masters)**
17	**Male**	**30**	**Nigeria**	**Postgraduate (PhD)**
18	**Female**	**23**	**Germany**	**Postgraduate (Masters)**
19	**Female**	**23**	**Zimbabwe**	**Postgraduate (Masters)**
20	**Male**	**29**	**Nigeria**	**Postgraduate (PhD)**

Note. PI*- participants identification.

4.3. Reasons for selecting the institution.

South African universities have attracted thousands of students from across Africa and globally, the selected institution happens to be one of those popular institutions. There are many factors that were considered that influenced the participants to select this particular institution. The University's reputation, quality of education and recognition of its qualifications was one of the biggest influences. Secondly, the availability of certain courses that are not available in their home countries. Thirdly, it was the cost of education which includes the availability of free remuneration and scholarship. Fourth, it was because of the recommendations or referrals from family, friends, relatives and the media at large. Lastly, environmental conditions which included the climate of the institution correspondingly to the geographic proximity.

"I came here because I got a scholarship from the government of Zimbabwe to come and study here, we were not given choices to choose university from, the government selected and placed us to specific institutions, and for me it was UKZN" (PI4).

"*I had a friend who was here, and he told me how good UKZN is in terms of research, so I applied for my Masters because I wanted a good quality, hence it is internationally recognised, so that would benefit me a lot in terms of my career*" (PI3).

The above responses indicated that students tend to choose an institution because of the affordability of education. The institutions ability to offer great and quality education through it competent and knowledgeable lecturers as well as the availability of resources makes it interesting to students. Likewise, the availability of inclusive courses that the students are interested in but due to the inaccessibility of them in their home country fascinates students.

"I had a passion to do Architecture but unfortunately that course is not available in my home country. From my country we also believe that education from outside or abroad is better than that of the local" (PI6).

"Currently, in Africa to say the least, South Africa's tertiary education is highly ranked; the credibility is very high everywhere across Europe, Australia and the U.S, so that is one of the big benefits of doing tertiary in South Africa, because of South African education quality I decided to apply here at UKZN" (PI17).

The other two participants indicated that they came here because of the partnership between their institution and the selected university, they are exchange students. Other factors were that it is close to student's home country, so it is easy to visit their home.

4.4. Challenges encountered

It is always difficult to adjust and adapt to a new environment when coming from a different country as it was highlighted in the literature review above. The international students face certain challenges when coming to study in a new country. For some students moving to another country is not an easy transition. Thus, there is a high possibility that the challenges that they encounter affect their academics and psychosocial well-being in general. In this study the participants raised several concerns related to their academic challenges namely

language barrier, financial hardships, culture shock, adjustment problems, prejudice and discrimination, xenophobia, difficulty in getting their study permit and homesickness.

4.4.1. Language barrier

Language difficulties are a major issue for international students, specifically when they are not used to learning in a new language. The language barrier mainly affects international students who come from countries that have a different medium of communication to that of the host international university. The majority of participants responded that indeed language was one of their major challenges when they came in South Africa. This is what they had to say:

> *"It was a big challenge for me, and it still is but not like before since I did everything back at home in French, so coming here where they speak English and IsiZulu in most cases it was a challenge" (PI*6).

> "*Definitely yes, language was a big challenge for me especially because I was the only one in class who did not understand IsiZulu*" (PI17).

The major issue that the language barrier presents for international students is that it affects their academic progress. Participants indicated that language barrier makes it hard for them to participate and engage in class. One participant mentioned that she was unable to contribute as effectively as required in tutorial discussions. It becomes hard for us to understand the lecturer especially when they use local language. These are comments from participants:

> "*The language made it hard for me to participate and engage in class discussions since I could not understand it. Even worse when you try to ask someone next to you what the discussion is about, some will try to say but you will not get the complete context as they just say it in brief. Others will laugh at you and respond in IsiZulu"* (PI16).

> "*Doing my school work was a big challenge, that is why I failed most of my modules in my first year because I did not understand English and that is the only language used for academic work"* (PI6).

The use of local language in some of the lectures really affected the participants and it really does not make sense to the participants why lecturers do that when they know there are student who are not familiar with the language.

*"I came to a point that I was no longer attending classes because I told myself why I should attend class when I did not hear anything" (*PI20).

Most international students find it hard to adjust to the new academic ways and expectations of the institution in the host country. The participants stated that the institution here has different expectations for assignment, deadlines, citations, workload, paper format, writing style and communication in general from what they we are used to. As a result, participant's academics and learning ability gets affected. They find it difficult to adjust to the new academic format, and the work load becomes too much for them. Thus, it took time for some students to become accustomed to the way in which things are done academically. To support the above this is what one respondent had to say.

"Other than the language, when I first came here, I was not familiar with the style of learning they are using compared to that of my home country. In my home country it is the lecturer's responsibility to know all the information and then teach us, whereas here you also as a student need to know much as the lecturer or even more. Since here, classes are more like a discussion between both the lecturer and students. Also, the style of oral presenting using the power point of which the slides are more of a guide or a summary of what you will be talking or rather teaching about, so you need to read and know most of the information. We never did that back at home" (PI16).

Another student also had a similar problem;

"*When it comes to the style of learning that was even worse, I remember in my first year I failed because I did not know where to check my timetable for exams, for those modules that I qualified for supplementary exam I failed them also because I did not know about such thing"(*PI13).

"What gave me most problem it the way things are done here, for instance communicating via emails, the style of writing and referencing, that was more than difficult" (PI9).

Students were unfamiliar with the local language therefore it became difficult to socialise or make new friends, as domestic students tend to use native language to communicate with each other. They therefore felt isolated and like they did not fit in to the new environment.

"*In my first year I never had friends because I was scared of the way that I pronounce words, my accent for both IsiZulu and English, because I was not good at them. So, I tend to isolate myself....it became a habit for me"* (PI6).

"*In terms of socializing it becomes a problem because some students use local language, and because of my accent when I speak in English they keep on saying they do not understand me and that irritates me at times" (*PI2).

Some participants mentioned that they prefer to rather make friends with other international students that they meet in class or around campus because it is easier to assimilate with them than with local students.

Other than the above-mentioned challenges with regards to language as a barrier, some participants also raised the disappointing fact that local students and some of the workers tend to use language to discriminate against international students. Local students use slang in their native language that the international students are unfamiliar with in order to gossip and exclude them from their social groups. Especially the dominant groups use local words that are abusive and inhumane when referring to international students

"*Also, being called names is common, especially as 'Amakwerekwere or abant'bangare'* (PI7).

"*Some students even use IsiZulu when they want to gossip about you since they know that you don't understand. You will hear them laughing and looking at you then you know" (*PI13).

A few of the respondents indicated that they did not encounter language barriers like the others. These were students who came from Zimbabwe in a village called kwaBulawayo. Simply, because they were familiar with the local language which is IsiZulu as they are from the Ndebele tribe, where they speak IsiNdebele that is a bit similar with IsiZulu. However, they had a challenge somehow as there are some terms that sound or are pronounced in the same way, but they have different meaning for both languages.

"*Language did not give me a challenge since I am from Bulawayo where they speak IsiNdebele, so I am familiar with the language as I am speaking IsiNdebele, and I knew most of the things in IsiZulu"* (PI11).

Additionally, there is also one student that has been here for a long period time. She was able to learn the language, and this made assimilation easier.

> "*Language is not a challenge for me because I have been here in South Africa since 2010 when I was doing my matric, and I also did my undergrad here in S.A, but not in UKZN, so when I came here for my Masters I was already familiar with IsiZulu"* (PI3).

Overall, it is of significance to mention that some students indicated that they did not have that much of language challenge in class because English is used as the main medium of communication teaching, learning and assessment in the University, even other students use it in terms of socializing. Therefore, for the students who understood English it was not a challenge except for those who did not understand English. The other participants pointed out that it was the South African indigenous languages that acted as a barrier to communication among them. As well as the mere fact that in most cases, international students cannot speak as fluently as the native speakers. And there is a certain amount of hesitation for them to speak out because of their poor language ability. Also, it is not easy for them to fully understand the underlying meaning of some words. Hence, there is a communication gap and a lack of understanding.

4.4.2. Financial hardships

Financial problems include a range of money-related difficulties faced by international students. This theme emerged as one of the major problems that affected international students in their studies. Most of the participants indicated that they have a challenge when it comes to finances, especially those who do not have financial aid, and still have to pay tuition and all other living expenses either by themselves, parents or any family member's assistance. Above that, international students must pay much higher fees compared to local students. Sometimes they are required to pay large sum of their tuition debt forefront.

> "…*That is the most difficult challenge I have encountered so far, when I first came in the university required me to pay upfront payment of which I did not have such money, and as an international student it was very challenging with the payment methods that they use, as well as the documents required"* (PI3).

Similarly,

> *"That is the most difficult part because we must pay more fees than the local students, and we have additional fees like medical aid, international students levy, so it is expensive. And it is very hard to make means of money since the opportunities that come up on campus prefer local students. Thus, funding is not available for international students, which is not fair since local students are given funding"* (PI5).

The financial hardships that the international students face tends to affect their learning progress. It becomes hard for them to buy studying material and stationery. Students indicated that they missed or skipped classes because they did not have transport fare. Others had to pause their courses due to insufficient funds to continue. In some cases, other students failed to register in the beginning of the year because of the high registration fee needed. Students are also required to pay a certain percentage upfront for their outstanding fees before they can proceed with their academics for the upcoming year.

> "*It has never been easy with finances since I came in. In my first year my parents used to cover for my fees, and when they ran out of money, I had to pause my course, go back home and start a family business to raise money for my fees, so I was really affected with my academics"* (PI6*).*

> "*It is a challenge for me since I came here on a scholarship, but it dropped me along the way in my first year, so I am now struggling to even buy books, pay rent, and transport fare"* (PI1).

Other students further indicated that they choose to make sacrifices in order to save money for their living. One of the participants explained that she had to sell her laptop in order to get money for accommodation. In some cases, they skip classes to save transport fee. Others sell snacks and sweets around campus to earn extra income. There are some students who were able to secure employment within the campus as tutors, invigilators and so forth.

> *"I couldn't register early like all other students since I was required to pay upfront for my tuition fees, so I had to go back home and find means of getting the money"* (PI10).

> *"I even skip some of my classes to save money for the taxi fare in order to be able to have money on important dates for my tests and submissions"* (PI9).

Another student stated that it is important to plan and budget for all the cost that one may have abroad. Not that it is simple but if one take charge as well as ensuring that they do not spend more than what they have, the education and living costs become a little better and manageable.

> *"It is a challenge, but then it's a matter of planning. One needs to plan for his/her education cost when going abroad, as much as it was a problem, but it did not affect me that much since before I came in here, I saved money through business that I did to cover for my tuition fees. I am also a tutor here at the university, so I use that money to cover for my additional expenses and also making sure that I do not spend money recklessly"* (PI2).

The average participants indicated that they did not have challenges with their finances. This included students that came from affluent families. These students have parents that are able to afford their children's school fees.

> *"I did not have any challenge since my parents covered for my fees and my brother also supports me financially"* (PI15).

Plus, three of the students did not have financial issues since they had free remuneration (the institution offers free remuneration to students doing Masters by research and PhD students).

> *"For my tuition fees it was not a problem since we were offered free remuneration as PhD students"* (PI17).

Students who have scholarships also indicated that they do not have major financial challenges, since most of their scholarships cover their expenses. However, some scholarships gave the students some challenges as the scholarship will pay fees late and that affected them since it took time to be academically cleared.

> "*My scholarship covered for everything tuition fee, accommodation and books, so I did not have a challenges with finance, and I also used to get academic funding i.e. when you perform very well in your modules then they will offer you some sort of rewards and I was very lucky with that"* (PI4).

Participants indicated that financial constraints affected their personal lives at the university. They were required to pay large amounts of registration fees and to clear the balance in a shorter time than South African students. It is difficult for international students to obtain

bursaries and scholarships in South Africa, as most of the state-sponsored bursaries are for South African citizens. Even those that have scholarships, some of the scholarships do not cover all their expenses but some do. In addition, the scholarships sometimes pay later as a result student suffer in terms of being financial cleared and also not having money to buy food, paying for accommodation fee. Most of the participants agreed that international students in South Africa with limited financial resources were prone to face difficulties. The international students pointed out that their situation was worsened by university policies that were stricter for international students and organisations that provide study grants in South Africa which tend to use discriminatory policies to exclude international students with the academic potential but are financially incapacitated.

4.4.3. Culture shock

Being in a new environment where you are not used to the way in which things are done is very challenging and international students have to try and adapt in such situations. The students explained that they were not familiar with the host institution's culture and it was very difficult for them when they first came here. In terms of the local language, the food and the lifestyle especially the way students dress was very different. Other participants especially first years explained that in the beginning it was very hard to adapt to the university environment and for them they believed that returning back home was the only way for them to be in harmony with their environment again. Whilst the older participants who seemed to be more understanding, tried to see their host country's environment and culture positively, and managed to adapt while keeping their original identity.

> *"Everything was very hard for me here, even getting used to campus for me was really difficult since I could not communicate with people, so I had to find my way around campus. The food they eat here is different from home, so I had to try and adjust to what is there for me"* (PI6).

> *"I couldn't get used to the food that was eaten here; it is very different from that of my home country. Here the food is very sweet and expensive" (*PI16).

The respondents explained the difference that they have noticed in terms of culture when they came here. They commented that the local students were more westernised - they seem to have adopted or they are more influenced by the cultural systems or the lifestyle of Europe and North American countries.

> *"It seems a lot of Black South African students have lost their heritage. The richer a South African gets, the more they become western. It's not general but in Nigeria whether you are rich or poor, you still want to keep to your roots, but here in South Africa the more you want to forget your roots"* (PI20).

The lifestyle that the students live here is way different than that in their countries. They felt like there is a lack of morals and dignity amongst students. It was evident that most of the international students perceive their culture as more superior than that of local students, and they proclaimed that back at their homes they still respect and are bound to their culture. One participant made an example that for them as females in Nigeria they are bound to wear long dresses wherever they go. Most participants from Zimbabwe asserted that wearing pants for a female is against their customs.

> "*The way they dress because in Zimbabwe people can't walk in town wearing those short skirts, people do wear skirts but they don't wear miniskirts, because before you even go out you will be even be ashamed of yourself before anyone can tell you that what you are wearing is not right*" (PI2).

> *"When I came here it was a bit weird on how people dressed the miniskirt, and hairstyles as compared to Zimbabwe. Even in lectures when they are dressed like that you look at them and it disturbs you, and for the boys, their hairstyle are a bit weird and when they wear hats they wear them half way and the trousers are tight and narrow. I once bought one and I didn't like it*" (PI19).

It is not only the way that the students dress, but the participants also commented on the lifestyle they are living;

> *"It is a common thing here to see females being dropped and fetched by expensive cars with sugar daddies. They leave at any time from res and when they come back, they're coming with shopping bags, and new hairstyles. They do not bother with going to campus for classes"* (PI5).

> *"I was surprised and shocked when I started staying in the university residence to see how the students get drunk almost every day, and they do not drink just any booze they drink expensive booze"* (PI8).

*"The lifestyle that students live here I tell you, it is too much. They live lavishly, they come to school with cars, wearing expensive clothes and they eat expensive food, not the snacks that I usually buy after a long day in class" (*PI9).

In terms of living arrangements, the way some of the students live with their partners in residences, it is bizarre for international students (cohabiting). However, it looks common and normal to most of the local students while international students saw it as a forbidden act. According to them in their culture cohabiting is a taboo. Particularly, in Rwanda it is prohibited to live with your partner out of wedlock or without paying any legal or religious sanction. Thus, it is associated with stigma and conservative religious attitudes.

*"It was very weird for me to see students living with their partners at res, and for them it was a normal thing. In my country living with your partner while you are not married is a taboo" (*PI11).

It is thus evident that though these participants may not be affected by the cultural differences in a bad way, they do take note that the differences play a role in how they interact with South Africans. It may also seem that some African international students view South Africa as a country that has lost its cultural roots and has succumbed to western values. Though the participants might have felt that these cultural differences did not necessarily affect their behaviours, they acknowledge that such differences existed and contributed to their overall adjustment experiences within the university environment and the South African context as a whole.

4.4.4. Accommodation

The majority of the participants explained that they had difficulties in finding accommodation within the university's residences. According to them it was a challenge to obtain the residence because they did not have funding; the institution usually prefers someone who has funding to offer them residences.

"*It is very hard to get accommodation if you are an international student, I have tried to apply for it several times but no luck, and it is because I have no funding the first preference usually favours those who have it"*

"I couldn't find accommodation here on campus, I spent days and weeks going to residence office, but I never got one. Even with finding off-campus was very challenging since they wanted a permanent residence and a fore front payment which

I did not have. So, I ended up settling for a very bad commune with poor living conditions for a student" (PI1).

The participants asserted that it is hard to secure or obtain school residences especially on campus and they had to look for private accommodation. Living in private accommodation for them presented a lot of challenges including the disturbance in their studies.

"I stayed very far from campus and I had to spend more money on transport and that really affected me since I had to miss some classes to try and save money for the bus fare, so my school work got affected" (PI18).

Another issue was that the private accommodations are very expensive, in some cases students had to settle for the cheapest or the most affordable ones. Now, the problem with them is that they are not in a good manner for students, they are not safe, and some are far from campus so in terms of transport it becomes a challenge.

"If you didn't have any luck to find university residence it becomes a problem because you have to look for private accommodation and they are too expensive, especially the ones that are on a great standard, the cheapest ones are not accommodative for students as you must share with many people. There is noise and your belongings are not safe as you're staying with different kinds of people, and that affects your performance academically" (PI17).

"*At the place we are staying, we have been robbed three times when we had gone to school"* (PI6).

Other participants did not have the challenge with accommodation, and this includes students who were on scholarship as they were covered and paid for everything. Others were lucky and got offered on-campus residences by the institution. Very few stayed with their families or relatives. Participants suggested that the university should prioritise on-campus accommodation for international students.

4.4.5. Prejudice and discrimination

International students face discrimination due to their nationality, race, ethnicity and cultural difference rather than physical appearances, which negatively impact on their psychological functioning and well-being (Singh, 2013). Most participants indicated that they experience unfair treatment, racial prejudice, social exclusion, being called names, recipients of negative

attitudes and stereotypes. Many international students experience not only feeling unwelcome, but also encounter incidents of insulting jokes and statements about their home country, particularly those from developing countries, which are perceived as lacking basic resources. Moreover, international students encounter reactions of frustration and contempt, not only from students but administrators due to their language accents, with some classmates being reluctant to befriend them. The majority of the respondents said they are used to being called names just because they are not from the country.

> *"Yeah … I have experienced it especially at school, students will call you names, and they have this perception that we are poor, and they wouldn't want to socialize with us. For instance, the other student at res asked me why I don't go back home because I have been here for so long and that made me feel unwelcome"* (PI7).

> *"I always get attitudes, especially from students and it is because of my accent. Some will laugh at me when I try to pronounce words in class* (PI8*).*

> He added … *Also some workers have this tendency, there was once a time where I went to ask for help in some assistance office and I greeted in IsiZulu, but as I couldn't continue with IsiZulu this sister was so reluctant to assist me, she said speak IsiZulu, English is not for us seeing exactly that I cannot speak in it".*

Surprisingly the discrimination and attitudes does not only come from students only, even the institution workers perpetrate this act. They regard international students as the 'other'. As a result, they treat them unfairly. Just like the domestic students, the workers also call international students names. Participants mentioned that the workers become resistant or reluctant in helping them.

> *"I went for help some place here on campus and the lady saw that I am an international student because they can just tell, while I was there, she was on the phone she said let me help 'lelikwerekwere elilana' thinking that maybe I won't understand what she was saying"* (PI17).

Other participants explained that they feel as if they are treated differently compared to other international students from European countries or first world countries. For instance, European students are accepted and most welcomed than African internationals. You will not hear a local student calling an international student from a European country 'ikwerekwere' or perhaps speaking in a native language with them. Even in offices or places where students

get help from within the University European students are given first preference and excellent attention.

> *"Basically, at UKZN international students who come from African countries are treated differently to international students that come from maybe first world countries. The way we are treated is totally different, even if we go to the international office you can tell, I once went there and the lady assistant talked very kind and friendly with a white guy, but when it was my turn, she was no longer friendly she kept on saying she can't hear me"*(PI9).

> *"International students from other countries such as America or Germany are given better treatment than us students from SADC countries. If you can ask an international student from America about all the attitudes that we get from international office, they will tell you they have never experienced such"* (PI10).

Participants further asserted that the unequal treatment is not only amongst them as international students but also with the local students. There is just an obvious distinction between local and international students.

> *"Everything always favours local students, and us as international students - we are treated as outsiders. For instance, if there a scholarship or bursary they are all specified for local students, and automatically we lose the opportunity, and I do not understand why since we all need assistance with money"* (PI17).

> *"In terms of opportunities that are there in campus yes, I have been refused an opportunity to be lecturer for a certain module because I am an international student, and they gave it to a local student who happened to have little experience than me but since he was a domestic student, they chose him"* (PI4).

The students do not like the way that the institution operates when it comes to such cases. Some participants showed irritation that they do not know why they have to be distinctive from the other students. They were particularly concerned why they are expected to pay upfront and large percent of their debt compared to the local students. With funding, why they are not given same opportunities because they are all in need at the end of the day, they are all students regardless of where they are coming from.

Discrimination in South Africa is widespread with people discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability and age (Singh, 2013). Likewise, foreign nationals are also discriminated against mostly based on their nationality and race. This has been evident where foreign nationals from the western world are being more accepted as they represent 'the white superior race' and they are seen as business investors who brings in resources whilst those from Africa are seen as a drain on resources and a threat to the economic opportunities as well as perpetrators of crime (Singh, 2013). This popular discourse is rather untrue in academia as international students across the globe have been seen as an important asset that brings huge sums of money to foreign institutions.

4.4.6. Xenophobia

The respondents of this study clarified that xenophobia is not prevalent or widespread within the institution; however, there are students who somehow show hatred to them as international students (name calling is the most common one and also being given attitudes, questions and remarks that show not being liked and seen as the 'other'). They also mentioned that outside the campus it is scary as lately the South African citizens are against foreigners and they fear for their lives. Thus, they get affected as some of their family members have been the victims of xenophobic attacks that has been happening lately within the country. Their well-being, coping and functioning get affected with incidences of xenophobia attacks. South Africa is a very intimidating country in relation to xenophobia, they said.

> *"To be honest I would say no, but I just get offended with stupid and silly assumptions that the local students make of international students. And it is because of ignorance and for some of them, they are unaware that one may get offended by what you are asking or saying i.e. one student at res asked when am I going back to my country because this is not home, and she continued on saying people from SADC countries come here to S.A because they are poor" (*PI5).

Another participant added:

> "*I have never been exposed to it within the campus … but outside it's bad. I was once in a taxi to town and there was a conversation going on within the taxi passengers and you could hear the hatred and anger that some South Africans have against foreigners. Even with the latest incidences that were happening in Johannesburg, it*

was very disturbing emotionally because those were our fellow brothers and sisters that were being attacked, but what can we say hey…." (PI14).

4.4.7. Study permit and Visa

Most of the participants indicated that they had problems with their study permits. The majority of the respondents indicated that it is very hard to obtain a South African visa. It requires money, perseverance and consistency because the process can be frustrating and draining. Due to the long queues, lots of documentation are needed, besides home affairs workers can be too much and very demanding at times.

> *"It was very difficult to get a study permit, the procedure is long and because I studied in South Africa a few years ago, I had to do a police clearance here in South Africa. So, I had to travel here and go back home to apply for a study permit, so it was hectic"* (PI3).

> *"Well it's really expensive, and it's hard to get a study visa; for a student who doesn't have the finances it can become a challenge. The rules, medical aid, you pay international fees, I feel like it's the most difficult"* (PI20).

Even reapplying for it is a struggle and it is expensive they said; the procedure for re-applying and renewal is very hard as they need a lot of staff there. They need many copies of medical records, faculty letters, proof of residence and they need police clearance from one's country of origin and South Africa.

> *"…The visa process is very long. At first it was easy to apply and renew the visa, and I renewed it once. You had to go there with your documents, pay whatever is required and within a month or less you have your papers. But now it's a whole process, if you don't stress you don't get your permit; so, you need money and to have proof of financial means, that's not something everyone has…."* (PI16).

Students asserted that the study permit delay their progress in various aspects. Some participants indicated that they missed out a chance in previous year of filling and accepting the offered program because the visa application was not approved. Others had to wait for the second semester if they missed the first semester.

> *"It gave me a big challenge because it came very late, I was supposed to start on a first semester but because of it I started in the second semester, because it came after the registration process was over and they couldn't let me register without it"* (PI8).

The participants stated that it becomes very challenging when one has to stay at home the whole semester just because his or her visa could not come out on time. On the other hand, the study permit caused a delay in students' enrolment and registration process.

> "*I missed a whole year at school because of it. My study permit did not come back at all"* (PI10).

The duration or period that one is given when coming to study complicates their study progress. Thus, the process of re-applying is complicated as well.

> *"It is very challenging studying under a given period. I had a problem with my fees, so I had to go back home, and I missed two years, so when I came back my study permit had already expired. I couldn't register before I re-apply for it"* (PI6).

> *"There's also a challenge with the duration that they give you. It might happen you fail to finish in a given time, so it won't last you till then. It is expensive to also pay for it and the sad part is that they expect you to pay fore-front for maybe your medical aid, so if it happens that you do not have enough money to pay for the whole period of study that you will be here for, the permit will expire after that period that you were able to pay for and you will have to renew it again"* (PI7).

Immigration officials working at Home Affairs are very unfriendly and rude to international students wanting to apply for study permits.

> "*The workers who work at home affairs really gave me a whole lot of attitudes, it's like they did not want me to obtain it. They asked for lots of documents, they did not tell me at first what they needed so they kept on calling me and asking for documents one-by-one, which was really frustrating. Above that, it came late, I almost couldn't register"* (PI14).

Other than that, they require a lot of documentation and sometimes they ask for unnecessary documents. Some of the immigration regulations are burdensome enough to frustrate and discourage international students from applying. Plus, other regulations limit students' freedom within the host country.

> *"It a challenge to apply for off-campus vacancies since we are restricted to work within the campus, if not, we are allowed certain or specific hours to work out"* (PI19).

> "*Its regulations are also a problem because they restrict us as international students to do things, for instance; we are not allowed to apply for off campus jobs, which becomes very challenging since even on campus - the job opportunities local students are considered first" (*PI9*).*

It becomes very difficult to obtain a study visa as the immigration laws are very strict. The new immigration law introduced in 2015 does not allow persons under the age of 18 and this includes international students to travel to or from the Republic of South Africa without both parents accompanying the student who is considered a legal minor.

> *"I came here at the age of 17 years for my first year, I couldn't travel without my parents since according to the law I am young, so I had to wait for my parents to take a day off from work to accompany, and that cost us a lot of money since it was three of us travelling. We did not even know about this law" (*PI15).

The participants who were here because of their university's partnership with the institutions aboard indicated that they did not have any problems with their study permit since they were helped, the process was fast, and it was done remotely. Similarly, the students from Zimbabwe who are here on Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship had no complications because they were helped with the whole process of applying for their permits, so they did not go through the tiring process like most students. As well as those who were lucky enough to get it early without impediments.

4.4.8. Crime and security

The crime rate in South Africa is very high and in Durban more so (Jonck. et al., 2015). Some of the participants indicated that have they have become victims of crime. However, they explained that they experience crime like everyone and not because they are international students, but still they fear for their lives as it really not safe here in Durban. In addition, they asserted that within the institution there are efforts to keep it safe as there are securities all over the campus and the campus is under CCTV surveillance 24 hours. Regardless of the universities' measures put in place for student's safety, the thugs still find their way within the campus.

It was evident through the participant's responses that they mostly experienced crime in their private accommodation, in town and also when they are walking to campus. Within the campus or the universities residences nobody mentioned any problems, except of course the ones they hear about from other student's experience. Therefore, it can be said that staying off campus put the lives of students at risk.

> "*Safety … it really not here, especially if you're a foreigner, but within the campus it a matter of every student. It is not safe since thugs easily get in, even though there's security it's not safe"* (PI2).

> *"It's really not safe, you cannot just walk around with your cell phone and laptop or anything, and the sad part is that the local people do not even bother in assisting you when they see you being robbed"* (PI19).

Most responses of those who admitted that they have experienced crime were mainly those students who stay off campus. Female students showed that they are very scared as they are more vulnerable as they are most likely to be targeted.

> *"I was once mugged and got beaten when I was travelling from the commune to campus and they took my laptop, wallet, cell phone - actually everything … I would just say I am not fortunate because they've also got into my room and took stuff, but that was on the other day" (*PI8*)*.

Other participants added their views explaining that they have not experienced crime, but they have seen or heard of criminal activities.

> *"Within the campus and in residence I have never experienced any"* (PI3*).*

4.4.9. Homesickness

Participants identified homesickness as one of the challenges that impedes their adjustment. More especially in the early days when they arrived here but not all of them experienced homesickness. These were some of the responses.

> *"Obviously I miss my wife and kids back home and it is unfortunate since I have not visited home since I came here last year"* (PI2*).*

It is even sad for those students who had never visited their homes, ever since they have arrived here because of finances and other issues.

"I miss home so much considering the fact that I only visited only once since I came here in 2010, so you can imagine how it feels" (PI4).

First year students who were often younger and they experienced more homesickness than the others. They indicated that the loneliness sometimes affects them in such a way that they experience emotional stressors.

"I really miss home, sometimes I even cry when I am alone, especially when I am struggling with my school work, it even got to a point where I suffered from anxiety, even worse, I once went through depression because I felt lonely" (PI13*).*

4.5. Coping strategies

International students encounter several challenges when coming to study in a new institution, but still, these challenges does not hinder them from achieving what they came here for, they strive and try so hard to cope and make it with good marks regardless of the impediments along the way. The participants indicated that various strategies that assisted in adjusting to the institution environment. The coping strategies employed by international students included improvements in social interaction skills, self-empowerment, and utilisation of student assistance facilities offered by the university. These were some of the participants` responses on how they managed to cope and adjust.

"*Well, it was through determination and telling my mind that I am here for something. I came to do what I have to do and finish what I have to do and not be pulled down by things that affect me, just to stand up and move forward"* (PI4).

"*With regards to my school work I had to study very hard, and make sure that I made friends with local students in class that I saw they were capable. As well as through making consultations with my lecturers and tutors seeking clarity where I do not understand"* (PI6).

Participants noted that being able to adjust in a new environment comes with a sense of self-empowerment. Another participant highlighted his point of view on how he adjusted to the environment, showing that many self-empowering ways may exist in conjunction with the individual's personality.

"Well, I just told myself that I am going to make it, no matter what it takes because I can't disappoint the people back at home" (PI9).

"Personally, I managed to adjust very well … Eventually, I picked up academically. I'm a pretty practical person, so when I'm in a situation I work out something to overcome it. I don't really see things as problems, but I find solutions to it" (PI12).

The above responses point out that most individuals employed self-empowering mechanisms to keep them going and help them to eventually adapt. Thus, the utilisation of university student assistance programmes reduced the harshness of the challenges that international students faced in the university. Some of the participants realised that the university had various programmes earmarked for student's health, learning and development. They had to take advantage of the student assistance programmes offered by the university to adjust and cope. The transitional difficulties faced by the international students when they arrived motivated them to develop strategies for problem solving and made them become independent leaners as they developed new learning strategies to deal with difficulties. They developed personally, their perspective changed; they observed academic growth which challenged them to grow independently.

4.6. Existing support systems in the institution

The assistance offered to international students by the university contributed immensely to student's adjustment. Assistance such as mentorship programmes for first years, writing place for academic assessment, tutors to assist with extra classes as well as IsiZulu classes for all those who did not do IsiZulu in high school and many other services are also rendered. Universities are expected to play a role towards student adaptation in as much as the student is expected to seek help or direction in their studies. When asked whether they thought the university had done enough to ensure that international students adjusted to the new environment, few participants agreed with the statement.

"*…. I think the University tries to cater for us, but it will just never be enough. To name a few, when we first came here there was an orientation day to help us get familiar with the university, there is a place of writing at the library where they assist you in writing the academic work, when you come for registration during the beginning of the year there are mentors available at the computer rooms to assist with the online registration (how to select relevant modules, how to make timetable). Above all there is student representative where one can go to with any problem and they will offer help and also an international student's office is also there for us*

specifically. So, I would say the institution provides assistance, it's just not enough…" (PI9).

"*… It's about who do you know hey, connections and communication. It also depends on what help you need, as well as keeping yourself in touch with people making friends with people in high places so that when you need help you know who to call. But there is student representative responsible for students' affairs and there is also international student's office"* (PI11*).*

Participants even stated that there is some sort of financial assistance from the school but not everyone gets it. It usually the students who do very well in their studies, others get free remuneration for their Masters and doctoral studies so it really differs and depends on how lucky you are. Others showed that they do not distinguish themselves from other students and that help them to go wherever they want around campus, where they can be assisted like local students.

"I try not to differentiate myself from other students so when I seek help, I go to the same place where others go. Should it be the clinic, finance offices, student representative - I just go right where they render the service that I need" (PI7).

The university has structures in place to help students, but the international students had to take ownership of their needs. Most students indicated that they ask around if they need something and the local students help them.

*"I didn't get that much help from the university; I helped myself in the university environment … maybe I didn't look for help but managed to adjust on my own" (*PI10*).*

There were students who disagreed that the university was helpful. Their responses were recorded as follows:

"There is nothing none … you just need to man up because you on your own here" (PI3).

"When I came here, I didn't get help from anybody. Luckily, I had my roommate, but most international students don't seem to get the assistance needed to find their way. There should be help but based on the number of workers at International Office, and the number of international students, they can't really help" (PI6).

Most of the respondents acknowledged the availability of the international student's office but the major issue was that it did not really assist them in their issues except for administration work of which it was not an issue for them. They further recommended that the institution should hire more workers and make the office active and be responsible to advocate and represent the international students.

> "*I wouldn't say there is, but there is an international student's office, but it doesn't do much really except for that they are there for us to ask question and seeking clarity, but the support is not that much There is no support at all and we kind of feel neglected on that part"* (PI4).

It was also evident through the discussions that not only that the international student's office does not help international students, but it also discriminates and favours certain international students over others which is not fair according to them.

It goes without saying that the institution strives to provide assistance where it can by all means. However, adjustment is largely left up to the student as an individual to make an effort to engage positively with the adversity encountered, which might not be the direct responsibility of the university to initiate such strategies.

4.7. Positive experiences

The majority of the participants appreciated the high-quality education they receive, the practical programmes and the favourable learning environment. They were grateful for the chance to experience different styles of learning that they were not exposed to in their home countries. The students admired and acknowledged the friendly, helpful, supportive and highly qualified lecturers and tutors. Additionally, they appreciated the good teacher-student relationships they receive, development of language and intercultural communication skills, and personal and intellectual growth they have acquired in the host institution. They mentioned that they are very happy with their academic progress and that they found their lecturers to be approachable, supportive and encouraging in most cases. Studying abroad granted them the opportunity to learn a new language, as they were offered local language short courses and the local students taught them. Surprisingly, other students found that they love their host country so much that they want to seek work here after varsity. Others were looking forward to going back home with qualifications that are internationally recognised, which they regarded as very attractive to their future employers.

Another positive experience that some of the respondents indicated was the fact that they were able to experience and learn about diverse cultures which made them understand, respect and value other people from different cultural backgrounds. Some of the students were fascinated by the distinct cultural perspectives. Consequently, they learned and were knowledgeable of a unique country's culture. Moreover, they have acquired a better understanding and appreciation for the host country's people and history. The international students mentioned that during their transition that presented challenges they developed personally, their perspective changed, they observed academic growth, had a supportive living environment and support from the international environment. Their intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills improved, studying in a different environment boosted their confidence and helped them to excel in many life aspects. Plus, they got the opportunity to witness a completely new way of life.

They further mentioned that studying abroad and being an international student in another country has a lot of perks other than academic benefits and achievements. The majority of the participants loved the fact that they got to travel, and experience different places and met different people with different beliefs that broaden their thinking. They developed new lifelong friendships and relationships with people from different backgrounds. In addition, their benefits of studying abroad included the opportunity to see new terrains, natural wonders, museums and landmarks of the host country. Thus, it was advantageous for them to be in Durban because of the city's warm subtropical climate and extensive beaches. Above all, they regarded the transition as an adventure of a lifetime as they got to explore the world.

> *"I feel very honoured to study at one of the best and well-known institutions. You know, it is great for my career opportunities and the prestige or status back at home"* (PI5).

> *"The quality of education that is offered here is excellent, their way or style of supervision in terms of research is also good especially if you had luck of getting a competent supervisor. People are friendly and there is just a lot more to explore even outside the institution"* (PI11).

> *"I got to learn new language, IsiZulu, and make friends with the local students, explore the diversity within the university community and learn different cultures"* (PI12*)*.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings gathered from in-depth interviews conducted with the international students. It was evident that there are a number of challenges that the students are faced with, and these challenges somehow affect their academic progress. Language barrier, financial hardships, study permit were most of the major challenges they had. However, the study also finds that the students have also experienced positive encounters (learning new language, meeting and making new friends, being in an institution that is highly recognized, learning different culture and discovering new places etc) and most of them were grateful to be here. It was observed amongst the majority that regardless of the challenges they encountered they still highly like the selected institution. This chapter has attempted to deepen the understanding of the student's challenges and experiences as internationals.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This study explores the challenges that international students encounter in the process of their academic journey at an institution of higher learning. The overall aim was to shed insights into the challenges facing international students. To gain in-depth perspectives of the issues, the study relied on a qualitative method and conducted in-depth interviews with 20 selected international students. The study draws on the push and pull theoretical framework to understand the given phenomena in a more detailed way.

5.2. Summary of key findings

Unsatisfactory conditions in the home country of an individual often forces one to move to a host destination that is perceived to have satisfactory conditions. Push and pull theory implies that students migrate from one place to another because of demographic, environmental and economic factors (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). This was evident in this study as the participants indicated that they migrated from their home country to South Africa because of economic instability, more in particular students from Zimbabwe. Other participants asserted that the economic instability and political unrest forced them to move to South Africa. Similarly, individuals from countries like the DRC and Zimbabwe are forced to leave their countries of origin due to political instability often created and sustained by foreign interventions and the inability of those states to protect individuals who live within their boundaries (Amisi 2006). Economic and political instability created the need for students to move to countries where the economy is perceived to be stable and political institutions are sustainable. This study suggests that, students migrate from their home country because of the desire for a better education. The majority of the participants especially those from SADC countries explained that the lack of quality higher education and certain exclusive course in their home countries compel them to move. These findings are parallel with those by Brown (2017), who argued that for people in less developed countries, low quality and limited access to education are some of the factors that influence them to move from their own countries to more developed countries with better education.

There are several factors that attract students to a host institution. In this study the majority of participants asserted that they chose UKZN because of its reputation and the quality of

education. The quality of infrastructure, the highly advanced technology utilized in the educational system, and research support for postgraduate is quite fascinating (UKZN, 2013). UKZN hold a good position amongst the top three universities in Africa (Marko, 2009). Thus, the institution is highly rated in terms of quality research and training and it offers internationally recognised academic qualifications (UKZN, 2013). According to the findings, UKZN offers exclusive courses that are not available in the student's country of origin. This is in line with the push and pull theory which states that students are pulled into the host country by exclusive programmes that are unavailable and scarce in their home country (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). The theory suggests that the cost of education influences students to choose an institution (Mazzaro, Kemp and Slavery, 1997). Similarly, the participants in this study explained that they preferred UKZN to other universities because of its affordable education; this included the low tuition fees and scholarship opportunities. In addition, referrals and recommendations from family members, relatives and friends made students to choose UKZN. According to the push and pull theory physical or geographical considerations attract students to the host institution. This was evident in this study as students especially those who are from SADC countries explained that they chose UKZN because of its location in South Africa which is closer to their home country and that makes it easier for them to visit their home regularly on a periodic basis during school vacations, the trips become frequent and affordable. The proximity to other countries has some impact on forming positive perceptions such as academic and cultural exchange between countries (Chen, 2007). Environmental and climate conditions were also the contributing factors to the student's choice of the selected institution.

The different views from students suggest that the experiences of international students are characterised by both positive and negative encounters. The majority of the participants acknowledged that studying in South Africa, particularly at UKZN, presented a number of advantages that could not be deterred by incidental, unpleasant experiences. In this regard, many of the students found that they were positively engaging with others, they were taught local languages, exploring and learning different cultures and they discovered new places. Above all the institution's a good reputation gives them that prestige back in their home country (Yen and Stevens, 2004). They also expressed that being exposed to transnational experience at UKZN instilled in them to be responsible, disciplined, and they acquired a great deal of experience in developing self-capacity to handle difficult issues by themselves.

Generally, students become more independent, self-reliant, adaptable, culturally aware, and multilingual and so much more (Yates and Wahid, 2013).

Language barrier poses a major challenge for international students globally. This is consistent with the findings by Robertson et al. (2000), in most studies documented for international students globally; language topped the list among the problems encountered by international students. It was clear from the participant's narratives that language made it difficult for them to adjust to the university's environment. The results support the findings reported by Yates and Wahid (2013), language proficiency tend to be the cause of adjustment problems international students faced in the host countries. For some students, language barrier became a challenge for their learning process and academic performance as well. In this regard participants mentioned that language made it very difficult for them to write their assignments, understand lecturers, engage and participate in class discussions and oral assessments. As indicated above by students that sometimes lecturers use local language when teaching in class. One of the respondents in Singh's (2013) research stated that lecturers spoke in local languages to give examples that excluded foreign students while they were aware that there are foreign students in class. There were also those students who had a problem with both the English and the indigenous languages. These were students who came from countries that did not use English as the language of communication, Rwanda in particular. This is consistent with Moslehpour and Chou's argument (2004) that, the language barrier mainly affects international students who come from countries that have a different medium of communication to that of the host international university. International students felt lost and excluded when they found themselves in such situations when another language is used for the purposes of communication.

However, language barrier did not affect international students learning process and academic performance only but further affected their communication and socialising with other local students. This is because local students tend to use their native languages when socializing and it becomes hard for international students to assimilate with them. Language barriers hinder international student's attempts to make friends and to interact with locals (Smith and Khawaja, 2011). According to Wright and Schartner (2013), international student's inability to easily communicate effectively in the host country complicates their ability to socialize and integrate with local students. It was also found in the study that language is also used as a form of discrimination. Students highlighted that local students use slang in their native language and name calling to gossip and exclude them. This is supported by Singh (2013)

who states that, international students just like immigrants in South Africa are stereotyped and called various inhumane and abusive names such as ‘amakwerekwere’. Subsequently, international students felt offended and unwelcomed in the host institution.

Financial hardships are a challenge which to a large extent intensifies other issues that the students encountered. Financial constraints emerged as an issue that most of the students are battling with, especially those who are self-funded. This is confirmed by Smith and Khawaja (2011), who notes that financial problems are experienced by the majority of international students. In this study, students who experienced financial difficulties were those who were self-funded., Altbach and Knight (2007) emphasized that, more than two million international students globally are self-funded which means that they pay for their own fees with the assistance of their families in some instances. This challenge affected student’s learning as some of the students had to make sacrifices. In this regard, some students indicated that they had to skip classes to save money for important school dates (submissions and test dates). Other students were not able to register in some years; as a result, they missed the whole semester or year. Solving the financial constraints was difficult for them as it is hard to obtain scholarships and on campus jobs because most of them favours or give first preference to local students.

The findings of the study demonstrate that international students struggle to obtain a study permit. Some of the students asserted that they could not obtain a study permit due to lack of required documents. The difficulties presented by the procedure of obtaining study permits disturb the learning progression of the students (Lee and Rice, 2007). In a way that some students could not register on time because study permit came out late. Others had to register in the following semester or year or miss the whole year because they were not granted a study permit. Moreover, the study permit restricts their learning; as they are given certain periods and failure to finish within the given period poses a problem. In some cases, students are given shorter periods than that of their course duration. Therefore, they have to re-new their permit and this is not easy. The procedure is frustrating, expensive, and requires many documentations and the long queues at home affairs. The findings confirm what was reported in previous research about the frustrating experiences that students encounter during the registration process of study permit (Maundeni et al., 2010). Likewise, according to students home affairs and immigration officials are not friendly. This is supported by Lee and Rice (2007), who argue that sometimes the requirements are ambiguous however in line with international practices; migration is bound to be hectic. In addition, international students

face an uphill struggle due to strict labour laws that regulate the employment of foreigners (Maundeni et al., 2010). The controversy is that a study permit is granted for the sole purpose of studying and not for work purposes. It implies that a work permit would be required for the international student to be allowed to work in South Africa. The first-year students who were under 18 had to be accompanied by their parents or legal guardians as they are considered as legal minors.

This study reveals that international students experience prejudicial attitudes and discrimination. International students face prejudice and discrimination even from students in the host country (Baba and Hosoda, 2014). Students mentioned the lack of equal opportunities for accessing funding, jobs and other benefits; to them this was seen as a form of discrimination and exclusion because they are international students. As well as unequal treatment amongst them as international students, and between them and local students. The literature suggests that immigrants which include international students tend to feel unprotected and unwelcome in South Africa and there is strong evidence that non-nationals living in the country suffer from systematic discrimination and social exclusion (Zar, 2009).

The threat of xenophobia affected most of the participants either directly or indirectly (Zar, 2009). In this regard, students clarified that within the university campus they have not yet or foreseen xenophobia attacks. However, they were affected emotionally and psychologically with the latest xenophobic attacks that was happening in South Africa especially in Johannesburg and Durban to be specific. Students explained that this affected them as some of the victims of the attacks were their family members, relatives and friends. This atmosphere of xenophobia in South Africa then impacts international students from other African countries studying in South Africa, as they fear that they will become targets of xenophobia (Zar, 2009).

The findings of the study reveal that international students face the challenge of getting accommodation, particularly securing on campus residences. Therefore, students were left with no other choice however, to live in private accommodation. The study further found that accommodation problems had a negative impact on the academic progress for international students, more especially to students who were living on off-campus accommodations (Ward et al., 2001). Living in private accommodation presented a challenge of getting late to class, in some cases students will miss their classes because of not having enough money to come to school as they live far away from campus. Participants mentioned that their gadget which

includes laptops, tablets and cell phones that they use for their school work get stolen. Consequently, it becomes difficult for them to do their school work. According to Ward et al., (2001), finding a good quality and affordable accommodation is a big issue for some of the international students. Consistent with this view, participants explained that some of the accommodations were not in a good standard for them as students and they were unaffordable. Others were very far from campus, as a result students had to pay for transport while those who manage to walk were at risk of being either mugged, beaten or getting kidnapped. It is worth mentioning that living off campus did not only affect students academically, as they were also exposed to being the victims of crimes (Baba and Hosoda, 2014). Consistent with the above, in the study by Barker and Hawkins (2006) more than one in 10 students surveyed had experienced attempted fraud, a figure that rose to almost one in three, where no more than 10% of international students had university accommodation arranged for them.

Cultural differences were noted in terms of the unfamiliar lifestyle that the local students are living and others found it hard to adjust to the South African cuisine. The international students also mentioned that they observed that the local students are more westernised, and they are no longer bound to their culture and tradition. However, the cultural differences did not affect the student's academic performance; nonetheless it was rather experienced as a culture shock. Moreover, students asserted that they realised that in order to adjust to the new environment, they needed to maintain their culture and yet acknowledged the South African culture, yet not allowing it to change them. Many of the participants tended to reject the new culture and become almost nationalistic regarding their own culture (Ward et al., 2001).

Homesickness was experienced particularly by first year students as they left their home country at an early age and they are not used to be on their own away from their parents. In addition, homesickness was experienced by those students who have been away for a long time and not visited home due to personal reasons. One of the participants mentioned that "during the holidays or birthdays, I get really homesick because I have no one to celebrate them with and when the thought hits you that you're on a whole other continent, I feel kind of stuck and the fact that I cannot go home even if I want to, breaks me. This study's findings acknowledge that homesickness is a challenge for international students; however, it is not a major one. Ying and Liese (1994) found that the level of homesickness was the strongest predictor of poor adjustment for most of international students. Similarly, Baker and Hawkins

(2006) argue that lack of social integration, family stress, and isolation that result in homesickness and loneliness are significant problems for many international students.

Despite the difficulties related to student's academics and adjustments they still managed to function and keep going especially those who strived to find ways of handling the presented situation, eventually succeeding in adapting due to their determination to overcome the challenges. Some students seemed resilient and had an independent mind in the sense that they managed on their own. Although they faced these challenges, they were motivated and persevered against these hardships in order to accomplish their study goals. This reflects the strengths and resilience of the students, despite the odds they work extremely hard, function well and succeeded (Yen and Stevens, 2004). According to the push and pull theory, using the available resources and assistance, people have the capabilities and strengths to adapt and make a positive impact (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).

In order to survive, the affected students made attempts and means to turn things around and fit in. The coping strategies that they employed included; working and studying hard, attending local language extra classes, making friends with local students to help them get familiar with the institution, using the institution's rendered programmes and services. With the reference to the findings, it appeared that, in spite of the challenges, life kept on going. Most international students progressed in their studies and they adapted to the institutional environment.

5.3. Recommendations

International student's situation needs to be given much more attention within the institution in order to improve the conditions of students. While the institution should take the responsibility to help international students adjust and settle within the university environment, adjustment is largely dependent upon an individual as they have to make an effort to engage positively with the adversity presented. Students need to take the initiative and strive to adjust and succeed through it all. One of the major concerns for students in this study was the financial difficulties. The institution should equalize the registration fees and the students must be required to pay the same amount upfront for their outstanding fees before the commencement of academic activities. In terms of scholarship and campus job opportunities, international students must be given the same opportunities as the local students. It would also be great if the university could provide scholarships and offer a wide range of job opportunities for international students. If possible, the institution needs to

reduce international student levy because students commented that they did not benefit from that, however, it just adds up additional costs for them.

More responsibilities should be given to the International Students Office to assign a body of members that could deal adequately with matters pertaining to international student's needs and concerns. Assisting them in dealing with the challenges they encounter within the campus. In this regards the international students should be assisted in matters such as finding university residences. International students face challenges when applying for their study permits, the study recommend that the international office should assist international students when applying for study permits and help them with availing them with some of the required documents. The study also recommends that the international office should have ties with the Home Affairs Department which will enable them to apply for study permits on behalf of international students. If possible, assign an officer from home affairs within the university to facilitate study permit issues and all other migration related concerns. In addition, international student's office workers should refrain from treating international students unequally as indicated in this study and further training of international office personnel is highly recommended. The international student's office should assist students by all means and not leave them with the burden of facing all these above-mentioned challenges alone.

The Student Representative Council (SRC) which is a representative for all students should also play a crucial role in addressing the challenges of international students within the university. The SRC should engage with the relevant stakeholders and management of the university to address the challenges facing international students. The management would have to address the needs of international students. The study suggests that the SRC structure must consist of an international student as one of the members, by so doing the students issues will be easily addressed. Moreover, their concerns will be advocated and represented by someone who knows how it is like to be an international student.

In terms of further research, a combined study involving native and international students is needed in order to strike a balance between the views gathered from international students in this study. The reason for this investigation is that native South African students were not represented in this study, and there are issues that would require their answers to map out a broader response to the academic challenges and experiences faced by international students within the institution. The scope of the study could also be extended to additional students in different universities within South Africa in order to have more generalizable conclusions.

5.4. Conclusion

In terms of the findings of this study, the evidence confirmed that amongst the challenges that the international students encountered language barriers, financial constraints and study permits were the major difficulties experienced. There were other difficulties that the students experienced however, the above mentioned were rated as the three major challenges. The findings from the study point out that despite the challenges that the students have encountered, there are also positive experiences. This includes the quality of education they get, exploring and learning new languages and culture. In addition, students were grateful being in an institution with a good reputation which gives them that prestige back in their home countries. Thus, the institution offers qualifications that are internationally recognized. Students also acknowledged the opportunity of transition, which instilled in them to be responsible, disciplined and they developed self-capacity to handle life challenges. The study has recommended the possible strategies that can be implemented to improve or to deal with the stated challenges. Lastly, possible or further research was also suggested.

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Appendix i: interview guide

Interview Guide

Demographic Questions

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Place of Birth
4. Race
5. Home language
6. Marital status
7. Employment status
8. Existing qualification and current degree
9. College and school

Key Questions

10. What was the most difficult part about leaving your country?
11. What were the reasons that made you to migrate?
12. When you decided to migrate, what provisions did you make for yourself in relation to your education?
13. What are the factors that influenced (or pulled) you to choose this institution?
14. How was your first encounter when you migrated to this institution? In your answer include whether you felt a sense of belonging when you moved to this area considering adaptation, language, and the communication patterns with other students and whether you had full access to services in the university.
15. Who was most helpful in getting you settled and used to the university setting?
16. As time has passed, how is your experience compared to what you expected?
17. What have been your biggest challenges?
18. What contributed to the above-mentioned challenges?
19. Were there times where you felt unwelcomed since you are a migrant student?
20. Where did you find strength in difficult times?
21. What would you consider and identify as your special needs?
22. How do you think migration has affected your education/changed you?

23. What, if any are the existing support systems in the institution and how do they function?
24. What are the things that you are proud of so far? Why?
25. What are you hoping to achieve?
26. What may hinder you from achieving it?
27. What do you think may help you to overcome those obstacles?
28. Is there anything you would like to add that that has not been asked?

The end…thank you.

Appendix ii: ethical clearance

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

27 August 2019

Miss Kwazikwenkosi Colinah Biyela (215002394)
School Of Built Env & Dev Stud
Howard College

Dear Miss Biyela,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00000217/2019
Project title: Experiences and challenges of international migrant students: a case study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Full Approval – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 12 August 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid for one year from 27 August 2019.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor Urmilla Bob
University Dean of Research

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Website: http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix iii: Gatekeeper's letter

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL ™
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

6 August 2019

Ms Kwazikwenkosi Biyela (SN 215002394)
School of Built Environment and Development Studies
College of Humanities
Howard College Campus
UKZN
Email: 215002394@stu.ukzn.ac.za Maharajp7@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Ms Biyela

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate degree, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Experiences and challenges of international migrant students: a case study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal."

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with international migrant students on the Howard College campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

DIRECTOR: GOVERNANCE & [redacted]RATION
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
UNIVERSITY ROAD
CHILTERN HILLS, WESTVILLE, 3629

pp RE[redacted]

Office of the Registrar
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 **Facsimile:** +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 **Email:** registrar@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix IV: informed consent letter

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

To whom it may concern

My name is Kwazikwenkosi C Biyela, a Population Studies Masters candidate from the School of Built Environment and Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College Campus. I am conducting a research project that will enable me to complete a Master's degree in Population Studies. My contact details are as follows: Email address-215002394@stu.ukzn.ac.za and my cell phone number is 0712555321/0740272830.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on investigating the challenges faced by international migrant students in acquiring their education. The aim and purpose of this research is to shed an insight into the challenges facing students in Durban by gaining an in-depth understanding on their perspectives and experiences as international migrant students as well as identifying the barriers they face in completing their education. So as to, ascertain opportunities and constraints for improving the situation. The study is expected to enroll 20 participants who are international migrant students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College. Should you choose to participate; interviews will be conducted and they will take place at school during the scheduled times (at any available lecture venues). There will be one meeting with each participant. The duration of one's participation in the interviews will be roughly one hour.

The study may involve discomforts when participants are discussing sensitive issues about the experiences and challenges they came across or experienced. If needed, the participants will be referred to the nearest public health facility for further assistance. We hope that the study will provide knowledge of the educational challenges and experiences of migrant students. Thus, an opportunity for both the researcher and participants to be involved in a research data collection will be granted. In cases where the participant experiences any psychosocial or medical difficulties in relation to his/her participation in the study, alternative assistance will be given using school facilities.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at:
Email address: 215002394@stu.ukzn.ac.za
Mobile number: 0712555321,

For further clarity please contact:
Pranitha Maharaj
Email address: Maharajp7@ukzn.ac.za
Telephone no.: X2243

Alternatively you may contact the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is completely up to you whether or not you choose to participate. If at any point during the period of the study conduction you change your mind or feel like withdrawing, you will be allowed to withdraw from the study. Hence, this will not impact or result into any penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. Nevertheless, a valid reason prior will be required. Your involvement in this study is purely for academic purposes, and the researcher will not derive any financial benefits from this study, however your participation will really be of significant to the study since you will help the researcher to investigate the given phenomenon. Thus help her, to be able to conduct the study as one of the requirements for her master's course to be completed. Should it happen that one discloses confidential information, pose destruction or show no interest in the study by repeatedly disobeying the rule, the researcher will dismiss that participant from the study.

If you accept to participate, interviews will be held at school where it will only be the researcher present for interviews and the participant. It is recognized that asking one to share personal and confidential information may make him/her feel uncomfortable therefore, should you feel uncomfortable during the interview based on the question being asked, it will be allowed for you not to answer that particular question. The session will be tape-recorded, with your consent to do so. The information recorded is confidential and you will not be required to state your name. The information collected will be kept private and will only be accessed by the researcher and her supervisor. If you have agreed to be recorded, the tapes will be destroyed when the study is completed. Participant's identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms that is not using their original names. The researcher will visit the participant if there is any feedback concerning participation.

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled (provide details) by (provide name of researcher/fieldworker).

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (provide details).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview YES / NO

Signature of Participant	**Date**
Signature of Witness (Where applicable)	**Date**
Signature of Translator (Where applicable)	**Date**