Surviving to Thriving:

Post-secondary Education for Refugee Youth in Smaller Centres in Canada

by © Hua Que

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Abstract

The research investigates refugee youth's aspirations for and access to post-secondary education in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The theoretical framework that underpins this study consists of segmented assimilation theory and the bioecological model of human development. A basic qualitative research approach was employed. Twenty refugee youths and three staff members from educational service providers participated in this study. Data were collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

Findings revealed that new life in Canada instilled hope into refugee youth as they aspired to get into university after high school. Refugee youth referred to their parents, support teachers and staff in high school, their friends, and university academic advisors as important people who helped them realize their educational goals. In addition, three educational programs were identified by refugee youth as helpful in preparing them for post-secondary education. Nonetheless, refugee youth's access to post-secondary education was impeded by a number of barriers, including financial difficulties resulting from the repayment of transportation loans and a lack of target scholarships for refugee students pursuing post-secondary education, lack of information about post-secondary admission requirements, scholarships, and on-campus employment opportunities, negative peer influence from refugee students who were less motivated, limited communication with local peers, and fear of the unknown and the academic challenges they would face in post-secondary education. In addition, refugee youth aged 19 or over found it difficult to further their education due to the policy of high school age limits and a lack of appropriate adult educational programs geared to their needs.

Recommendations were also offered to reduce these barriers such as eliminating transportation loans and offering targeted scholarships and bursaries to refugee youth; providing refugee youth with information and assistance they need to make informed decisions about their education and career; increasing the number of ESL teachers at the secondary level and continuing to offer ESL support for college and university refugee students; and optimizing language and academic support for refugee young adults with goals of pursuing post-secondary education.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 My Embarkation on This Research Journey

During my doctoral studies, I worked as a research assistant on my supervisor's multiple projects on the social and educational integration of refugee children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. These projects have made a comprehensive investigation into the support programs and services provided for refugee students in elementary and secondary schools. After that, I became interested in further looking at their transition to post-secondary education in this province, an area under-explored by researchers. I also thought it would be a timely study considering changing public attitudes toward refugees and immigration in Canada.

Canada has become a global leader in response to the recent global refugee crisis. In late 2015, the refugee crisis recaptured attention around the world when thousands of refugees from the Greater Middle East and Africa made the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. Responding to significant humanitarian crises, Canada received 20,046 refugees in 2015, 46,702 in 2016, and 26,980 in 2017 (IRCC, 2017; UNHCR, 2019).

Despite Canada's renowned generosity towards refugees, negative attitudes towards refugees seem to be on the rise in Canada. A recent CBC News poll ran between May to June 2019 suggested that a majority of Canadian opposed accepting more refugees (Johnston, 2019). People's lack of firsthand knowledge of the refugee experience likely contributes to such negative attitudes against refugees. It is against such a backdrop that I conducted a research project to present refugee youth's pursuit of post-

secondary education in Canada in the hope that it would open a window through which people learn more about the experiences of these youth.

1.2 The Profile of Refugees in Canada

The 1976 Immigration Act was the first Canadian immigration legislation that recognized refugees as a distinct class of immigrants. Based on the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, the Act defined convention refugees as any person who

a. by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion;
b. is outside the country of the person's nationality and is unable, or by reason of that fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or
c. not having a country of nationality, is outside the country of the person's former habitual residence and is unable or, by reason of that fear, is unwilling to return to that country (Government of Canada, 1976, Definitions section, para. 12-14).

In addition, the Act stipulated that one of Canada's immigration objectives was "to fulfil Canada's international legal obligations with respect to refugees and to uphold its humanitarian tradition with respect to the displaced and the persecuted" (Government of Canada, 1976, Immigration Objectives section, para. 8).

In 2002, the 1967 Act was replaced by the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) which "placed a greater emphasis on selecting GARs (government-assisted refugees) based on their protection needs rather than on ability to

establish in Canada" (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], 2016a, p. 1). The legislation became the cornerstone of Canada's commitments to maintain its humanitarian tradition of sponsoring refugees.

A large percentage of refugees who landed in Canada annually were children and youth. According to arrival data from 2007 to 2014, approximately 25% of refugees and protected persons resettled in Canada each year were younger than 15 years of age, and about 20% were aged between 15 to 24 (IRCC, 2017). In 2015 and 2016, about 29% and 38% respectively were under the age of 15, and about 19% and 15% respectively were between the ages of 15 and 24 (IRCC, 2017). Therefore, approximately half of the refugees resettled in Canada each year are aged 24 or younger.

Refugees have a lower level of education upon arrival than other categories of immigrants. From 2007 to 2012, among refugees aged 15 or older, about 35% had none to nine years of schooling, and about 29% had ten to 12 years of schooling, while about 10% had bachelor's degrees (IRCC, 2013). In comparison, among economic immigrants in the same age range, about 5% had nine years or less of schooling, and about 3% had ten to 12 years of schooling, while as high as 45% had bachelor's degrees (IRCC, 2013). According to data from another report by Statistic Canada (Houle, 2019), among refugees who resettled in Canada between January 1, 2015 and May 10, 2016, about 49% of Syrian refugees and 45% of refugees from other countries did not have a high school diploma upon arrival. The education profile of refugees was characterized by a high percentage of people with less than high school level education. It is noteworthy that education systems and quality around the world may differ. However, the two reports (IRCC, 2013; Hou, 2019) did not clarify the equivalency of foreign educational credentials.

In addition, refugees were less likely to speak English or French upon arrival in Canada. Data indicate that from 2007 to 2016, on average, about 45% of refugees admitted to Canada did not have knowledge of official languages (IRCC, 2017). In particular, recent Syrian refugees had a lower level of language skills than refugees from other countries. 55% of Syrian refugees landing in Canada between 2015 to May 2016 did not know English or French, compared with 28% of refugees from other countries (Houle, 2019).

Furthermore, with respect to the labour market integration and outcomes, refugees tended to have a low employment rate and low earnings. Data from Statistics Canada indicated that 54% of GARs and 58% of private sponsored refugees had found employment ten years after entering Canada (IRCC, 2016a). Although the income rate for refugees increased with the number of years spent in Canada, it remains low (Statistics Canada, 2018c). For instance, refugees who landed in 2006 had average annual earnings of $24,900 five years after entering Canada, compared with $29,700 ten years after resettlement. In addition, a larger number of refugees worked in sales and service occupations and trades (Statistics Canada, 2018c).

In sum, Canada maintains a humanitarian tradition of resettling refugees, and arrival data indicate that the refugee population in Canada is relatively young and has relatively low levels of education and language skills. Moreover, they tended to experience higher rates of unemployment and have lower incomes.

1.3 The Profile of Refugees in Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador, the most easterly province of Canada, received the second-lowest number of refugees annually across Canada after Prince Edward Island

(P.E.I.). The number of refugees landing in Newfoundland and Labrador and P.E.I. was so small that IRCC used to report the number of refugees arriving in the two provinces together. IRCC's Facts and Figures 2016 (2017), for the first time, indicated the separate breakdowns for Newfoundland and Labrador and P.E.I.. According to the data from IRCC, from 2007 to 2014, each year Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed 148 refugees and protected persons on average (IRCC, 2017). The number rose to 297 in 2015 and 336 in 2016 in response to Canada's commitment to resettle Syrian refugees (IRCC, 2017). Despite the increase, the number of refugees arriving in Newfoundland and Labrador remains relatively low compared to most of the Canadian provinces.

According to the arrival data on government-assisted refugees (GARs) recorded by the Association of New Canadians (ANC), the main refugee resettlement agency in this province, a large number of refugees who landed in Newfoundland and Labrador were children and youth under the age of 25. In 2018, among the 167 GARs admitted to Newfoundland and Labrador, 67.1% were younger than 25 (ANC, 2018). In 2017, 66.8% of the 178 GARs were under 25 years of age (ANC, 2017).

The retention rate of newcomers in Newfoundland and Labrador remains low nonetheless. A study by Goss Gilroy Inc. (2005) indicated that 51 (35%) of the 144 refugees who landed in Newfoundland and Labrador from January to October 2004 left the province within approximately ten months of arrival, and among these leavers, a third moved out of the province within one month of arrival. Another study by Huystee (2016) on the interprovincial mobility of immigrants who landed in Canada between 2008 and 2013 indicated that Newfoundland and Labrador had the lowest retention rate of refugees. In the tax year 2013, 245 out of the 540 refugees who landed in Newfoundland and

Labrador in this period were still living in the province (Huystee, 2016). Thus, the retention rate of refugees was 45.4% (Huystee, 2016). More specifically, in terms of inter-provincial migration, the other 295 refugees were living in other provinces in 2013, while only five refugees who declared a destination province other than Newfoundland and Labrador moved there (Huystee, 2016). In another report by Statistics Canada (2017) indicated that Newfoundland and Labrador had the lowest retention rate throughout Canada. In 2015, only 36% of refugees who landed in 2010 in Newfoundland and Labrador were residing there, followed by P.E.I. (37.5%) (Statistics Canada, 2017a). In comparison, the retention rates of refugees were 92.5% in Ontario, 89.8% in Alberta, and 81.9% in British Columbia (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

A report on interprovincial migration in Canada concluded that "persons may be more inclined to migrate to provinces/territories experiencing economic growth in hope for better opportunity, and more likely to leave provinces/territories experiencing economic difficulties or higher unemployment" (Statistics Canada, 2014, Number of interprovincial migrants in Canada section, para. 2). These reasons for relocation may also apply to refugees. For instance, CBC reported the relocation of the two Syrian refugee families who landed in a small town in Newfoundland and Labrador and then moved to Windsor, Ontario, to seek better job security, live close to family and friends and have access to a larger Arabic community (McKenzie-Sutter, 2018).

Refugee economic integration in Newfoundland and Labrador follows the national trend. According to Census 2016, those aged 15 to 24 when they landed in Newfoundland and Labrador between 2011 and 2016 were most likely to work as cashiers, food counter attendants and kitchen helpers, and construction trade helpers and labourers (Statistics

Canada, 2018b). In addition, ten years after resettlement, refugees who landed in Atlantic Canada in 2006 had average annual earnings of $30,500 (Statistics Canada, 2018c). It needs to be noted that the separate breakdowns for each Atlantic province were not available.

To sum up, refugees resettled in Newfoundland and Labrador were young and less likely to seek a long-term settlement in this province. In addition, they were more likely to work in the lowest-paying jobs. Moreover, according to Wilkinson and Garcea (2017), "economic integration is still a relatively slow process, particularly when employment opportunities are constrained by economic stagnation or downturn" (p. 20). Faced with the gloomy picture of the economy in Newfoundland and Labrador, refugees are more likely to experience difficulties integrating into the local labour market.

1.4 Problem Statement

Refugee youth have strong aspirations to gain a university or college education: a proactive response to their lack of education opportunities before they immigrated to Canada (Shakya et al., 2010). However, their desires for post-secondary education are overshadowed by the urgent need to provide primary and secondary education for refugee children and youth (Dryden-Peterson, 2010). At the policy level, no official mandate to increase refugee youth's access to post-secondary education has been written into Canadian refugee resettlement policies (Ferede, 2010). Thus, Shakya et al. (2010) argue that justice, equity, and empowerment are missing in Canada's mainstream humanitarian refugee resettlement policies, which largely focus on the survival of refugees, giving little attention to helping refugees thrive. Therefore, there is a lack of policy initiatives that would empower refugees educationally, professionally, and politically.

Post-secondary education is important to the development of refugee youth because it provides them with the opportunities to become active planners for their futures rather than passive recipients of aid (Dryden-Peterson, 2010). It is also a gateway to upward economic and social mobility (Ferede, 2010). A study undertaken by Statistic Canada (Prokopenko, 2018) examined the participation of refugees who landed in Canada between 2002 to 2005 in Canadian post-secondary education and its economic returns. It was found that eight years after landing, GARs and privately sponsored refugees who have participated in Canadian post-secondary training were 30% and 25% more likely to be employed than those without (Prokopenko, 2018). GARs who have not received training had the lowest employment incidence among all categories of immigrants in the study (57%). Meanwhile, the average earnings of refugees with Canadian post-secondary education were $9,000 higher than their counterparts without (Prokopenko, 2018). In addition to personal growth, post-secondary education would make it possible for refugee youth to make positive contributions to Canadian society and their home countries (Anselme, 2010; Dryden-Peterson, 2010; Plasterer, 2010).

Moreover, little literature exists on refugee youth's access to Canadian post-secondary education (Ferede, 2012). A few existing research studies either combined refugee youth with immigrant youth (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009; Kanno, 2010) or focused on post-secondary education for refugee youth in Canada's large cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver (Shakya et al., 2010), while little attention has been paid to post-secondary education for refugee youth in smaller Canadian cities beyond the three large cities. In addition, as Ferede (2012) suggested, "The dearth of research indicates the urgency for high-quality research that focuses on this group's challenges,

barriers, needs, opportunities, and experiences" (p. 84). Kanno (2010) also indicated that future investigations are necessary to examine refugee students' transitions to college.

1.5 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to investigate refugee youth's aspirations for and access to post-secondary education in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. The results contribute to the existing literature on the educational needs of refugee children and youth in Canada's smaller cities. The study aimed to give refugee youth in smaller centres a voice, attract public attention to post-secondary education for refugee youth, and provide research-based insights into improving access to post-secondary education for refugee youth in smaller centres in Canada.

1.6 Research Questions

The research questions that served as the basis of this study were:

- To what extent do refugee youth aspire to pursue post-secondary education?
- What programs and supports are in place for helping refugee youth pursue post-secondary education?
- What are the barriers to post-secondary education faced by refugee youth?
- What recommendations could be made to increase refugee youth's participation in education beyond high school?

1.7 Definition of Terms

To avoid confusion, I provide definitions of the terms used throughout this thesis.

Refugee: Refugee includes both government-assisted refugees and privately assisted refugees unless specifically stated. Government-assisted refugees refer to

> Permanent residents in the refugee category who are selected abroad for resettlement to Canada as Convention refugees under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act or as members of the Convention Refugees Abroad Class, and who receive resettlement assistance from the federal government. (IRCC, 2017; p. 45)

Privately assisted refugees refer to "Permanent residents in the refugee category who are selected for resettlement in the Convention refugees abroad class, the source country class or the country of asylum class and who are privately sponsored by organizations, individuals or groups of individuals" (IRCC, 2017, p. 47).

Immigrants: Immigrants include economic immigrants who are "Permanent residents selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy" (IRCC, 2017, p. 45) and sponsored family class immigrants who are "Permanent residents sponsored by a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident living in Canada who is 18 years of age or over" (IRCC, 2017, p. 47).

Youth: According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (n.d.), youth is defined as "the time of life when one is young, especially the period between childhood and maturity" (para. 1). The age range for this group can be fluid, as governments in Canada use several definitions of the youth age group in their reports. For example, a report by Statistics Canada (2018a) on Canadian youth defines youth as persons aged between 15 and 34. Another report by Employment and Social Development Canada (2017) on youth employment in Canada defines youth as those between 15 and 24 years. Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour (DAESL, n.d.) defines youth as those between 18 and 29 years.

This study uses DAESL's definition of youth (i.e., 18–29 years) because refugee students are more likely to have finished some or most of high school courses at age 18. Although students normally finish high school at age 18, refugee students may need to take more years to finish elementary and secondary education to fill their gaps in education, leading to their late graduation from high school, which in turn, would delay refugee students' transition to post-secondary education, and thus, refugee students are likely to be enrolled in post-secondary programs in their late 20s.

Post-secondary education: Post-secondary education includes both university and college.

1.8 Organization of the Dissertation

This study is presented in seven chapters. Chapter 1 includes the development of my interest in conducting this study, the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, and the definition of terms.

Chapter 2 reviews the current literature relating to refugee youth's access to post-secondary education in Canada and other main resettlement countries, including refugee youth's aspirations for post-secondary education, their current participation in post-secondary education, factors impeding their access to post-secondary education, as well as recommendations made to schools, post-secondary institutions, community organizations, and all levels of government for helping refugee youth achieve their educational goals.

Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical framework that informs this study, which consists of segmented assimilation theory (Portes & Zhou, 1993) and the bioecological

model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The rationale behind the employment of the theoretical framework was also discussed.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used for this study. It includes the discussion of the philosophical underpinning of the study, research design, sampling strategies, demographics of participants, data collection, data analysis procedures, validity, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 reports the study's findings by the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data to address the four research questions. Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the major findings through the lens of segmented assimilation theory and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. And finally, Chapter 7 provides a summary of the study, its significance, and key messages for readers.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

In this chapter, I review the current literature relating to refugee youth's access to post-secondary education in Canada and other main resettlement countries such as the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom. The chapter is organized according to the themes found in the literature reviewed, containing sections on refugee youth's aspirations for post-secondary education, their current participation in post-secondary education, factors impeding their access to post-secondary education, as well as recommendations made to schools, post-secondary institutions, community organizations, and all levels of government for helping refugee youth achieve their educational goals.

2.1 Aspirations for Post-secondary Education among Refugee Youth

Within the Canadian context, research has shown that refugee youth have high educational aspirations. In a study of 57 refugee youths aged between 16 to 24 from Afghanistan, Burma, and Sudan in Toronto, Shakya et al. (2010) indicated that these refugee youths' educational aspirations have significantly strengthened after they moved to Canada, which was considered "a proactive response to" (p. 69) the unfavourable pre-migration school experiences such as the low quality of education and limited educational opportunities. Further, the strengthening of these refugee youths' educational aspirations was closely associated with their expectations that education would lead to high-paying jobs, which they perceived as vital to building a better future for their family and community (Shakya et al., 2010). In another study involving 41 refugee youths over 18 years of age from Central and South America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia who had completed secondary school either in their country of origin or in Canada, Bajwa et al., (2017) found that all of these refugee youths either wished to further their education to

attain degrees or to receive technical or diploma training after high school. Gunderson's report (2000) which drew on two large-scale studies involving approximately 35,000 immigrant students in British Columbia, Canada found that 60% of immigrant students in lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods and schools aspired to attend college or university whereas 30% of them wished to find jobs after completing secondary education. The study did not indicate the goals of the rest 10% immigrant students (Gunderson, 2000). Refugee youth's high aspirations for post-secondary education can be explained by their perception of education as the priority in life because they viewed education as "their only hope for a better future" (Stewart, 2011, p. 67) and "an agent of change" (p. 67).

A few studies conducted in other settlement countries reached a similar conclusion. In the UK, a study by Stevenson and Willott (2007) of 18 refugee youths aged between 16 and 20 from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan, Bosnia, Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo found that these refugee youths expressed a strong desire to receive post-secondary education because they viewed it as "a route out of poverty and exclusion and as a means of establishing a better and more secure way of life for themselves" (p. 676).

In the context of Australia, Naidoo's (2015b) study on high school refugee girls' aspirations for higher education found that the importance of university education towards their career goals was well perceived by these refugee girls. In another study on educational experiences of refugee students at two universities in Australia, Joyce, Earnest, de Mori, and Silvagni (2010) found that these refugee students were determined to complete post-secondary education despite the varied difficulties they faced in completing their university degree. "Increased respect, higher incomes and better jobs

[are] the motivation to push through the struggles" (Joyce et al., p. 93). In particular, refugee students took pride in being the first in their family to obtain university degrees (Joyce et al., 2010).

Contrary to the findings of the high educational aspirations among refugee youth portrayed in the literature mentioned above, Kanno and Varghese's study (2010) on immigrant and refugee students' access to four-year college education in the United States found that many refugee students did not desire to attend university or only wished to go to community college. Some of them had doubts about their competences in meeting admission requirements, and some others were overwhelmed by the challenges they assumed they would face at university (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). It remains unknown why refugee youth in the United States seem to have lower aspirations for post-secondary education.

Furthermore, support and teaching staff in Naidoo, Wilkinson, Adoniou, and Langat's study (2018) articulated that refugee students resettled in Australia "had unrealistic expectations about their capacity to enter university" (p. 78). Teachers noted that many refugee students were interested in medicine, dentistry, and engineering; however, they had little knowledge of admission requirements to enter these disciplines (Naidoo et al., 2018). Bowden and Doughney (2010) revealed that there was a considerable gap between students' high aspirations to undertake university education and enrollment levels. In particular, immigrant students from families with low socioeconomic status were more likely to experience the aspirations gap (Bowden & Doughney, 2010).

In order to identify whether there is a gap between refugee youth's high educational aspirations and their achievements, the next section reviews the literature on the participation rates of refugee youth in post-secondary education in Canada.

2.2 Refugee Youth's Current Participation in Post-secondary Education

Despite refugee youth's high educational aspirations, the literature suggested that this demographic appears to have lower participation rates in post-secondary education in Canada. Hou and Bonikowska (2017) conducted a nationwide study on the educational attainment of childhood immigrants who came to Canada with parents by drawing on the data from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) and the Immigrant Landing File (ILF). The 2011 NHS provided information about the current status of education, employment, and other socioeconomic characteristics of people living in Canada, and 2011 ILF provided information on the entry status of immigrants such as their immigrant class and prior educational experiences (Hou & Bonikowska, 2017). The study focused on childhood immigrants who came to Canada at age 15 or younger and who were between the ages of 25 and 44 at the time of the 2011 NHS and used university completion (i.e., being awarded a degree, a certificate or a diploma after successful completion of an undergraduate or graduate program) as an indicator of educational attainment (Hou & Bonikowska, 2017). Based on the NHS and ILF linkage, Hou and Bonikowska (2017) found that childhood immigrants in the government-assisted refugee class children had lower university completion rates (29.7%) compared to childhood immigrants in business class (59.3%) and skilled worker class (50.3%).

Another nationwide study by Prokopenko (2018) drew on the data from the 2013 Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) to examine refugees' participation in

Canadian post-secondary education at any point in the first seven years after arrival. The target population for this study (Prokopenko, 2018) was refugees who landed in Canada between 2002 and 2005 and who aged 25–44 at landing. According to the study (Prokopenko, 2018), refugees participated in post-secondary training at a lower rate than other categories of immigrants, with only 22% of male and 17% of female government-sponsored refugees having participated in post-secondary training. By comparison, 39% of male economic immigrants and 51% of female economic immigrants participated in post-secondary training after arrival in Canada (Prokopenko, 2018).

Based on the literature, there is a mismatch between refugee youth's high educational aspirations and their low rates of participation in post-secondary education in Canada. Therefore, factors impacting on their realization of aspirations need careful examination, which is the focus of the next section.

2.3 Factors Impeding Refugee Youth's Access to Post-secondary Education

The review of the literature in this section was primarily guided by the bioecological model of human development, which enables me to pay attention to refugee youth's person characteristics, the context of four layers of environmental systems, and in particular, proximal processes embedded in the innermost microsystem. Central themes emerging from the literature include ethnicity, linguistic barriers, and informational barriers in relation to person characteristics; lower levels of parental educational attainment, financial difficulties, and the negative consequences of living in subsidized-housing areas in the context of family; teachers' lower levels of expectations, experiences of discrimination, and inappropriate grade placement in the context of school; and the

limitation of age-cap policies as well as the lack of policy addressing the educational needs of refugee youth in the macrosystem.

2.3.1 Factors relating to person characteristics

2.3.1.1 Linguistic barriers

It has been well documented that refugee students in high school are likely to experience language difficulties. A study conducted in Newfoundland and Labrador by Li and Grineva (2016) showed that limited English proficiency and limited prior schooling negatively influenced high school refugee students' "ability to negotiate and manage the development of their academic competence at school" (p. 59). The lack of vocabulary, and local linguistic nuances like accent and fast speech rate (Li & Grineva, 2016), and grammar (Roxas & Roy, 2011) were the major challenges noted by refugee students in high school. Another study by Shakya et al. (2010) found that some refugee youths in high school were not able to comprehend the content taught in class or interact well with their teachers due to their low fluency in English, which resulted in their underachievement. Shakya et al. emphasized that "compared to other immigrant groups, refugee youth and their families are twice as more likely to have limited or no official language fluency and thus may face more severe linguistic barriers, with serious negative impacts on their education" (p. 71).

Furthermore, it is well acknowledged that linguistic barriers are a major barrier preventing refugee youth from accessing post-secondary education. According to Naidoo (2015a), "refugee-background students' ability to transition to postsecondary options – tertiary institutions in particular – depends on their ability to read and write in sophisticated ways" (p. 214). Differing from immigrant students whose first language (L1)

literacy could help them master English, many refugee students have experienced disrupted schooling before resettlement and have a lower level of L1 literacy, which impedes their language learning processes (Naidoo, 2015a). Similar to Naidoo (2015a), Stevenson and Willott (2007) in their study on teenage refugees' access to higher education in the UK indicated that "inadequate language skills prevented integration into all aspects of life and were almost as important in preventing access to higher education as financial needs" (p. 680). Sweet et al.'s study (2010) on post-high school pathways of immigrant youth in Toronto found a strong relationship between taking English as a Second Language (ESL) in high school and attending college rather than university among immigrant youth.

Although most of the refugee youth have taken ESL courses in high school, many of them are still more likely to face language challenges in post-secondary education (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). This could be explained by Cummins' (1981) conceptual distinction between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). According to Cummins (2008), "BICS refers to conversational fluency in a language while CALP refers to students' ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school" (p. 72). Cummins (2016) posited,

> at least 5 years' length of residence (LOR) was required for immigrant students to catch up to grade expectations in L2 (second language) CALP even though most students developed L2 conversational fluency much more rapidly (typically 1-2 years of LOR). (p. 942)

According to Cummins (2008), at the time when refugee youth graduate from high school, they may still have not acquired sufficient CALP to succeed in post-secondary education.

Three aspects of language challenges were expressed by immigrant and refugee students at a public university in the United States, including difficulties in academic reading due to their lack of discipline-specific vocabulary; frustration with academic writing; and no additional time was given to them to complete academic reading and writing tasks (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Similarly, Naidoo et al. (2018) found that refugee youth tended to lack discipline-specific language skills to succeed in higher education in Australia. A lecturer in law at a university who participated in Naidoo et al.'s study (2018) indicated that refugee students were less likely to "[achieve] the right structure and tone for oral argument and discussion in law" (p. 113). In addition, the difficulties that refugee students faced in academic writing not only lay in vocabulary and grammatical structures but also lay in the text structures which differ across disciplines, languages, and cultures (Naidoo et al., 2018). For example, refugee students were not familiar with the text structures of English essays expected in different disciplines, such as the usage of explanations in the scientific disciplines and the employment of narratives in the humanities (Naidoo et al., 2018).

Furthermore, a lack of English language prevents refugee youth from accessing information (Bajwa et al., 2017). Participants in Bajwa et al.'s study (2017) were distressed to be told to check information on websites whenever they approached educational institutions for support, feeling it was challenging to navigate an ocean of information on the internet.

2.3.1.2 Informational barriers

Despite the high aspirations of refugee youth for post-secondary education, they generally lacked knowledge about the Canadian education system to realize their aspirations (Ferede, 2010). Many refugee high school students who set their minds towards college or university education were enrolled in applied programs rather than academic programs leading to post-secondary education, and the differences between applied and academic programs were beyond refugee students' comprehension (Ferede, 2010). This was in line with Li and Grineva's study (2016) which found that refugee students in a high school in Newfoundland and Labrador tended to have little knowledge of the credit system and its link to a high school diploma. Although refugee students had received explanations on these matters from their teachers, confusion remained for them (Li & Grineva, 2016). Therefore, as Bajwa et al. (2017) concluded, "the pervasive lack of access to accurate and reliable information experienced by refugees in Canada presents barriers to accessing post-secondary education" (p. 62).

Furthermore, refugee youth are likely to have limited information on how to navigate educational pathways in Canada (Bajwa et al., 2017), including a lack of information on various post-secondary options, application procedures, differences between private and public post-secondary institutions, and the association between advanced education and future employment. Refugee youth in Shakya et al.'s study (2010) also complained that they were confused about what educational path they should take, complaining that they knew little about post-secondary education even after the completion of high school and indicating that they probably would have made a

successful transition to further education if they had been well informed of the Canadian education system.

Bajwa et al. (2017) further indicated that refugee youth's lack of information was indicative of their limited access to formal supports to help them make informed decisions. Some refugee youths found that support staff at secondary and post-secondary institutions had little knowledge of course selection and planning, and some other refugee youth received inaccurate information from Canadian post-secondary institutions because some staff treated them as international students rather than as domestic students (Bajwa et al., 2017). In addition, refugee youth tended to rely on the word-of-mouth information from friends, family, and community members to navigate the education system; however, they were likely to receive inaccurate or conflicting information from them, which would adversely influence their decision-making processes (Bajwa et al., 2017).

In the context of the UK, Stevenson and Willott (2007) indicated that refugee youth generally lacked knowledge about the UK educational systems in three aspects. First, they sometimes received inaccurate information from college/university staff who were not certain about the rights of refugee youth based on their refugee status (Stevenson & Willott, 2007). Second, even provided with accurate information, some of them were likely to have difficulty in understanding the post-secondary application process and in preparing application documents (Stevenson & Willott, 2007). Lastly, they were likely to know little about what a higher education environment looks like, worrying that they may not be able to survive post-secondary education (Stevenson & Willott, 2007).

2.3.2 Factors in the context of family

2.3.2.1 Lower levels of parental educational attainment

Segmented assimilation theory discusses the importance of immigrant parents' human capital on their children's development (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Education and language knowledge are two types of human capital that immigrant parents bring alone to the host society (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). A study by Hou and Bonikowska (2017) found that refugee youth's lower university completion rates were correlated with their fathers' lower levels of education and language ability. The study (Hou & Bonikowska, 2017) used the educational attainment and language proficiency of immigrant fathers as the indicators of immigrant parents' overall educational level and language ability, considering immigrant fathers generally had higher average education levels than immigrant mothers, and the education of fathers in all immigration categories differed more greatly than that of mothers. The data showed that only 13.5% of privately sponsored and 14.7% of government-assisted refugee fathers had completed university education when they landed in Canada, much lower than other categories of immigrants (Hou & Bonikowska, 2017). In comparison, 44.7% of skilled workers came to Canada with a university degree (Hou & Bonikowska, 2017). In addition, 77% of privately sponsored and 74.6% of government-sponsored refugee fathers were incapable of speaking English or French when they came to Canada, while only 16.8% of skilled workers did not speak either of the official languages upon arriving in Canada (Hou & Bonikowska, 2017). The university completion rates among children of privately sponsored refugees, government-sponsored refugees, and skilled workers were 33.5%, 29.7%, and 50.3% respectively (Hou & Bonikowska, 2017). Hou & Bonikowska's study

(2017) concluded that immigrant children whose father had limited educational experiences and language skills were less likely to complete university education. It is important to note that it could be misleading to only use refugee fathers' education as the indicator of their children's educational attainment because many prior studies (e.g., Erola, Jalonen, & Lehti, 2016; Guo & Harris, 2000) have indicated that both mothers' and fathers' education influence their children's educational attainment.

The negative influence of refugee parents' lower levels of education on their children's educational attainment was also indicated in another study by Hou (2017), which particularly focuses on the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees who came to Canada in the 1979 to 1980 period. Drawing on the data from the 1981, 1991, and 2011 Census, as well as the 2011 NHS, Hou found that most of these Vietnamese refugees had not finished high school and their children had a higher high-school dropout rate than other immigrants. The relationships between parental education and the university completion of their children were also reflected in Abada et al.'s study (2009) which found that Black fathers had a much lower rate of attaining a university degree than other visible immigrants, which to a large extent accounted for their children's lower academic achievement than other similar-aged immigrants.

In addition, previous research showed that language was a barrier preventing refugee parents from engaging in their children's education. For example, some refugee parents from Burma reported that they were not able to help their children with their homework due to their lack of English language proficiency (Shakya et al., 2010). This is consistent with evidence from an ethnographic case study on Somali refugee parents' participation in their children's education (Georgis, Gokiert, Ford, & Ali, 2014). Most of

the Somali parents who participated in Georgis et al.'s study (2014) were in the process of learning English, and they had to rely on two Somali settlement workers from the immigrant services organizations to help with the oral or written communication with the school. Georgis et al. suggested that the lack of English proficiency among Somali parents is a key factor hindering them from engaging in their children's education.

Unlike Canadian parents whose class status and educational attainment strongly influence their educational value systems, refugee parents generally place a high value on education, regardless of their lower educational levels (Wilkinson, 2002). Picot and Hou (2013) conducted a survey tracking secondary school immigrant students in Canada from age 15 in December 1999 to age 23 in December 2007, and they identified that immigrant parents' aspirations have a major impact on their children's participation in university, while their levels of education play a less important role. This phenomenon could be explained by the refugee parents' perception that a high level of education promises a successful career (Anisef, Axelrod, Baichman-Anisef, & James, 2000), and is a means to achieve upward socio-economic mobility (Naidoo et al., 2018). However, some refugee parents may have unrealistic expectations for their children because they have little knowledge of the pathways that lead to entering post-secondary education (Naidoo et al., 2018).

2.3.2.2 Financial difficulties

Refugees face higher levels of unemployment and underemployment compared to other categories of immigrants and Canadians, resulting in their overestimation of the cost of higher education and their underestimation of the income differential between high school and post-secondary graduates (Ferede, 2012). The perceived high expense of post-

secondary education and its intangible benefits may prevent refugee youth from considering pursuing further education after high school. Although refugees are provided with financial assistance in the first few years after they came to Canada, the government's financial support is not sufficient to cover their basic living expenses, let alone the cost of post-secondary education (Shakya et al., 2010).

Despite that youth from low-income families generally face similar financial barriers to accessing post-secondary education, refugee youth are more likely to have to take on greater family responsibilities. For instance, in Shakya et al.'s study (2010), some refugee youths were found to be the primary breadwinners in their families, facing the pressing needs to support their families, which overshadowed their aspirations for pursuing further education. Aside from supporting themselves and their families in the host country, some refugee students in Joyce et al.'s (2010) even had to send money to their families back home regularly. Further, more than half the 40 refugee students from grades 10-12 who participated in Kanu's study (2008) reported that they had to support their families and pay back loans that the Canadian federal government paid for their airfares and initial housing.

It is no wonder that many refugee youths choose to work while in high school to help their families overcome financial difficulties. Although it is common for high school students to get jobs, refugee youth are more likely to hold full-time night shift jobs (Kanu, 2008; Stewart, 2011). There is a direct correlation between refugee students' poor academic performance and long working hours (Kanu, 2008). Stewart (2012) also concluded that "having to work and go to school was a contraindication to [refugee] students' academic success" (p. 182).

Although refugee youth generally experience financial difficulties, they are less likely to benefit from financial assistance offered to students attending college or university (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Refugee youths may lack information about how to access government loans, bursaries, and scholarships (Bajwa et al., 2017) or miss application deadlines (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Worse still, the scholarship programs target refugee students "are very limited and most of the time will not cover the entire cost of education-related expenses (such as transportation, clothes, uniforms, food, and accommodation)" (Anselme & Hands, 2010, p. 93).

2.3.2.3 The issues associated with living in government-subsidized housing

After moving to Canada, many refugee youths and their families have to live in government-subsidized housing which often has higher rates of criminal activity and violence due to affordability (Kanu, 2008). Refugee youth from two Winnipeg high schools reported that they were constantly afraid of gangs and drug dealers in their neighbourhoods and suffered from a higher level of psychosocial stress (Kanu, 2008). A study conducted in Newfoundland and Labrador by Shea and Beausoleil (2012) on newcomer youth's access to physical activities in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador found that living in socially and economically deprived subsidized housing areas constrained refugee youth's participation in physical activities because these areas lacked the public spaces for residents.

Worse still, refugee youth living in government-subsidized housing are likely to drop out of school and join gang activity like running drugs (Stewart, 2012). A similar conclusion was reached by (Anisef, Brown, Phythian, Sweet, & Walters, 2010) who indicated that immigrant youth living in neighbourhoods with a higher proportion of the

population living below the low-income cut-off were more likely to drop out of school. This could be explained by the fact that schools in these neighbourhoods are less likely to have sufficient funding and other resources for both refugee students and their teachers due to higher rates of poverty in these areas (Roxas & Roy, 2012). In a study conducted in Newfoundland and Labrador on service providers' perspectives on the integration of refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador (Li, Que, & Power, 2017), some teacher participants reported that many refugee families lived in subsidized housing away from the schools with centralized support programs for refugee students. In order to take advantage of these specialized programs, many refugee students had to take public transportation to and from school, which added extra financial burdens to their families (Li et al., 2017).

Arnot & Pinson (2005) emphasized that social capital in terms of community and family networks can help immigrant communities to overcome challenges and become more successful in school, for instance, when they have difficulty navigating the educational system, they could turn to professionals for information. However, refugee families are unlikely to build meaningful networks when they are housed away from prospective communities (Arnot & Pinson, 2005). Countercultures that immigrant children encounter in schools and neighbourhoods "may promote a set of undesirable outcomes such as dropping out of school, joining youth gangs, or participating in the drug subcultures" (Portes & Rambaut, 2001, p. 59).

2.3.3 Factors in the context of school

2.3.3.1 Teachers' lower levels of expectations

The classic study by (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1966) demonstrated that students' educational performance was influenced by their teachers' expectations. Students are more likely to achieve academic success if their teachers hold high expectations and vice versa (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1966). Considering refugee youth are likely to lack support networks such as family members or relatives knowing the education system in the host countries, their teachers play a vital role in guiding them through their educational journey (Naidoo et al., 2018). Ontario Ministry of Education (2016) suggested that teachers should hold high expectations for all students including those from refugee backgrounds, noting "Students must believe that they can achieve before they will risk trying, and young people are astute at sensing whether their teachers believe they can succeed" (p. 6).

ESL teachers in Naidoo et al.'s study (2018) believed it is important to hold high expectations for the refugee students because many of them are not aware of their competence in achieving academic success. However, some school staff appeared to have low expectations for refugee youth, indicating that refugee youth's aspirations for attending university were unrealistic, because many of them had limited and disrupted schooling before resettlement (Naidoo et al., 2018). In another study on Somali Bantu refugee students in a high school in the United States, Roxas and Roy (2012) also found that classroom teachers tended to have low expectations of this group of students.

2.3.3.2 Discrimination experienced in school

An Australian study by Correa-Velez, Gifford, McMichael, and Sampson (2017) showed that experiences of discrimination strongly influenced refugee students' completion of secondary school. Correa-Velez et al. found those refugee youth who experienced discrimination while living in Australia were considerably less likely to complete secondary school. Shakya et al.'s study (2010) also indicated that discrimination from peers, teachers, and administrators "can have adverse impacts on youth's sense of identity and well-being and can make schools an alienating and even unsafe space" (Shakya et al., 2010, p. 73). Refugee students believed that discrimination was indicative of some teachers' and administrators' stereotypes about minority groups (Shakya et al., 2010).

Teachers' discriminative attitudes or behaviours perceived by refugee students included some teachers' unwillingness to have refugee students in their classes; some teachers' indifference to refugee students' special needs; and teachers' lack of initiative to adapt teaching practices such as curricula, instruction, assessment, and classroom interaction to meet the needs of refugee students (Kanu, 2008; Stewart, 2011).

In addition, refugee youth from more culturally distant countries were more likely to have lower social competence in terms of establishing a friendship with peers (Beiser, Puente-Duran, & Hou, 2015). An extreme example of cultural conflicts between refugee students and their Canadian peers was found in Feuerverger's study (2011). A fatal stabbing due to religious frictions between the two groups of youth took place in an inner-city high school in Toronto, where the study was undertaken (Feuerverger, 2011).

Discrimination experienced in Canada has not only a negative impact on the social integration of refugee youth but also is a source of refugee youth's emotional problems and aggressive behaviour, and in particular, discrimination based on their refugee status adds additional harm to their mental health (Beiser et al., 2015). However, there are few counselling services provided for refugees after their arrival in Canada to proactively help them deal with trauma (Kanu, 2008). In particular, mental health services are rarely seen in school, which is due to the ignorance of some of the teachers and administrators on refugee youth's pre-immigration traumatic experience and its influence on their current lives in Canada (Stewart, 2012).

2.3.3.3 Inappropriate grade placement

Perception of whether they have been appropriately placed in grades when refugee students begin high school in Canada is crucial to their educational journey and their career in the future (Wilkinson, 2002). Refugee students who feel that they have been placed too high are more likely to drop out of high school, which negatively influences their access to post-secondary education and successful employment (Wilkinson, 2002).

Li and Grineva (2016) found a dilemma faced by the support teachers and refugee students in their study. Li and Grineva indicated,

> Placing students with weak numeracy or language skills in a class based on their age would inevitably make them vulnerable to academic failure. However, the participants stated that their placement in a lower level greatly affected the emotional dimension of their adjustment to academic life. (p. 60)

Many refugee youths viewed repeating learning the same content that they had studied in their native language before coming to Canada as wasting time (Li & Grineva, 2016).

Some refugee youths in Kanu's study (2008) felt that they had been placed in grades too low or too high for them. Similarly, some refugee youths in Shakya et al.'s study (2010) also noted that they were misplaced in inaccurate grade or academic stream, and due to their lack of information about the Canadian educational system, they were not able to realize the inappropriate grade placement earlier.

While some researchers argued that the provision of catch-up classes, accelerated learning programs, language courses, and other forms of specialized programs are essential to meet the particular needs of refugee students (Anselme & Hands, 2010; Wilkinson et al., 2012), some other researchers indicated that specialized programs are less likely to create inclusive school environments to help refugee youth reach their full potential (Kanu, 2008; Schroeter & James, 2015; Stewart, 2012).

Some refugee students who were in English as Additional Language (EAL) classes felt isolated from students in mainstream classes because they spent most of their time in EAL classes with other refugee students and had few chances to interact with their Canadian-born peers (Kanu, 2008). Many immigrants were reluctant to enroll their children in ESL classes because they were concerned that their children might not have enough time to study the core-curriculum courses (Anisef et al., 2010). Stewart (2012) argued,

> Although placing students into a specialized program for intensive language skills may be what some professionals think is most appropriate, doing so has repercussions on the school culture … Programs should not be culturally specific and only programs that get students together will overcome the fears and insecurities they have about people who are culturally different. (p. 179)

Therefore, schools need to pay more attention to avoid spatial integration between refugee students and their mainstream peers. For example, a successful model was found in a study by Pugh, Every, and Hattam (2012), who found grouping classrooms according to the age level rather than segregate support programs for refugee students from other regular classrooms fostered interaction between the two groups of students and prepared refugee students for the transition to the mainstream classes.

Refugee students were found more likely to be enrolled in basic or general programs, which were not enough to meet the requirements for university admissions (Kaprielian-Churchill & Churchill, 2010). For instance, African refugee students in Schroeter and James' study (2014) were frustrated with being placed in an employment-oriented program because it did not count for credits. Robson et al. (2018) found that Black, Latino American, and Southeast Asian students were less likely to be streamed into academic courses and were less prepared for university education. Anisef et al. (2010) also found that immigrant students who were streamed into the vocational stream are more likely to drop out of school than those who were streamed into the university pathway. Schroeter and James' (2014) warned that there is a tendency to conflate refugee youth with students who are not interested in pursuing higher education, and streaming refugee students into specialized programs would make the younger generation of refugee youth follow their ancestors' trend of taking low-skill jobs, which would result in "further social exclusion or marginalization" (p. 36).

In fact, some of the teachers were aware of these negative feelings from newcomer students taking the employment-oriented program, and they acknowledged that specialized programs were not an ideal way to help newcomer students integrate into the

school environment (Schroeter & James, 2015). At the same time, these teachers acknowledged that this program was a necessary compromise considering the limited funding available for addressing the particular needs of newcomer students in high school (Schroeter & James, 2015). Therefore, the academic challenges faced by refugee students in the school were indicative of the inadequate policy responses to their educational needs at the systematic level.

2.3.4 Factors in the macrosystem

2.3.4.1 The limitations of the high school age-cap policy

The high school age-cap policy is one of the major factors in the macrosystem preventing refugee youth from furthering their education. Wilkinson (2002) suggested that policymakers should consider making exceptions regarding age-cap for refugee students because a large number of refugee youth have significant educational gaps when they arrive in Canada and are less likely to complete high school before the prescribed age of 18 or 19. Another study by Wilkinson, Yan, Tsang, Sin, and Lauer (2012) published ten years later, again, discussed this systematic problem. Wilkinson et al. (2012) claimed that the age-cap policies of most Canadian provincial governments push refugee youth out of school because many of them are likely to be placed in grades lower than their Canadian peers, and they would need additional two years to catch up with their peers. Wilkinson et al. (2012) found that refugee youth who came to Canada at older ages were more likely to leave high school early, which was indicative of the limitation of the age-cap policy. Although most provinces have adult education programs for adult learners, the seats are limited, or the fees may not be affordable for refugee families (Wilkinson et al., 2012).

2.3.4.2 The lack of educational policies addressing the educational needs of refugee youth

The policy issues pertaining to education for refugee students at the provincial level have been discussed in several studies. The issues included the lack of planning mechanism or division direction for refugee students and dependence on the principals to determine the support for refugee students (Stewart, 2011), the lack of policies on the inclusion of refugee students in mainstream classes (Asadi, 2015).

At the federal level, "There is no official mandate in resettlement efforts to increase newcomers' higher educational access or participation" (Ferede, 2010, p. 80). The Canadian refugee resettlement program reflects "depoliticized and minimalist humanitarianism" (Shakya et al., 2010, P. 74), which "precludes policymakers from recognizing and proactively supporting the high educational aspirations among newcomer refugee youth and their families. Consequently, refugee youth tread a thin line between vulnerability and empowerment in pursuing their educational goals after coming to Canada" (Shakya et al., 2010, P. 74).

In the broader global education movement, the main focus has been on primary and secondary education, while the provision of higher education for refugee youth has received little attention (Dryden-Peterson, 2010). Policies pertaining to refugees' rights to educational programs after secondary education are vague, which makes refugee youth more vulnerable than refugee children (Anselme & Hands, 2010). In particular, international funding policies view the different stages of education as independent compartments rather than interdependent and interactive educational processes (Anselme & Hand, 2010). The lack of investment in higher education for refugee youth has long-

term negative influences for individuals and society such as decreased earnings and slowed economic growth due to the lack of highly skilled workers (Dryden-Peterson, 2010).

In the next section, suggestions made by scholars as to how to better help refugee youth achieve academic success are elaborated. The organization of this section is based on the stakeholders in environmental systems who play a significant role in helping refugee youth access and fully participate in post-secondary education, including schools and post-secondary institutions in the microsystem, community organizations in the mesosystem, and all levels of government in the macrosystem.

2.4 The Role of Schools, Universities, Community, and Government in Helping Refugee Students Realize their Educational Potential

2.4.1 Schools: Developing strong leadership and building an inclusive environment

Principals and administrators of the schools should develop strong leadership to help refugee students reach their full potential, including taking action against injustice and taking a holistic approach to address the needs of refugee students. For instance, Stewart (2012) suggested that school principals and administrators should "set an example for the staff and the community by promoting equality, fairness, and respect. [Otherwise,] … the overall tone and culture within the school will be adversely affected" (p. 186). Taylor and Sidhu (2012) emphasized that advocating for refugee students is particularly a significant dimension of principals' strong leadership. After the examination of good practice of four Australian high schools which had a reputation for working with refugee students, Taylor and Sidhu found that all of the four principals were

strong advocates for refugee students as they did not consider having a large number of refugee students as problematic and were dedicated to promoting positive images of refugee youth both in school and in the community. Similarly, the schools succeeding in supporting refugee students in Arnot and Pinson's study (2005) all had a positive attitude towards refugee students, perceiving them as dedicated and committed students with high expectations about the education rather than think of them as problematic students.

According to Arnot and Pinson (2005), "an ethos of inclusion" is vital to building a welcoming school. Taylor and Sidhu (2012) emphasized that schools should not address the language needs of refugee students at the expense of their other learning needs. "Rather than separating 'students at risk' from the mainstream system in order to meet their educational needs as in the past, education systems and schools now aspire to deal with student diversity through inclusive education" (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012, p. 53). For example, ESL teachers in Taylor and Sidhu's study co-taught with the class teacher instead of withdrawing refugee students from the mainstream class. Asadi (2015) also found schools in which refugee students were more likely to achieve academic success not only focused on language learning but also provided adequate support for refugee students to meet their learning needs and transitioned them into mainstream classrooms as soon as they have gained basic language proficiency.

A holistic approach to support has been suggested in several studies. Schools need to understand that refugee students have multi-faceted and complex needs, and it is insufficient to address only their learning needs (Arnot & Pinson, 2005). Similarly, Asadi (2015) emphasized that "it is difficult to imagine [refugee] students achieving meaningful success without a holistic approach to their education journey, with particular attention to

the areas of learning and the social and emotional needs of the students" (p. 199). Taylor and Sidhu (2012) suggested that in addition to addressing the learning needs of refugee students, schools also need to address their and their families' social and emotional needs.

It is imperative to offer professional development opportunities to teachers to increase their diversity awareness and capacity to adapt the curriculum for the benefits of refugee students to ensure inclusive education for refugee students. Four areas of professional development were suggested in MacNevin's study (2012), including strategies to work with refugee students suffering from pre-migration trauma, ways to foster an inclusive classroom environment for refugee students who have limited English proficiency and significant educational gaps, strategies to teach basic literacy, and diversity training to enhance teachers' understanding of refugee students' cultural backgrounds, pre-migration experience, and educational backgrounds before these students arrive in their classrooms.

A holistic approach also requires school leaders to promote the involvement of refugee parents (Stewart, 2012). For instance, the school could provide welcoming information in multiple languages when refugee students and their parents first come to the school; offer translation services to facilitate teacher-parent communication; and encourage refugee parents' participation in school events by removing barriers preventing their attendance such as language, work schedules, and child care (Stewart, 2012). Hogue (2018) also emphasized that school leaders play a crucial role in building a welcoming educational community, and first and foremost, they should work closely with refugee parents. Recommendations made by Hogue (2018) included providing an orientation to the school system, especially for refugee parents; hiring cultural liaisons to close the

cultural gap; developing trustful relationships with refugee parents through regular meetings, providing parent education classes, referring them to language and literacy programs offered by community organizations, and providing training to school staff on how to engage refugee parents.

Furthermore, to meet refugee students' complex needs, schools should partner with community organizations offering services to address refugee students' social and emotional needs because "these partnerships were essential to maintaining a holistic approach to supporting refugee students" (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012, p. 52). Stewart (2012) also stressed that school leaders should work in partnership with community organizations and businesses to develop mentoring and tutoring programs, hire school-community liaison workers, and provide sports and recreation activities for refugee students. Asadi (2015) suggested that schools should coordinate and collaborate with other agencies to better support refugee students' needs, such as offering counselling services, homework clubs, and various extracurricular activities.

2.4.2 Universities: Facilitating refugee youth's access to and participation in higher education

Previous research also introduced or recommended several educational programs offered by post-secondary institutions to better support refugee students, including the Refugee Action Support Program, Equity Buddies, outreach programs, Refugee Campaign, and Student Refugee Program (Naidoo, 2015b; Vickers, McCarthy, & Zammit, 2017; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Roque, Aiazzi, Smart, Topouzova, & Touzet, 2018; Peterson, 2010).

The Refugee Action Support Program introduced in Naidoo's study (2015b) is a successful school-university collaboration supporting refugee youth's participation in higher education in Australia. Pre-service teachers from Western Sydney University acted as tutors in this program, being allocated to 11 high schools in Western and South Western Sydney. Each of them spent one day at a school each week for the duration of 12 weeks. These tutors offer a range of targeted literacy and numeracy support to refugee students, assisting them in class, providing small-group and one-on-one tutoring outside the classroom, and creating teaching and learning resources for refugee students through classroom observation. It was found that refugee students have significantly improved their speaking and listening skills, as well as have gradually improved their reading and writing skills. In addition, pre-service teachers have also benefited from this program as they gained practical skills to work with students from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, this is a good practice in collaboration between universities and schools, which was mutually rewarding to both refugee students and pre-service teachers (Naidoo, 2015b).

Equity Buddies is another program supporting refugee and immigrant students at Western Sydney University (Vickers, McCarthy, & Zammit, 2017). According to Vickers et al. (2017), this is a for-credit student mentoring program in which advanced students act as mentors paired with mentees who are first-year refugee and immigrant students. Students in teacher education, psychology, or humanities are eligible to enroll as mentors. They are required to meet with their mentees face-to-face once each week for 10 weeks. The goal of this program is to help beginning refugee and immigrant students navigate and succeed in the university environment. Vickers et al. (2017) asserted that this

program had promoted mentors' intercultural understandings, fostered cross-cultural friendships, and developed a supportive academic environment.

Outreach programs were suggested in an American study on refugee youth's access to a four-year college education (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Kanno and Varghese (2010) advised that the current outreach programs for minority and low-income students which encourage them to apply for college, help them with the application process, and offer them ongoing support during college should be expanded to refugee students. In addition to partnerships between schools and colleges/universities, Kanno and Varghese recommended community colleges collaborate with four-year institutions as they believed that attending a community college first and later transferring to a four-year university is a feasible pathway for refugee youth who aspire to gain a bachelor's degree.

In the United Kingdom, a number of students at Oxford University launched the Oxford Students Refugee Campaign in October 2015 in response to the Syrian refugee crisis (Roque et al., 2018). According to Roque et al. (2018), the Campaign aims to help refugees and displaced students have equitable access to higher education. As a result of the campaign, Oxford University started to offer scholarships targeting this cohort of students to eliminate their financial barriers to pursuing higher education. In addition, the Campaign worked closely with the undergraduate and graduate admission offices to help applicants solve problems they have encountered during the application process, such as the absence of application documents. The Campaign also incorporated a mentoring scheme and an outreach program. The mentoring program linked current Oxford students with refugee applicants to offer guidance on the application process, and the outreach program aimed to inform applicants about scholarship opportunities.

In Canada, the Student Refugee Program (SRP), "is the only one of its kind to combine resettlement with opportunities for higher education" (World University Service of Canada [WUSC], 2019b, para. 1). According to WUSC (2019b),

> The program supports over 130 refugee students per year through active partnerships with over 80 Canadian campuses. [They] have empowered over 1,800 young refugees from 39 countries of origin to continue their education in safe and supportive environments in Canada since the program began. (para. 1)

Canadian post-secondary institutions are important partners in this program. In particular, campus administration, WUSC local committees, and student volunteers work closely with SRP (WUSC, 2017).

According to WUSC (2017), the campus administration supports SRP students in two aspects. First, they provide financial support, such as waived tuition, residence, books, and meal plan fees. Second, they allow flexibility in admission criteria and application deadlines for refugee students. WUSC campus-based local committees constituted mainly by Canadian students are crucial to the success of the SRP, providing peer-to-peer academic and social support for refugee students to help them navigate the Canadian post-secondary system and integrate into the community.

The SPR has achieved great success in fulfilling refugee youth's aspirations for higher education. According to (WUSC, 2019a), "97% of sponsored students had completed or were in the process of completing their post-secondary program with many intending to further their education. The vast majority – 85% – had found work in their chosen fields after graduation" (para. 4).

Moreover, the SPR is beneficial to Canadian students and faculty members, fostering transformative learning (Peterson, 2010). According to Peterson (2010), "Transformative learning is learning that involves a change in one's worldview and/or understanding of the self" (p. 111). For example, some of the Canadian students who volunteered in the SRP continued graduate studies in the fields related to refugees in Canada or worked for community settlement agencies. Also, faculty members involved in the SRP became more aware of the plight of refugees and attentive to their particular needs (Peterson, 2010).

2.4.3 Community organizations

2.4.3.1 Resettlement workers: Establishing close relationships with refugee families

Previous studies suggested that school-based settlement workers from resettlement agencies play a crucial role in the growth of refugee youth (Georgis et al., 2014; Li et al., 2017; Stewart, 2012). In Li et al.'s study (2017), these settlement workers worked with refugee students on a daily basis, helping them integrate into school and community, including the navigation of the Canadian school system, the selection of schools and classes, homework and language tutoring, the introduction of the public transportation system, and the assistance in finding volunteer jobs and choosing post-secondary programs. Li et al. recommended that more schools should work with the settlement workers to better facilitate refugee youth's integration into school and community.

Georgis et al. (2014) also found that the community settlement workers from the same cultural and linguistic backgrounds as their refugee clients are more likely to build close and trusting relationships with refugee parents, and therefore serve as cultural

brokers for the refugee families. Once the strong relationships are built, refugee parents would feel comfortable to engage in school to voice their opinions, express their needs, and request supports.

Moreover, assigning on-site settlement workers to school is a good example of community organizations' shifting of their services and programs to refugee youth's microsystem (Li et al., 2017). In Li et al.'s study (2017), one settlement worker was stationed at a middle school and a high school to work with refugee students. Community organizations usually are considered as refugee youth's exosystem – the environmental contexts which have an important but indirect influence on human development ((Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). However, school-based settlement workers have shifted from refugee youth's exosystem to their microsystem because they spend much of their time working in school and visiting refugee students' families, through which they have fostered close relationships with refugee students and their parents (Li et al., 2017). Li et al. (2017) further suggested community organizations should follow this good model of practice to have staff members stationed at school to deliver their programs and services, bringing more direct benefits to refugee youth.

2.4.3.2 Mental health counsellors: Introducing whole-family mental health interventions

In addition to settlement services, scholars suggested community organizations offer counselling services to promote refugee youth's mental health in particular (Beiser, Puente-Duran, & Hou, 2015; Feuerverger, 2011; Guruge & Butt, 2015). Feuerverger (2011) believed that listening to refugee students' stories of their struggles, sufferings, as well as their hope is the first step to help them. The trauma they carry with them is hidden,

and they seldom have an opportunity to tell their challenges as they confront the process of immigration, and therefore conversations with refugee students would allow them to tell their stories and to have their voices heard (Feuerverger, 2011).

Moreover, engaging parents in mental health interventions is of great importance (Guruge & Butt, 2015). Guruge and Butt (2015) indicated that counsellors should listen to refugee parents' views concerning their children's mental health issues. In addition, counsellors should attend to refugee parents' resettlement stress by referring them to language and employment training to improve their economic status (Beiser et al., 2015).

2.4.3.3 Career counsellors: Providing holistic career services

Since refugee youth have a strong sense of determination to pursue meaningful work (Gateley, 2014), employment is at the core of the services provided by community agencies. Career counsellors act as employment-oriented cultural brokers helping refugee youth integrate into the Canadian labour market (Gateley, 2014). Several researchers suggested that career counsellors working with refugee youth should focus on establishing close relationships with them through addressing their needs beyond employment (Abkhezr, McMahon, & Rossouw, 2015; Gateley, 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2012). Abkhezr et al. (2015) recommended that career counsellors consider a narrative career counselling approach while working with refugee students. This approach would allow refugee students to have the opportunity to tell the stories of their cultures, pre-migration experiences, post-migration challenges, and current needs (Abkhezr et al., 2015). Therefore, through a narrative approach, career counsellors would better understand refugee students' cultural backgrounds and current living conditions, as well as building close relationships with them (Abkhezr et al., 2015). Similarly, Gately (2014)

indicated that the employment services for refugee youth should attend to their particular needs, including living necessities, emotional turmoil, language difficulties, and legal documentation.

Moreover, the more information on the Canadian labour market that refugee parents are provided, the more likely that their children would be able to make informed and effective decisions about their educational paths and career (Wilkinson, 2008). For example, career counsellors could inform refugee parents that a university education is not the only post-secondary pathway and that there are other options like vocational and training opportunities available to their children (Lauer et al., 2011). In addition, career counsellors also need to pay attention to the well-being of the entire family such as their financial conditions and social integration (Lauer et al., 2011). More importantly, career counsellors should provide the necessary support to help refugee parents create a healthy family environment because refugee students from stable and healthy families tend to have better academic performance in school and then have a smoother transition to the labour market in Canada (Wilkinson, 2008).

2.4.4 Governments: Providing adequate funding and building a welcoming community

Previous studies called for adequate financial support from all levels of government (Anselme & Hands, 2010; Kanu, 2008; Shakya et al., 2010; Taylor & Sidhu; 2012; Wilkinson, 2008). For example, the principals in Kanu's study (2008) suggested,

> Key decision makers and policy makers constituting the macro-system must be made aware of the unique challenges involved in educating refugee students so

> that funding can be provided for programs to support the adjustment and academic success of these students. (para. 927)

The provincial government, in particular, should increase funding to schools to allow them to better provide the specialized programs for refugee students, such as extending and expanding existing programs and offering professional development to teachers and school staff (Kanu, 2008). Taylor and Sidhu (2012) also recommended that sufficient financial resources should be available to assist high schools in implementing inclusive education and designing programs for refugee students. In addition, targeted scholarships should be offered to refugee students to remove their financial barriers to higher education (Shakya et al., 2010).

The federal and provincial governments should provide financial support for the entire refugee family because a healthy and stable family environment lays the foundation for the development of refugee youth (Wilkinson, 2008). Forgiving federal government loans for refugee resettlement is one of the ways to ease refugee families' financial burden that has been advocated by many researchers (Kanu, 2008; Shakya et al., 2010). Furthermore, Dryden-Peterson (2010) emphasized that higher education for refugee youth should not be ignored due to the pressing needs of primary education and limited resources, and investment in higher and primary education is of equal importance. Benefits resulting from this long-term view includes the growth of refugee youth, the reconstruction of their home countries, and the development of host countries. Therefore, international donors should make a financial commitment not only to fund primary education but also to fund higher education (Dryden-Peterson, 2010). Anselme and Hands (2010) made similar suggestions, indicating, "The donor community should ensure its

support to post-primary education (secondary, vocational, tertiary, university) by creating appropriate mechanisms to link humanitarian relief funds with development funds" (p. 95).

In addition to the provision of sufficient funding resources for programs and services supporting refugee youth, governments also need to eliminate anti-refugee sentiments among the public (Beiser & Hou, 2016). Beiser and Hou (2016) suggested that receiving countries like Canada should not only focus on helping them recover from pre-migration trauma but also paying attention to eradicating post-arrival anti-refugee sentiments among the public. Diversity celebration events and public education programs on the contributions that refugees have made to Canada are effective ways to make Canada a more welcoming country (Beiser & Hou, 2016). In particular, to encourage school leaders to act on their initiatives to set refugee youth in a path to academic success, they need support from district-level administrators (Gardiner, 2006). Gardiner (2006) argued that "Multiculturalism or social justice values must be written in the district and school mission statements and core values to serve students effectively" (p. 580).

It is demonstrated that sustained and effective collaborations between government departments, non-government sector, universities, schools, and community-based organizations are vital to the success of support initiatives for refugee youths (Naidoo et al., 2018). Collaboration is of significant importance in places short of financial resources, as Li et al. (2017) noted in their local study on refugee youth's integration in Newfoundland and Labrador that "Considering the current economic downturn and provincial government budget cuts, collaboration between government and non-government agencies and among multiple sectors could not be more important in

facilitating newcomer integration" (p. 15). Naidoo (2015b) also suggested that education bureaucracies and government departments should provide sufficient resources to maintain partnerships and community organizations to better support refugee youth through their educational and settlement programs.

2.5 Summary

Firstly, the literature review showed that refugee youth resettled in Canada were likely to have high educational goals, aspiring to attend college or university after high school (Bajwa et al., 2017; Gunderson, 2000; Shakya et al., 2010). Their educational aspirations were strengthened after they came to Canada, which was closely associated with their perception of post-secondary education, especially university education, as a mechanism to achieve upward socio-economic mobility (Shakya et al., 2010; Stewart, 2011). Research conducted in the context of Australia (Naidoo et al., 2015) and the United Kingdom (Stevenson & Willott, 2007) also portrayed the high educational aspirations among their refugee youth. However, one American study indicated that refugee youth rarely had plans to attend university, or they only wished to attend community colleges due to their doubts about their academic competences (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Furthermore, prior research suggested a gap between refugee youth's high educational aspirations and their capacity to achieve them (Bowden & Doughney, 2010; Naidoo et al., 2018).

The second section of literature review presented refugee youth's low participation rates in post-secondary education in Canada. For example, according to a recent study by Prokopenko (2018), only 22% of male and 17% of female government-sponsored refugees have participated in post-secondary training in Canada. Perceiving the

mismatch between refugee youth's high educational aspirations and their low participation rates in post-secondary education in Canada, in the third section of literature review, I continued to review the literature on the factors impeding their access to post-secondary education. Guided by the bioecological model of human development, I presented the factors related to personal characteristics, in the context of family and school, as well as at the policy level.

Studies suggested that the educational attainment of refugee youth varies according to their ethnic origins. According to Sweet et al. (2010), students from the Caribbean, Africa, and Western Asia had the lowest rates of participation in university and were more likely to drop out of school. In addition, refugee youth were confronted with linguistic and informational barriers. Their academic reading and writing difficulties were the biggest barriers to accessing post-secondary education (Naidoo, 2015a). Meanwhile, refugee youth were less likely to have sufficient and accurate information they need to make informed decisions and achieve success. For example, they were not familiar with the high school credit system (Li & Grineva, 2016); unaware of the various educational pathways available to them (Shakya et al., 2010); and overwhelmed by the post-secondary application process (Bajwa et al., 2017).

In addition, refugee youth were constrained from accessing post-secondary education by their parents' lower educational attainment (Hou & Bonikowska, 2017) and lower socioeconomic status (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) in the context of family; by their teachers' low levels of expectations (Naidoo et al., 2018), the experiences of discrimination (Correa-Velez et al., 2017), and inappropriate grade placement (Wilkinson, 2002) in the context of school; and by the limitations of the high school age-cap policy

(Wilkinson et al., 2012) and the lack of educational policies addressing the provision of post-secondary education for refugee youth (Ferede, 2010) at the policy level.

The last section of the literature review presented some recommendations made to schools, post-secondary institutions, community organizations, and all levels of government for helping refugee youth achieve their educational goals. It was suggested that schools should develop strong leadership to advocate for refugee students (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012); universities should offer educational programs to facilitate refugee youth's transition from high school to post-secondary (Peterson, 2010); community organizations should build close relationships with refugee families (Georgis et al., 2014), paying particular attention to promoting their mental health (Feuerverger, 2011) and helping them integrate into the Canadian labour market (Gately, 2014).

The next chapter will present the theoretical framework that underpins this study, including segmented assimilation theory which justifies the importance of post-secondary education for refugee youth, the bioecological model of human development which provides a framework to pay close attention to factors determining human development; and the chain-of-response model on adult learning which provides a framework to examine the factors relating to participation in adult learning activities among refugee youth beyond high school age.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework that underpins this study consists of segmented assimilation theory (Portes & Zhou, 1993) and the bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This chapter elaborates on the major components of each of these two models to make sense of the methodology adopted and the analysis and discussion of the findings in the following chapters.

3.2 Segmented Assimilation Theory

Segmented assimilation theory was introduced by Portes and Zhou (1993) and expanded by Portes and Rumbaut (2001) to explain that immigrant children and youth may undergo different assimilation patterns in the United States. Although this theory focuses on immigrants and their children in the United States, it provides insights into the integration of newcomers in Canada. In particular, this theory gives powerful reasons to focus on refugee youth's access to post-secondary education.

First, differing from the previous dominant assimilation perspective that immigrants undergo a common process of assimilation through which they will eventually join the mainstream of the American society, Portes and Zhou (1993) posited that immigrants experience three different patterns of assimilation by which they are assimilated into different segments of the society:

> One of them replicates the time-honored portrayal of growing acculturation and parallel integration into the white middle-class; a second leads straight in the opposite direction to permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass; still

> a third associates rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity. (p. 82)

In other words, segmented assimilation theory emphasized that while some immigrant children and youth experience upward assimilation, unfortunately, others experience downward assimilation in which they are still assimilated but into the lower social class, and they are less likely to climb up (Stanford Centre on Poverty and Inequality, 2016).

Secondly, to which social class in the host society that immigrant youth will move is closely associated with their academic achievement (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Specifically, "How well [immigrant children and youth] do and how far they go in school will govern their eventual position in the American status system" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 234). In particular, refugee youth in their late adolescence need more attention because "This is the time … when the first signs of segmented assimilation become established as some children leave school prematurely because of unexpected pregnancies or economic need and others seek outside job opportunities and fall behind in school" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 246). In other words, whether or not refugee youth will continue with post-secondary education largely determines which segments of society they will be assimilated into.

Furthermore, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) created a model of the process of segmented assimilation which presents how four decisive factors influence which assimilation path that an immigrant child will follow (see Figure 1). The four factors are the socioeconomic attainment of immigrant parents, intergenerational acculturation, challenges faced by immigrant children and youth, and resources for overcoming these challenges (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

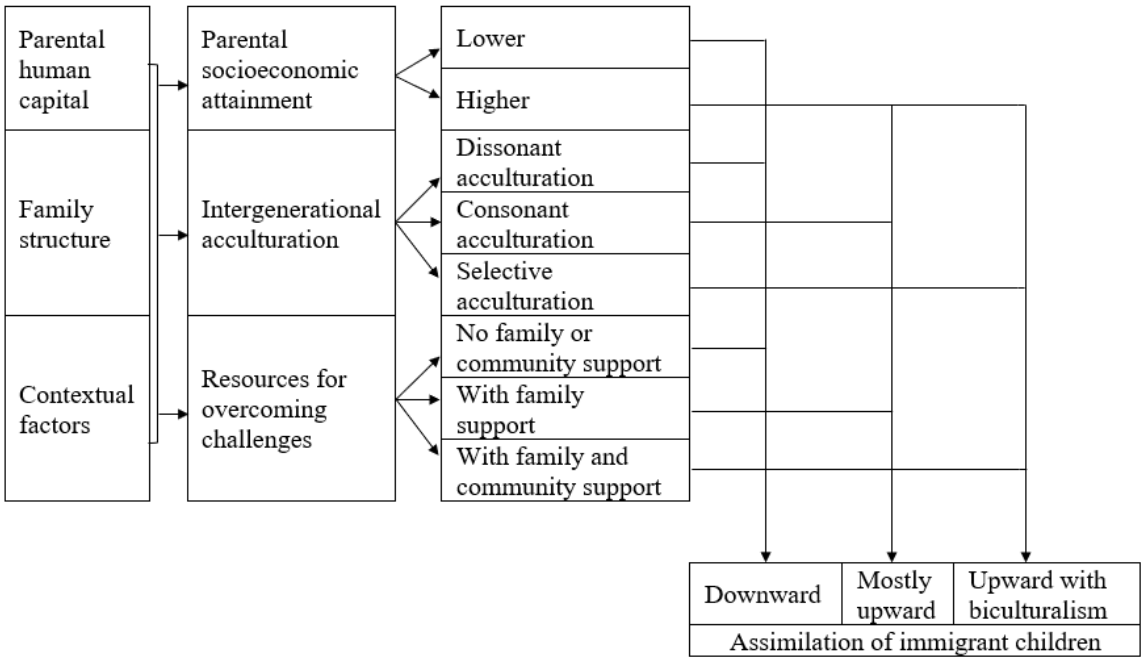

Figure 1 The process of segmented assimilation: A model. Adapted from 'Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation,' by A. Portes and R. Rumbaut, 2001, p. 63.

3.2.1 Parental socioeconomic attainment

Immigrant children and youth differ in their backgrounds, which is largely determined by their parents' socioeconomic attainment in American society as a result of their human capital, family structure, and contextual factors (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Parental human capital consists of educational attainment, work experience, and language knowledge of immigrant parents, strongly and positively determining their socioeconomic attainment which in turn positively influences their children's educational attainment (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Family structure refers to whether the biological parents stay together, as immigrant children from intact families are more likely to achieve academic success (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Immigrant parents' human capital alone does not translate into a favourable socioeconomic status which, at the same time, is determined by the governmental, societal, and communal responses to immigrant groups (i.e., contextual factors) (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). For example, "the policies of the receiving government, the values and prejudices of the receiving society, and the characteristics of the co-ethnic community" all positively impact on the extent to which immigrant parents can utilize their human capital to achieve socioeconomic status (Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 83). Therefore, these contextual factors indirectly influence immigrant children and youth's assimilation outcomes through their impact on their parents' socioeconomic attainment (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In addition, these contextual factors also have a direct influence on immigrant children and youth because they, as well, are situated in these contexts where various barriers and resources are embedded (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), which are further discussed in the section 3.2.3 and the section 3.2.4.

3.2.2 Intergenerational acculturation

While living in the American society, immigrant parents and their children may experience acculturation at a different pace, which leads to three types of intergenerational acculturation, including dissonant acculturation, consonant acculturation, and selective acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Dissonant acculturation takes place when immigrant children and youth's learning of English and American customs and the loss of their mother tongue and ethnic culture are faster than their parents. Dissonant acculturation does not inevitably lead to downward assimilation; however, it weakens parental authority and places immigrant children at risk because they are more likely to escape parental control (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Consonant acculturation

takes place when immigrant children and their parents learn English and American customs without preservation of their heritage language and culture roughly at the same pace, which does not guarantee upward assimilation but lays the foundation for parental guidance and mutual support to overcome external challenges such as discrimination (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Selective acculturation takes place when immigrant parents and their children maintain home language and culture while learning English and American customs at the same pace, which are most likely to lead to upward assimilation because it "offers the most solid basis for preservation of parental authority along with the strongest bulwark against effects of external discrimination" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 54).

Intergeneration acculturation is also positively determined by the three factors that impact on parental socioeconomic attainment: parental human capital, family structure, and contextual factors (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In general, immigrant parents and their children from intact families with strong parental human capital and experiencing favourable governmental, societal, and communal reception are more likely to experience consonant or selective acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

3.2.3 Challenges to upward social mobility faced by immigrant children and youth

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) indicated that immigrant children and youth are faced with three major challenges preventing them from achieving upward social mobility in today's American society: racial discrimination, the polarization of the labour force, and living in poor neighbourhoods. First, unlike the children of early white immigrants from Europe who were barely distinguishable from American population once they acquired an

American accent, adopted American ways of behaviour, and achieved a certain level of social status, children of recent non-white immigrants are likely to experience discrimination based on physical differences (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Picca and Feagin (2007) asserted that racism is more likely to occur in a society where whites are the majority. According to the 2016 Census (Statistics Canada, 2017b), 96.9% of the population in Newfoundland and Labrador were non-immigrants (i.e., persons who are Canadian citizens by birth). In fact, racist incidents were reported in Baker's study (2017). Baker (2017) conducted a web-based survey among first-year students attending Memorial University, and over 82% of respondents indicated that they had observed a racist incident against persons of colour in St. John's. In particular, ethnic minorities are likely to experience pre-employment discrimination (i.e., unequal access to jobs) and post-employment discrimination (i.e., differential treatment) in the Canadian labour market (Agocs & Jain, 2001). Immigrants in Canada tend to experience weak economic integration due to the non-recognition of their foreign educational credentials, accent, and work experience (Creese & Wiebe, 2012). The knowledge of immigrants, especially those from Third World countries, is usually perceived as "incompatible and inferior, and hence invalid" (Guo, 2009, p. 49). Worse still, today's immigrant youth face a labour market that is characterized by the growth of employment in low-paying service-sector jobs and well-paying technical and professional jobs and a shrinking of jobs in between (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The Canadian labour market reflects this trend. According to the data on employment by industry (Statistics Canada, 2019), in May 2019, approximately 25% of jobs were available in trade, accommodation and food services and 26% of jobs were available in health care, educational services, and professional, scientific and technical

services. For this reason, as Portes and Rumbaut (2001) suggested, post-secondary education plays an important role in preventing immigrant youth from getting trapped in dead-end jobs. Lastly, immigrant families are likely to live in poor neighbourhoods due to affordability, and thus their children are likely to be enrolled in schools with higher dropout rates and be exposed to gang activity and drug use in the neighbourhoods (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). This is also relevant for refugee children and youth in Canada because they often live in government-subsidized housing with higher rates of criminal activity and violence (Kanu, 2008).

3.2.4 Resources to overcome the challenges

The resources available to immigrant children and youth for overcoming the challenges they face in the new society also determine their assimilation paths (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In particular, resources offered by immigrant parents and the co-ethnic community play an important role in influencing immigrant children and youth's social mobility (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Immigrant parents with high human capital are more likely to offer information and economic resources to support their children, and strong co-ethnic communities also indirectly help immigrant children and youth overcome these challenges through helping their parents with employment, keeping families intact, and reinforcing parental authority (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

In short, personal factors (i.e., parental human capital) and contextual factors (i.e., supports from government, society, and co-ethnic community in the host country) largely determine immigrant children and youth's educational attainment and future social mobility. More importantly, segmented assimilation theory posits that even if immigrant parents have lower levels of human capital, their children still can achieve upward social

mobility when they receive favourable reception at the three levels in the host country (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

It is noteworthy that assimilationism has been the subject of debate in the Canadian context that advocates multiculturalism. From the viewpoint of multiculturalists,

> premigration cultural attributes inherent to ethnicity are not assumed to be inferior traits which should necessarily be absorbed by the core culture of the host society; rather these primordial characteristics constantly interact with the host society to reshape and reinvent themselves (Zhou, 1997, p. 981).

In other words, multiculturalism affirms that ethnic minorities are equal participants in Canadian society who do not need to sacrifice their ethnic heritage, language, and identity (Guo, 2017).

As an immigrant myself, I hold the position that multiculturalism should be applauded. The purpose of employing segmented assimilation theory in this study was not to stress that ethnic minority groups should make efforts to be assimilated into the host society but to emphasize that immigrant youth's educational attainment and future social mobility are largely determined by a number of personal factors and contextual factors.

3.3 Bioecological Model of Human Development

This study also draws on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model which is ''an evolving theoretical system for the scientific study of human development over time'' (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 793). The theory has undergone a process of evolution from an ecological model which was first introduced in the 1970s to a bioecological model which is the mature form of the theory in 2005 (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The description of the bioecological model of human development in this section

primarily draws on the book chapter authored by Bronfenbrenner and Morris in 2006 which well summarizes the evolution of the theory and provides a complete introduction of the bioecological model. In addition, Bronfenbrenner's highly cited article on the ecological model published in 1994 is drawn on to explain the components appear both in the early and the mature version of the theory.

In sum, this study draws on the central tenets of the bioecological model of human development (see Figure 2), including proximal processes, the influence of person characteristics and context on proximal processes, and the interrelation between human development and macrotime in terms of social changes over time.

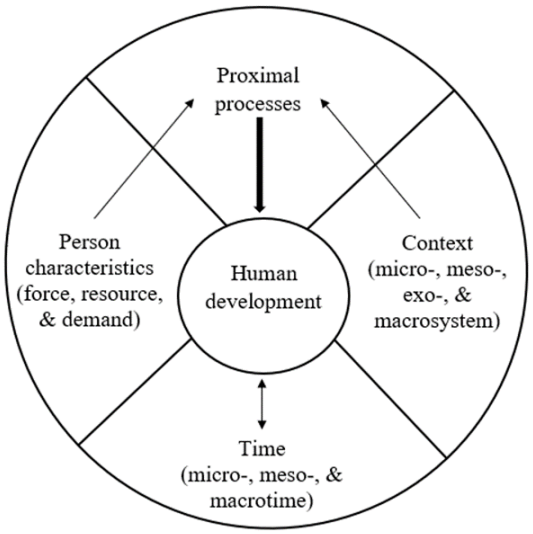

Figure 2 The bioecological model of human development: Central tenets.

3.3.1 Proximal processes

The bioecological model comprises four components: proximal processes, person characteristics, context, and time. Proximal processes are "the core of the model" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 795), constituting "the primary engines of

development" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 798). The defining properties of proximal processes are stated in the following proposition:

> [H]uman development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. Such enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment are referred to as proximal processes. (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 797)

The examples of proximal processes provided by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) include "learning new skills, athletic activities, problem solving, caring for others in distress, making plans, performing complex tasks, and acquiring new knowledge and know-how" (p. 797) and so on.

Although proximal processes are considered the driving force of human development, the power of such processes varies substantially according to the three remaining components of the bioecological model, which are stated in the second proposition,

> The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person; of the environment – both immediate and more remote – in which the processes are taking place; the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration; and the social continuities and changes occurring over time

> through the life course and the historical period during which the person has lived. (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 798)

In other words, person characteristics and context are two main factors that influence the power of proximal processes (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

3.3.2 Person characteristics

The second component of the bioecological model, person characteristics, is categorized into three types, including force characteristics, resource characteristics, and demand characteristics (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Force characteristics include "developmentally generative characteristics" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 810) such as "curiosity, tendency to initiate and engage in activity alone or with others, responsiveness to initiatives by others, and readiness to defer immediate gratification to pursue long-term goals" (p. 810) which can initiate or sustain proximal processes. In addition, force characteristics include "developmentally disruptive dispositions" (p. 810) such as "impulsiveness, explosiveness, distractibility, inability to defer gratification, or, in a more extreme form, ready resort to aggression and violence" (p. 810) at one extreme of "difficulties in maintaining control over emotions and behaviors" (p. 810), and such as "apathy, inattentiveness, unresponsiveness, lack of interest in the surroundings, feelings of insecurity, shyness, or a general tendency to avoid or withdraw from activity" (p. 810) at the opposite extreme. Force characteristics are considered to be most likely to influence a person's developmental outcomes through a generative or disruptive manner (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Resource characteristics are those that influence the capacity of the person to engage effectively in proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). "ability,

knowledge, skills, and experience" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 812) are some of the resource characteristics that encourage proximal processes; whereas, "genetic defects, low birthweight, physical handicaps, severe and persistent illness, or damage to brain function through accident or degenerative processes" are some of the resource characteristics that impede proximal processes (p. 812).

Demand characteristics are "their capacity to invite or discourage reactions from the social environment that can disrupt or foster processes of psychological growth: for example, … hyperactivity versus passivity" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 812). It is noteworthy that personal characteristics appear twice in the bioecological model, both as "precursors and producers of later development … [through] their capacity to influence the emergence and operation of proximal processes" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 810) and as "measures of developmental outcomes" (p. 810).

3.3.3 Context

The third component of the bioecological model, context, consists of four nested environmental systems previously indicated in the ecological model, namely, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, which Bronfenbrenner described as "a set of Russian dolls … [m]oving from the innermost level to the outside" (1994, p. 1645). It is noteworthy that no further modifications have been made to the component of context in the bioecological model.

The microsystem is the most immediate environment, such as school, family, peer group, and workplace in which the developing person closely interacts with others (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The microsystem is defined in the same way throughout the evolution of the theory; however, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) made it clear that

the microsystem is the most important environmental system in human development in the bioecological model because it is where proximal processes occur. The three types of person characteristics of teachers, parents, mentors, close friends, or other people situated in the microsystem also invite or inhibit the development of proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). In addition, the features of the various microsystems also positively or negatively influence proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). For example, "the growing hecticness, instability, and chaos" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 796) in microsystems affect the shape of a person's competence and character, and in turn, generate or disrupt proximal processes.

The mesosystem is the relations between two or more microsystems such as the relations between home and school, school and workplace (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner (1994) cited Epstein's research as one example of the force of mesosystem on human development, which revealed that joint involvement in decision-making by parents and teachers had stronger influence than parental socioeconomic status or race on primary school students in terms that they showed more initiative and independence, and had better academic performance after entering high school.

The exosystem is an environment in which occurrences have an indirect influence on the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For example, parents' workplaces, family social networks, and neighbourhood-community contexts are three exosystems that indirectly affect the microsystems of family, school, and peer group (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The macrosystem is viewed as "a societal blue-print for a particular culture or subculture" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 1646). For example, macrosystems include "the

belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 1645-1646). Bronfenbrenner (1994) suggested that more attention should be paid to the influence of the macrosystem to the microsystem.

3.3.4 Time

The latter component of time includes three levels: microtime, mesotime, and macrotime. (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Their formal definitions read as follows:

> Microtime refers to continuity versus discontinuity in ongoing episodes of proximal process. Mesotime is the periodicity of these episodes across broader time intervals, such as days and weeks. Finally, Macrotime focuses on the changing expectations and events in the larger society, both within and across generations, as they affect and are affected by, processes and outcomes of human development over the life course (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 796).

Bronfenbrenner and Morris made it clear that their emphasis of time in the bioecological model was laid on "the role of developmental processes and outcomes in producing large-scale changes over time in the state and structure of the broader society over time, and the implications of those changes for the society's future" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 796). In other words, the bioecological model not only focuses on the influence of social ideologies and historical events (i.e., macrotime) on human development but also pays attention to the counter-influence of developmental outcomes on social changes over time and the meaning of these social changes in the long run.

It needs to be noted that the flaws of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model have been pointed out by several researchers. For example, Rosa and Tudge (2013)

emphasized that while the bioecological model pays more attention to proximal processes, the characteristics of the people involved in those processes, and the microsystems in which the processes embedded, it ignores the macrosystem in terms of the cultural influence on processes of development. Velez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, Vega-Molina, and Coll (2017) also criticized that the bioecological model fails to explicate the notion of culture, and they posited that simply placing culture in macrosystem is problematic. Velez-Agosto et al. (2017) further suggested that culture should be situated in the microsystem because it is closely related to individuals' everyday activities. These critiques called researchers' attention to culture and its influence on individuals' characteristics and the microsystem.

3.4 Summary

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework that informs this study, including segmented assimilation theory and the bioecological model of human development. In addition, the rationale behind the employment of the theoretical framework was discussed. Segmented assimilation theory posits that children of immigrants experience assimilation into different segments of a new society, which is largely linked to their academic attainment, providing an overarching scientific justification for the investigation into post-secondary education for refugee youth. The bioecological model provides a framework to pay close attention to proximal processes which are viewed as the primary driving force of human development as well as person characteristics and the environment which are considered two factors that strongly influence proximal processes. The next chapter will present the methodological design of my study.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology employed in this qualitative study. I first introduce the paradigm that underpins this study and explain why it is the best fit. Next, I explicate the research design that was chosen for this study and the rationale behind this choice. I then explain the data collection process, including the sampling strategies, sample size, recruitment process, participants, and data collection methods. I then provide information on the procedures that were employed to analyze the data. Lastly, a discussion of validity and the ethical considerations follows.

4.2 Paradigm: Constructivism

This chapter begins with a discussion of paradigms which are the philosophical foundations of research. According to Creswell (2013), "The research design process in qualitative research begins with philosophical assumptions … Good research requires making these assumptions, paradigms, and frameworks explicit in the writing of a study" (p. 15). Similarly, Killam (2013) emphasized that "The lens (or paradigm) we choose as researchers changes the way we see the world. It directs everything we see and do as a researcher" (p. 5).

I employed Guba and Lincoln's definition of paradigms as "basic belief systems based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions" (1994, p. 107). Guba and Lincoln (1994) described four dominant inquiry paradigms, including positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism from the three dimensions. Since the choice of the paradigms is determined by research questions (Killam, 2013), I restate my research questions below:

- To what extent do refugee youth aspire to pursue post-secondary education?
- What programs and supports are in place for helping refugee youth pursue post-secondary education?
- What are the barriers to post-secondary education faced by refugee youth?
- What recommendations could be made to increase refugee youth's participation in education beyond high school?

Ontologically, these research questions require the searching for multiple interpretations of a situation rather than a reality. Constructivism "assumes multiple, apprehendable, and sometimes conflicting social realities that are the products of human intellects" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). For that reason, constructivism is appropriate for this study.

In addition, to answer these research questions, understanding and reconstructing of refugee youth's experiences through description and interpretation are required. Therefore, considering the epistemological and methodological positions of constructivism, it is appropriate because constructivists believe that knowledge is created in the interaction between researchers and participants, and the aim of constructivists is to reconstruct previously held constructions through a dialectic methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

4.3 Research Design: Basic Qualitative Research

This study used a basic qualitative research approach. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "in applied fields of practice such as education, administration, health, social work, counseling, business, and so on, the most common 'type' of qualitative

research is a basic interpretive study" (p. 23), and in particular "They are probably the most common form of qualitative research found in education" (p. 24).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) made it clear that researchers who adopt a basic qualitative research design are interested in "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 24), and "the overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (p. 24). Although other qualitative research designs share these characteristics, "each also has an added dimension" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 42). For example, phenomenology seeks to identify the essence of experiences; ethnography emphasizes the culture of a group; grounded theory aims to build theory, narrative inquiry uses stories as data, and a qualitative case study focuses on the phenomenon which is intrinsically bounded (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Considering none of these dimensions was the focus of this study, a basic qualitative research approach was appropriate.

This type of qualitative research has been labelled in other ways, such as interpretive or generic design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 25). In Merriam's early book (2002), she labelled it as a basic interpretive study in which researchers "seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved, or a combination of these" (p. 6). As an expert in adult education, Merriam conducted a few studies by using an interpretive qualitative approach. For example, in Jiang and Merriam's (2004) study of the motivations of university-graduated full-time housewives for returning to the university, the researchers interviewed 13 Korean full-time housewives who had a bachelor's degree and who were pursuing higher education to understand the reasons that forced them to live as full-time housewives and their

perceptions of higher education in personal development. In another study by Kim and Merriam (2010) of Korean older adults' experiences in a computer classroom, the researchers observed 11 sessions of an intermediate computer course for older adults and interviewed ten older computer learners to understand how computer learning is embedded in learning contexts and their identity development.

Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015) referred to a basic qualitative research design as a generic qualitative research approach which "investigates people's reports of their subjective opinions, attitudes, beliefs, or reflections on their experiences, of things in the outer world" (p. 78). Similar to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), Percy et al. (2015) made a distinction between generic qualitative research and four other more traditional approaches (i.e., ethnography, case study, grounded theory, and phenomenology), indicating that each of these four approaches has its particular focus. In particular, Percy et al. (2015) differentiated generic qualitative inquiry from phenomenological inquiry, concluding that

> If the researcher is interested more in the actual outer-world content of their questions (the actual opinions themselves, the life experiences themselves, the participants' reflections themselves) and less on the inner organization and structure of the participants' experiencing processes, then phenomenology would not be appropriate, but a more generic qualitative analysis would be. (p. 78)

In a basic qualitative study, data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis (Merriam &Tisdell, 2016). The analysis of data focuses on the identification of recurring patterns or themes, and "the overall interpretation will be the researcher's understanding of the participants' understanding of the phenomenon of

interest" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 25). Percy et al. (2015) also suggested that unstructured data collection methods and thematic analysis should be employed in this type of approach.

4.4 Data Collection

4.4.1 Sampling strategies

Purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) was used to select participants in this study. According to Creswell (2012), "in qualitative inquiry, the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon. Thus, to best understand the phenomenon, the qualitative researcher purposefully or intentionally selects individuals and sites." (p. 210). Patton also (1990) emphasized that,

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling (p. 169).

In this study, I intended to examine refugee youth's aspirations for and access to post-secondary education from the perspectives of two groups of participants: refugee youth and community-based educational service providers. Refugee youth are the key informants giving me information on their educational experiences. In addition, educational service providers are in a position to talk about refugee youth's educational experiences from a different angle.

In particular, criterion-based sampling and snowball sampling were used to select refugee youth participants. Three criteria were employed. The first is the category of immigration. They would have to migrate to Canada as refugees. Thus, those who moved

to Canada as economic immigrants or as family class immigrants would be excluded from sampling. The second criterion is age. I employed Newfoundland Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour's (DAESL, n.d.) definition of youth as those between 18 and 29 years. Therefore, my sample of refugee youth would have to fall into this age range. Lastly, they would have to be at different stages of education, including those who were attending high school, graduating from high school, attending post-secondary institutions, or taking adult education programs. Refugee youth who have entered the labour market after completion of high school would not be included in this study because this study focuses on direct high school to post-secondary transition. It is important to note that the exclusion of this group of refugee youth from this study does not imply that they have lower aspirations for post-secondary education. Some of them may spend a few years working after finishing high school before undertaking post-secondary studies. However, this indirect enrolment into college or university is not the focus of this study. Additionally, snowball sampling was utilized to locate information-rich informants. At each interview with refugee youth, I would ask them to refer me to other refugee youth who met these three sampling criteria.

In addition, snow-ball sampling was also employed to select educational service providers. Li, Que, and Power's (2017) study comprehensively examined the specialized programs and services for refugee students offered by the schools and the primary settlement agency in Newfoundland and Labrador. In particular, Li et al. (2017) provided thorough information on the support systems within the school setting such as the LEARN program (i.e., an academic bridging program designed to help newcomer students to fill educational gaps and transition to the mainstream courses), the ESL

program, the school counselling services, and the in-school settlement services. Therefore, in this study, I would select educational service providers beyond the schools and the resettlement agency in this province. At each interview with refugee youth, I would ask each of them to identify educational service providers in addition to these well-established programs that they viewed as helpful to their access to post-secondary education. My purpose was to draw a fuller picture of the educational support system for refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador.

4.4.2 Sample size

Regarding the sample size, I expected to recruit approximately 20 refugee youth and five educational service providers. The estimation of sample size was guided by similar existing studies. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative researchers could examine the number of participants used in similar studies to determine the sample size. In an Australian study (Naidoo, 2015) that investigated the challenges faced by refugee students during their pathways to post-secondary education, the researcher interviewed 14 refugee students from three universities and 39 refugee students from six high schools across three regional areas in Australia. Thus, the average number of participants from each area is approximately 18. Considering that my study was conducted in a smaller centre, I expected to recruit 18 to 20 refugee students. Additionally, the local study (Li et al., 2017) mentioned previously examined 15 organizations and programs offering services ranging from social integration, education, career development, recreation, to health and wellbeing. Among these, three offered educational support to refugee students. Therefore, I expected to recruit three or more educational service providers.

4.4.3 Recruitment process

I first applied for permission from the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) at Memorial University of Newfoundland (Memorial University). After my project was granted full ethics clearance, I submitted a research request to the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) as I intended to recruit refugee students at ABC High School. ABC is the code name I assigned to the high school to achieve confidentiality. Once I gained approval from the NLESD, I sought and obtained permission from the principal at ABC High School for recruitment at the school.

Recruitment posters (see Appendix A) were used to recruit refugee youth. They were pinned onto bulletin boards at ABC High School, the College of North Atlantic (CNA), and Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. ABC High School was selected because it has a larger number of students from refugee backgrounds than other schools. CNA and Memorial University are the only two public post-secondary education institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador. Due to the uniqueness of the two institutions, code names were not assigned to them.

I received positive responses from refugee youth. Thirteen refugee youths contacted me via email, informing me that they were interested in participating in this study. They were either attending high school, graduating from high school, or attending Memorial University. I sent them the consent form for students (see Appendix B), consent form for parents/guardian (see Appendix C), and interview protocol (see Appendix D) via email so that they could have a better understanding of my study and the interview questions. They also referred me to the other four refugee youths who met the

sample selection criteria. Two of them were attending high school, and the other two were attending Memorial University.

Meanwhile, I contacted the service providers of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program for the recruitment of refugee youth taking their adult education programs. According to the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour (DAESL), ABE is “a provincial high school equivalency program for adult learners” who are 19 years of age or older (2018, under section What is ABE, para. 1). The ABE program comprises three levels: Level I focused on basic literacy and numeracy; Level II equates to grades 7-9; and Level III equates to grades 10-12, and learners must earn 36 credits to graduate (DAESL, 2018). Adult learners may be eligible for funding support (DAESL, 2018). The ABE Level I program is complimentary for most adult learners as it receives significant funding from the federal government (Rabbittown Learners Program Inc., n.d.). The website of DAESL shows a list of ABE service providers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador with contact emails. I emailed the six ABE service providers located in St. John’s, requesting them to help with the recruitment of young refugee learners. The recruitment poster was attached to the email. However, the recruitment was not successful at the beginning. The service providers did not respond to me or informed me that they did not collect information on the immigration status of their students, or their students did not fall into the age range of youth.

Fortunately, three high school refugee students whom I interviewed helped me recruit three refugee youth taking adult educational programs. Two of them referred me to their elder sisters who were taking the ABE program, and another referred me to his elder brother who was taking the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

program. The LINC program is funded by IRCC (2010), offering language training to refugees and immigrants of the legal school-leaving age to facilitate their social, cultural and economic integration into Canada. The LINC program comprises seven levels ranging from level 1 (i.e., foundation classes) to level 7 (i.e., advanced classes). In the context of Newfoundland and Labrador, based on my previous research experience, I understand that refugee youth who age out of high school usually are placed in the LINC program which is only offered at the Association for New Canadians (ANC), the main refugee settlement agency in this province. I considered both programs adult education programs and decided to include the three young refugee learners in this study.

Eventually, I successfully recruited 20 refugee youths. Four of them were attending Memorial University; two of them were attending CNA; five were graduating from ABC High School; six were attending ABC High School; one was taking the LINC program; and two were taking the ABE program.

In addition, three educational service providers were identified by the refugee youth during the interviews as being helpful to their transition to post-secondary education. Then, I sent the three educational service providers recruitment emails attached with the consent form (see Appendix E) and the interview protocol (see Appendix F). Eventually, one staff member from each of the educational service providers volunteered to be interviewed.

4.4.4 Participants

4.4.4.1 Refugee youth

Twenty refugee youths were interviewed for this research. They were asked some demographic questions at the beginning of the interview to elicit detailed personal

information, including their age, gender, country of origin, year of arrival to Newfoundland and Labrador, the current level of education, and their future career goals. Table 1 summarizes the demographic data collected from the refugee youth. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identity.

Table 1 *Demographics of Refugee Youth*

Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnic origin	The year came to NL	Age at the time of the interview	The educational stage at the time of the interview	Career goal
Attending post-secondary education						
Hanan	Female	Middle East	2012	19	First year at Memorial in general education	English teacher
Yohan	Male	South Asia	2011	Turning 22	Third year at Memorial in business	Any professional job
Roland	Male	South Asia	2011	20	First year at Memorial in science	Entrepreneur
Aida	Female	North Africa	2012	Turning 20	First year at Memorial in general education	Healthcare professional
Zane	Male	South Asia	2011	29	Third year at CNA in business	Educator
Ray	Male	South Asia	2009	20	Second year at CNA in computer science	Computer technician
Graduating from high school						
Feechi	Male	North Africa	2013	22	Offered general admission by Memorial	Healthcare professional
Oliva	Female	South Asia	2010	19	Admitted into the nursing program at Memorial	Healthcare professional
Esinam	Female	Central Africa	2010	19	Offered general admission by Memorial	Healthcare professional
Kwame	Male	Northeast	2013	21	Placed on the	Electrician

		Africa			waitlist for a CNA program	engineer
Rosine	Female	Southeast Europe	2007	19	Intended to spend one year working or upgrading credits	Healthcare professional
Attending high school						
Adama	Female	Central Africa	2015	18	Taking grade 11 mainstream courses	Healthcare professional
Christ	Male	East Africa	2015	19	Taking grade 11 mainstream courses	Health care professional or computer technician
Awax	Male	Central Africa	2016	18	Receiving support from the LEARN program	A church job
Amare	Male	Central Africa	2016	Turning 20	Receiving support from the LEARN program	Plumber
Jamilah	Female	East Africa	2015	21	Taking grade 11 mainstream courses	Accountant
Deba	Female	East Africa	2015	19	Taking grade 10 mainstream courses	Healthcare professional
Taking adult education programs						
Ekon	Male	Central Africa	2016	Turning 21	Taking LINC Level 6	N/A
Imani	Female	East Africa	2015	25	Taking ABE Level I	Cashier
Kalifa	Female	East Africa	2015	23	Taking ABE Level I	Career in banking

In the following section, I introduce the demographics of these refugee youths in detail, focusing on their pre- and post-settlement educational experiences. As shown in the above table, I categorized these refugee youths into four groups, including those who were attending post-secondary education, those who were graduating from high school, those who were attending high school, and those who were taking adult educational

programs. Considering that the number of refugee youth resettled in Newfoundland and Labrador was relatively small, I indicated the regions they came from instead of their specific home countries to make them less identifiable.

Refugee youth attending tertiary education. Hanan, originally from the Middle East, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with her parents and siblings in 2012 at the age of 14. She and her family were forced to flee to a few countries before they were resettled in Canada. Prior to resettlement, Hanan was in the sixth grade. She began her educational journey in Newfoundland and Labrador from the eighth grade, receiving ESL support from itinerant ESL teachers in middle school. After that, she was directly enrolled in mainstream courses in grade 10 at ABC High School, not requiring additional support from the LEARN program. At the same time, she was placed in the ESL course at the advanced level. In the spring of 2016, Hanan was offered general admission to Memorial University with an entrance scholarship. At the time of the interview, she was in her first year, intending to complete a major in geography and a minor in English and pursue graduate studies in education to prepare herself for becoming an English teacher. However, her family probably would move to either Quebec or Ontario after she earns a master's degree.

Yohan, originally from South Asia, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with his parents and siblings in 2011 when he was turning 16. His family was forced to flee their home country to a refugee camp in a neighbouring country. Born in the refugee camp, he spent his entire pre-resettlement life in the camp. Yohan was in the tenth grade before he was resettled in this province and began his educational journey there from repeating the tenth grade and taking the ESL course at the beginner level at ABC High School. In the

summer of 2014, Yohan was offered general admission to Memorial University. At the time of the interview, he was in his third year in business, hoping to find a professional job outside of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Roland is Yohan's younger brother, coming to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2011 at the age of 14. Also born in the refugee camp, Roland had finished the seventh grade before he was resettled in this province. He was enrolled in mainstream courses in grade 8 at a middle school upon arrival and received ESL support from an itinerant ESL teacher. After two years of intermediate schooling, Roland was enrolled in mainstream courses in grade 10 at ABC High School. At the same time, he was placed in the ESL course at the intermediate level. When he was admitted to Memorial University in 2016, he was offered a Joyce Foundation Bursary. At the time of the interview, he was in his first year in science, intending to switch to business to prepare himself for becoming an entrepreneur.

Aida, originally from North Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with her younger sibling in 2012 when she was turning 15. Their mother was resettled in Newfoundland and Labrador a few years before them. During the separation from their mother, Aida and her sibling lived in their hometown with their grandmother. Aida was in the ninth grade before moving to this province and repeated the same grade upon arrival. She also received ESL support from an itinerant ESL teacher in middle school. After finishing the ninth grade, she was enrolled in mainstream courses in grade 10 and took the ESL course at the intermediate level at ABC High School. In the spring of 2016, she was offered general admission to Memorial University. At the time of the interview, she was

in her first year, planning to apply for admission into a nursing program in her second year to prepare herself for becoming a nurse.

Zane is Yohan and Roland's elder brother, coming to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2011 at the age of 24. He had been living in the refugee camp for 20 years. Prior to resettlement, he was attending college. After coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, he went to the LINC school for one and a half years. After that, he started to work in a refugee-serving organization and kept pursuing post-secondary education. At the time of the interview, he was in his third year in business at CNA and worked in the same organization, hoping to work in the field of education after completing post-secondary education.

Ray, originally from South Asia, came to Newfoundland and Labrador at the age of 13 in 2009 with a big family. Prior to resettlement, he was in the seventh grade. After moving to Newfoundland and Labrador, he started from the eighth grade and received ESL instruction from an itinerant ESL teacher. After two years, he was enrolled in mainstream courses in grade 10 and took the ESL course at the intermediate level at ABC High School. However, upon graduation, he realized that he had not earned enough credits for programs at CNA. In order to meet the entrance requirements, he went back to high school for half a year to upgrade his credits. After that, he took the Comprehensive Arts and Science (CAS) Transition program offered by CNA for one year in preparation for admission to college programs. In the Fall semester of 2016, he made a successful transition to a computer science program at CNA. At the time of the interview, he was in his second year, intending to transfer to a post-secondary institution in Ontario in the

following year because his family decided to move there next summer. He was hoping to find a job related to his college major.

Refugee students graduating from high school. Feechi, originally from North Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with his siblings in 2013 when he was turning 19 to get reunited with their mother who was resettled in this province a few years earlier. Their father went missing when they were little. During the years when they were separated from their mother, they were taken care of by their grandmother. Before coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, Feechi had finished high school and was enrolled in a nursing program in college. After resettlement, he had to repeat high school by taking mainstream classes in grade 10 and took the ESL course at the beginner level at ABC High School. At the time of the interview, he was graduating and was offered general admission to Memorial University with a Joyce Foundation Bursary. He was interested in applying for admission into a nursing program in his second year in preparation for working in the healthcare sector.

Oliva, originally from South Asia, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with her parents and siblings in 2010 when she was at the age of 11. Born in a refugee camp, she had finished the fourth grade before coming to Newfoundland and Labrador. After resettlement, she resumed schooling from the fifth grade and received ESL instruction from itinerant ESL teachers. After that, she was enrolled in mainstream courses in grade 10 and took the ESL course at the advanced level at ABC High School. In two and a half years, she earned enough credits for university admission. At the time of the interview, she had been admitted into a nursing program at Memorial University with a Joyce Foundation Bursary. Meanwhile, she was waiting for the results of her application for

admission to four other universities in Ontario, where her family decided to move to that summer.

Esinam, originally from Central Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with her mother, one sibling, and two relatives in 2010 when she was 12. She lived in a refugee camp in a neighbouring country for two years. Before resettlement, she only attended school for approximately two months. When she just came to Newfoundland and Labrador, she was placed in the LEARN program in a middle school and received ESL support from an itinerant ESL teacher, and she was integrated into mainstream courses in grade 7 in the following year. Eventually, she graduated from middle school in four years. After that, she was enrolled in mainstream courses in grade 10 at ABC High School. At the time of the interview, she was graduating from high school and has been offered general admission to Memorial University. However, she intended to transfer her credits to a nursing program at a university in Calgary because her family decided to move there in the following year.

Kwame, originally from Northeast Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador alone in 2013 when he was at the age of 18. He escaped to a neighbouring country on his own when he was in the ninth grade because he refused to become a child soldier. He lived in a refugee camp in the neighbouring country for three years, waiting to be sent to a resettlement country. He stopped attending school in the refugee camp because there were no schools. After coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, he spent the first year taking the LEARN program at ABC High School and spent another three years finishing mainstream courses. At the time of the interview, he was graduating from high school and received a communication from CNA which informed him that he had been placed on a

waitlist for an engineering program. If he were not going to receive an offer of admission from the college by that June, he would move to big cities in Canada like Toronto for better employment and educational opportunities.

Rosine, originally from Southeast Europe, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with her parents and siblings in 2007 when she was at the age of nine. Due to wars, her parents fled to a refugee camp in another country in the same region when she was at the age of two, and they lived there for seven years. Rosine had finished the third grade in the refugee camp and was about to start the fourth grade before resettlement. After coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, she repeated the third grade and received ESL instruction with an itinerant ESL teacher. In middle school, she took the LEARN math course and other mainstream courses. After that, she was enrolled in mainstream courses in grade 10 and took the ESL course at the beginner level at ABC High School. At the time of the interview, Rosine was graduating; however, she did not intend to apply to college or university because her family would move to Hamilton in Toronto soon in that September. She intended to spend one year working and taking upgrading courses to qualify to apply for a nursing program after the relocation.

Refugee students attending high school. Adama, originally from Central Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador as a single mother with her son and siblings at the end of 2015 when she was 16. Separated from their parents, she and her siblings had been living in a refugee camp for nine years by themselves. Adama quit school in grade 10 because she became pregnant. When she just came to Newfoundland and Labrador, she took the LEARN program for three months at ABC High School and then was integrated into mainstream courses in grade 10. At the time of the interview, she was in grade 11,

taking mainstream courses and the advanced ESL course. She was interested in applying to a nursing program after completing high school; however, she was uncertain whether she would seek a long-term settlement in Newfoundland and Labrador because two of her siblings just moved to Quebec and another was leaving for Alberta in the following week.

Christ, originally from East Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with his parents and siblings in 2015 when he was 17. His family fled to a refugee camp in a neighbouring country, and he lived there for ten years. He missed some years of schooling because the school he attended in the refugee camp opened on and off, and he was in the ninth grade before resettlement. After moving to Newfoundland and Labrador, he took the LEARN math and social studies courses for only one month at ABC High School, and then he was integrated into mainstream courses in grade 10. At the time of the interview, he was in the eleventh grade and took the advanced ESL course. He was interested in applying to a nursing or computer science program at Memorial University after finishing high school, and he might seek a long-term settlement in Quebec where he could speak French which is one of the official languages in his home country.

Awax, originally from Central Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with his parents and siblings in 2016 when he was 17. His parents fled to the same refugee camp where Christ's family lived and spent 20 years there. Awax and his siblings were all born in the refugee camp. He was in the eleventh grade before resettlement. After moving to Newfoundland and Labrador, he was enrolled in the LEARN program at ABC High School. At the time of the interview, he was taking LEARN math and social science courses and the beginner-level ESL course. Awax was going to take mainstream courses

in grade 10 in the following academic year. He was interested in theology, hoping to find a job in the church.

Amare, originally from Central Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with his mother, grandmother, and siblings in 2016 when he was turning 19. He was born in the same refugee camp where Christ and Awax were born. He and Awax were friends in the refugee camp, going to the same schools. Amare was in the tenth grade before resettlement. When he just came to Newfoundland and Labrador, he was placed in the LINC program; however, he refused to take that program and managed to go to ABC High School. At the time of the interview, he was enrolled in the LEARN courses and took the beginner-level ESL course. He was interested in becoming a plumber, thinking about applying to a plumbing program at CNA after high school.

Jamilah, originally from East Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with her mother and siblings in 2015 when she was 19. Her father passed away when she was little. Due to wars, her family fled to a refugee camp in a country in Northeast Africa when she was seven. She had finished the fourth grade in the refugee camp and stopped going to school in the fifth grade because her mother did not have enough money to pay for her tuition. After that, her eldest sister who had finished the twelfth grade started to tutor her in math at home. When Jamilah came to Newfoundland and Labrador, she was enrolled in mainstream courses in grade 10 and took the beginner-level ESL course. At the time of the interview, she was in her second year in high school, taking mainstream courses in grade 11 and the intermediate-level ESL course. Being interested in math, she intended to apply to an accounting program after graduating from high school.

Deba, originally from East Africa, came to Newfoundland and Labrador with her mother and siblings in 2015 when she was turning 17. She was in the eighth grade before resettlement. During the first year after coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, she was taking the LEARN math and science courses at ABC High School. At the time of the interview, it was her second year in high school, taking mainstream courses in grade 12 and the advanced ESL courses. She was interested in applying to a nursing program at Memorial University after high school.

Refugee learners taking adult education programs. Ekon is Awax's elder brother. When his family moved to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2016, he was turning 20 and was about to finish grade 12 in the refugee camp. After coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, he was placed in the LINC Level 5 class. At the time of the interview, he was taking the LINC Level 6 class; however, he had not gone to school in the past four months due to sickness. He was considering taking the ABE program after finishing the LINC program.

Imani is one of Christ's elder sisters. When her family moved to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2015, she was 23. She lived in the refugee camp for 12 years and had finished grade 10 there. After coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, she started to take the LINC program and completed LINC Level 5 in one year and seven months. At the time of the interview, she had been taking the ABE Level I for three months and intended to finish ABE Level II and Level III as soon as possible to gain a high school diploma so that she would be able to apply to an accounting program to become a cashier.

Kalifa is one of Jamilah's elder sisters. When her family moved to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2015, she was 21. She lived in the refugee camp for six years and had

finished grade 10 there. After coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, she started to take the LINC program and completed LINC Level 5 in eight months. At the time of the interview, she had been taking ABE Level I for eight months, and she was going to finish this level and transition to level II in that May. She was interested in applying to an accounting program after completing ABE Level III to find a job in banking.

4.4.4.2 Educational service providers

Three staff members from the three educational service providers identified by the refugee youth participants as helpful to their pursuit of post-secondary education volunteered to be interviewed. They were asked to introduce their educational programs and services at the beginning of the interviews, including the focus of their programs, the age range of their target clients, their specific programs and support, and instructional approaches. They were assigned codes: Staff 1, Staff 2, and Staff 3, respectively to protect their identity. Their programs were assigned codes: Program 1, Program 2, and Program 3 accordingly (see Table 2).

Table 2 *Demographics of Staff Members from the Educational Service Providers*

Code of the staff member/ program	Focus of the program	Age range of target clients	Programs and support	Instructional approaches
Staff 1/ Program1	Youth	5-18	Homework support, post-secondary application, scholarships/ bursaries application, job searching	Volunteer-led tutoring
Staff 2/ Program 2	Literacy	18 and up	Literacy support, ESL support, basic/advanced math, computer skills	Volunteer-led tutoring
Staff 3/ Program 3	Adult education	18 and up	Level II and III of the provincial high school equivalency program for adult learners	Self-paced classroom-based instruction

Staff 1 was coordinating an industry-sponsored educational program of a nation-wide organization serving youth between the ages of five to 18, with extension to 19 if they were still in school. In this program, they match each of the student participants with a mentor who will offer educational support, including helping them with homework, offering information on and filling out applications to post-secondary education, as well as applying for scholarships and bursaries. Their tutors are volunteers from diverse backgrounds, such as retirees, engineers, teachers, and students attending Memorial University. This program also offers transportation services to pick up all participating students every evening. Although this program is open to any youth no matter whether they are newcomers or locals, most of the participants in this program are teenagers from refugee backgrounds. At the time of the interview, there were 24 newcomer students taking part in this program. Staff 1 attributed newcomer students' higher involvement in this program to their program's close relationships with the in-school settlement workers. Unfortunately, when I interviewed Staff 1, their program was facing funding cuts. As a result, their program probably would suspend transportation services and turn Staff 1's full-time coordinator position into a part-time one.

Staff 2 was in charge of a literacy program receiving some funding from the provincial government. They offer one-on-one tutoring to their clients three hours a week. Their volunteer-led tutoring program is open to anyone who is not in the school system normally above 18 years of age with literacy needs. Their volunteers could give lessons at flexible locations such as the clients' homes, community centres, or libraries. In recent years, they have seen an increase in ESL clients who wished to improve their English skills. At the time of the interview, Staff 2 had approximately 35 tutors and clients,

respectively and had another 12 clients on the waiting list. Program 2 has helped a few newcomer clients progress to taking the ABE program. However, this one-staff organization also was facing financial difficulties as they have been receiving the same amount of funding in the past ten years, which has constrained the development of their program.

Staff 3 was working at one of the ABE service providers offering the level II and level III programs. As previously mentioned, ABE is a provincial high school equivalency program for individuals who are 19 and above. Program 3 is self-paced and classroom-based, offering five hours of instruction each day from Monday to Friday. At the time of the interview, they have a few students who are new Canadians. Because they do not ask their students whether they came to Canada as immigrants or refugees, the specific number of students who are refugees was not available.

4.4.5 Data collection method

Interviews were used to collect data in my investigation. According to Kvale (2007), the research interview is based on conversation through which

> the researcher asks about, and listens to, what people themselves tell about their lived world, about their dreams, fears and hopes, hears their views and opinions in their own words, and learns about their school and work situation, their family and social life (p. 2).

Interviews could be categorized into three types according to the amount of structure, including highly structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In highly structured interviews, researchers ask the predetermined questions in the same order, which could be used by qualitative

researchers to collect sociodemographic data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In comparison, unstructured interviews are those in which researchers do not have any predetermined questions, which usually could be employed by qualitative researchers to generate questions for later interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the middle between highly structured interviews and unstructured interviews are semi-structured interviews in which "interview protocol is used as a 'guide' and questions may not always be asked in the same order; the interviewer initiates questions and poses follow up 'probes' in response to the interviewee's descriptions and accounts" (Roulston, 2010, p. 14).

I employed semi-structured interviews to understand refugee youth's aspirations for and access to post-secondary education in Newfoundland and Labrador from the perspectives of refugee youth themselves as well as educational service providers. I conducted a one-on-one interview with each participant under the guidance of the interview protocols prepared beforehand. Each of the interviews lasted approximately one hour.

The interview protocol for refugee youth consisted of questions in four areas. First, I aimed to collect their demographic information, such as their ethnic background, age, the year when they came to Newfoundland and Labrador, and their family composition. The second part of questions focused on their pre- and post-settlement educational experiences, including their grade level, educational and career goals before resettlement, as well as their grade placement after coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, and their current educational and career goals. The third part contained questions looking into the support they had received and the challenges they faced in the pursuit of post-secondary

education. The last part focused on their recommendations for increasing refugee youth's participation in education beyond high school.

The interview protocol for educational service providers consisted of questions in four areas accordingly. The first part of the questions focused on the description of their educational programs and services for refugee youth. The second part of the questions aimed to understand their perception of refugee youth's aspirations for post-secondary education. The third part of the questions focused on their identification of the challenges faced by refugee youth. The last part of the questions requested their recommendations for helping refugee youth access post-secondary education.

The interview questions and the consent forms were sent to participants via email in advance. Interviews were scheduled at times and places at their convenience. I interviewed eight refugee youths in my office or vacant classrooms in the Faculty of Education building at Memorial University. The other 12 refugee youths preferred to be interviewed at home. One educational staff member was interviewed in a dining area at Memorial University, and the other two staff members preferred to be interviewed at their office. Nineteen of the participants consented to answer all the questions listed on the interview protocols and the follow-up probes in response to their accounts, and they also gave me permission to audiotape the interviews. Each of the interviews was transcribed by myself immediately after it was completed. However, one staff member, Staff 3, did not wish to be audiotaped and only agreed to respond to the first part of the questions related to the description of their program. Instead, Staff 3 allowed me to take notes during the interview and gave me a copy of their program brochure for reference. I wrote down as much as I could remember based on my notes immediately after the interview.

4.5 Data Analysis

I used the constant comparative method to analyze the data. This method of data analysis was first developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as the means for analyzing data in grounded theory studies to identify patterns in the data and generate theory. This inductive data analysis approach "can and is commonly used with any narrative or textual data" (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008, p. 594). As Fram (2013) suggested, the use of the constant comparative analysis method allows researchers to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perspectives.

I conducted data analysis simultaneously with data collection. First, I read through the first interview transcript. As soon as the first interview with Hanan was conducted, I transcribed it. While reading the transcript, I made notes next to the segments of data that could answer my research questions. Because I just began the analysis, I jotted down substantial notes that might be relevant to my study. The notes were either in my own words or in the exact words of the participant. In particular, the quotes that could be included in my findings were in bold font. Next, after the entire first interview transcript was coded, I combined the notes into groups. I kept a list of the groupings on a separate Word document.

Second, in the same manner, I read the second interview transcript and made another list of groupings with the first list of groupings in mind. Next, I compared the two lists and merged them into one master list of recurring categories or themes. Then, the list of categories or themes was revised while reading through the rest interview transcripts.

Third, after I developed a list of themes, I began to sort the segments of interview transcripts into these themes. I created Word files, and each file labelled with a theme

name. Then, the segments of interview transcripts that were coded under the same theme were copied and pasted into each Word file of that theme name. The original notes and the name of the participant were included in the Word files so that I could quickly go back to the original transcripts when necessary.

4.6 Validity

Although there is no consensus on the term used to describe validity in qualitative research, there is an agreement that "qualitative inquirers need to demonstrate that their studies are credible" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 124). Creswell and Miller (2000) defined "validity as how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them" (p. 124-125). Creswell and Miller (2000) further concluded there are nine different types of validity procedures according to the lens used by the researcher (i.e., the researcher, the participants, and individuals external to the study) and there are three paradigm assumptions underpin qualitative research (i.e., the postpositivist, constructivist, and critical perspectives). In this study, three strategies were used to promote validity, including triangulation, member checking, and thick description.

"Triangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Denzin (1978) identified four types of triangulation, including methods triangulation (i.e., the use of different data collection methods), data triangulation (i.e., the use of multiple data sources), investigator triangulation (i.e., the use of multiple investigators), and theory triangulation (i.e., the use of multiple theoretical perspectives). Furthermore, according to Merriam and Tisdell

(2016), data triangulation includes collecting data at different times or in different places, from people with different perspectives, or from follow-up interviews with the same group of participants. In this study, data triangulation was used, with interview data being collected from two groups of individuals with different perspectives, including twenty refugee youths and three staff members from educational service providers.

The second strategy used to promote validity was member checking. Creswell and Miller (2000) indicated that "with member checking, the validity procedure shifts from the researchers to participants … It consists of taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account" (p. 127). In this study, transcripts were emailed to each of the participants to have them comment on the accuracy, and they were requested to contact me if they found anything inaccurate. In the emails, they were also asked if they would like to view the preliminary findings. Eventually, four refugee youths and one staff member were able to respond to me and agreed to view the findings. Next, I emailed them the preliminary findings to check if the interpretations captured their perspectives. Then, I incorporated their comments into my revised analysis.

The third strategy employed was thick description. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), rick and thick descriptions "Provide[s] enough description to contextualize the study such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situations match the research context, and, hence, whether findings can be transferred" (p. 259). Therefore, I provided a detailed description of the setting and participants of the study and presented the findings with adequate evidence presented in the form of quotes from the participants.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

"Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 237). To ensure a high ethical standard, first of all, I obtained ethics approval from the Ethics Board at Memorial University before I started the study. With regard to the data collection, the informed consent form was sent to each participant via email before interviewing. Two copies of the informed consent form were given to the participants to read and sign before the interviews started. The consent form included an introduction to the research, objectives of the study, length of time, voluntary participation, possible benefits and risks, confidentiality, anonymity, and the recording and the security of data. Participants and I kept one signed copy respectively. Furthermore, the anonymity of the participants was kept at all times. The pseudonyms were used to protect their identity.

In addition, the informed consent forms and the interview transcripts were kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home. All electronic documents were password protected and saved in a portable memory stick which was also safely stored in the locked filing cabinet in my room at the end of each working day. All documents will be kept for five years, and then hard copy files will be physically destroyed, and electronic files will be deleted.

4.9 Summary

This chapter began with the explanation of my philosophical stance as a researcher. Underpinned by constructivism, I used a basic qualitative research approach which allowed me to focus on understanding and reconstructing how people interpret their experiences. Sampling strategies and recruitment processes were detailed in this

chapter. The description of each participant regarding their demographic information was included. A constant comparative analysis was used to analyze the data. Triangulation, member checking, and thick description were employed to promote validity. Ethical considerations were discussed. The next chapter will present the findings based on the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data.

Chapter 5 Findings

In this chapter, I report the findings of the themes that emerged from my analysis of the data. The presentation of the findings is arranged by the four research questions. To address the first research question (i.e., To what extent do refugee youth aspire to pursue post-secondary education?), five themes will be presented in the first section of this chapter (i.e., Section 5.1), including the change of refugee youth's educational goals before and after resettlement, their preference for local post-secondary institutions, their perception of a university education being superior to a college education, the development of their interests, and their long-term settlement plans. The findings of data analysis for the other three research questions will be presented in Section 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4, respectively.

5.1 Refugee Youth's Aspirations for Post-secondary Education

5.1.1 Educational goals before and after resettlement

For many refugee youths, attending college or university used to be a dream that was impossible to achieve, and it was when they started their new life in Canada that they gradually realized it was possible to fulfill that dream with hard work. Christ noted that a new life in Newfoundland and Labrador made him feel hopeful to get into university. Christ stated, "After I came to Canada, I thought it might be possible for me to go to university. I see the hope!" Before resettlement, Christ had been living in a refugee camp, dreaming of attending university; however, he understood that it was only a dream because the schools in the refugee camp were only open irregularly. He complained, "The government of […] just did that for refugees, so you got six months in school, and maybe then out of school for a few months, and then after one year the school started again."

Because of the school closure, he missed four years of schooling in the refugee camp, leaving him with little hope for getting into university. Similarly, Amare noted that the miserable life in the refugee camp made him think he was unlikely to realize his dreams of getting into university. Amare indicated that after he came to Newfoundland and Labrador, he started to feel his dream was achievable. He said, “Here we have a different life, much better than the camp life. It gives me hope!”

Many refugee youths indicated that their families barely had enough money to live before resettlement, which blurred their vision for the future. Esinam noted that her mother was unemployed when they were in the refugee camp, being unable to pay for school fees for her and her younger brother. Therefore, both had to stop going to school. Her plan at that time was to find a job to help her mother. After coming to Newfoundland and Labrador, the new life there made her change the mind. Esinam indicated, “I realized as long as I go to school and work hard, one day I will go to university and make my family proud!” To financially prepare for university, she worked part-time while attending high school in Newfoundland and Labrador. Like Esinam, Awax had thought about going to university when he lived in the refugee camp; however, he had to give it up because his family was poor. His plan at that time was to complete high school and find a job to earn money to support his family. After moving to Newfoundland and Labrador, he felt his dream of attending university could be realized because his family’s finances were improving through government financial assistance.

Differing from most of the refugee youths who tended to bow to the harsh realities and give up their dreams of further education before resettlement, one refugee youth actively fought for education. When Kwame was in grade nine in […], wars and conflicts

took place, leaving him with the threat of becoming a child soldier. Though under such threat, he was still determined to get more education, Kwame said, “I have to get an education and change the environment and life in […]. That is my vision!” Therefore, he fled to a neighbouring country alone, leaving his family behind. He then lived in that country for three years, waiting for resettlement. Though he has been separated from his family since the escape, he believed that he made the right decision because resettlement gave him access to quality education in Canada.

While most refugee youths reported that they had dreamed of going to university before they came to Canada, two refugee youths noted that they never had that dream before resettlement because they were too young. Rosine and Olive came to Newfoundland and Labrador at the age of nine and 11, respectively. It was when they went to middle school in Newfoundland and Labrador that they started to aspire to attend university.

Although all the twenty refugee youth participants reported that they aspired to post-secondary education, it is noteworthy that a few indicated that many of their friends from refugee backgrounds entered the workforce directly after high school. Roland noted that in the year when he graduated from high school, most of his refugee friends “just graduated and planned to find a job because their academic level was not high on average.” According to Roland, they continued working at a local newspaper distributor or grocery store where they worked part-time before. Olive also reported that some refugee students aimed to find a job after high school because they seemed less interested in studies.

Through working with refugee children and youth, Zane also noted that though most refugee students had high educational aspirations after coming to Canada, some of

them had little idea of how to achieve their goals. Although Zane knew some of them were not able to realize their ambitious goals, he chose to be positive and encouraging.

> I also don't want to bring their thoughts down, say like "No, you can't be a doctor. You can't be a doctor if you can't even spell your name." I can't say that. I have to keep their goals high all the time, but I know the reality it's not going to happen.

He continued to note that some of these refugee students later would realize that they were incapable of achieving their goals and dropped out.

5.1.2 Local post-secondary institutions versus out-of-province post-secondary institutions

It appeared that the majority of the refugee youths who participated in the study preferred going to post-secondary institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador. For instance, among the six refugee youths in high school, three (i.e., Adama, Christ, and Jamilah) decided to apply to Memorial University, one (i.e., Awax) would apply to Memorial University and other Canadian universities as well, and the other two (i.e., Deba and Amare) were uncertain about which university to choose.

Among the five refugee students who were going to graduate from high school, three (i.e., Feechi, Esinam, and Olive) have been successfully accepted to Memorial University, one (i.e., Kwame) has been placed on a waitlist for the program he applied to at CNA, and one (i.e., Rosine) has not applied to any post-secondary programs. While Feechi and Esinam only applied to Memorial University, Olive applied to Memorial University and other four universities in Ontario as well. In addition, all the six refugee students who were already attending post-secondary institutions had applied either to

Memorial University or CNA, without consideration for colleges or universities in other provinces.

Hoping to stay close to their families in Newfoundland and Labrador was the main reason why refugee students rarely considered going to university outside of this province. Some wished to live at home during the university years to avoid extra living expenses. Aida was one of them, saying, “If I moved to another city, the money would be more. I don’t have that much.” Some others felt obligated to look after their families. For instance, being the oldest child in a single-mother family, Feechi emphasized that it was important for him to play a parental role of caring for his younger siblings. He said, “I need to make sure my younger brothers and sisters are under my control. Sometimes, at this age, you need to make sure they are doing good things.” Roland also indicated that he had to live with his parents to take care of them because they did not speak much English. He said, “I have to help [my parents] do the housework because they go to LINC school.”

The affordable tuition at Memorial University appeared to be one of the reasons why many refugee youth participants preferred to attend this institution. Yohan was one of them, saying, “Memorial is pretty good and cheap too comparing with other universities, so I just wanted to go here.” Likewise, Christ noted, “They said the tuition is not that much, and the quality is good. That’s why I want to stay here for university.” While the low tuition rates at Memorial University could be an attraction to most refugee students, Awax expressed concern about its quality of education, as he questioned rhetorically, “I don’t know why it’s cheaper, due to the quality of education?” It can be seen that Awax somewhat associated low tuition with inferior quality of the programs offered at Memorial University, which reflected his lack of knowledge of the near 20-year

tuition freeze at Memorial University. The provincial government has been subsidizing tuition at Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic since 1999 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000; 2019) to make it more affordable for both Canadian students and international students to come to Newfoundland and Labrador for education.

In addition, one female refugee youth, Hanan, noted religion as a factor that constrained her from applying to universities outside of St. John's. Since her family's religious faith would not allow her to live alone by herself, she had to choose to attend Memorial University to stay with her family.

5.1.3 A university education versus a college education

A university education was perceived by nearly all the refugee youth participants as superior to a college education at the interview, considering that universities have more strict admission requirements, and university graduates are more likely to find good jobs. Feechi thought college was for those students who failed to have good grades in high school. Similarly, Aida was quite confident that her overall average of above 70% would ensure her admission into Memorial University. Awax believed that "going to university and then you can get a job which involves using your brains, but you can only get a job which involves using your hands if you go to college."

Even the three refugee youths who have applied to or were attending CNA admitted that they would have applied to Memorial University if they had stronger academic results. For example, Kwame noted that he did not apply to Memorial University because of his concerns over his English proficiency. He thought the language requirements at CNA might be less strict than that at Memorial University. Lower

language requirements were also a reason why Zane chose to go to CNA. Ray worried that his grades in the 12th grade were not good enough for applying to Memorial University; however, he did have a plan to transfer credits earned at CNA to a university after moving to Windsor, Ontario.

5.1.4 Areas of interests

Nursing seems to be the area that most refugee youths were interested in. Eight of them had aspired to become a nurse before resettlement. The suffering they had experienced in their previous lives made them interested in nursing and in pursuing a career in healthcare, such as the loss of their loved ones and the limited healthcare services in the refugee camp.

Two life-changing events happened to Feechi were the main incentive for him to become interested in nursing. One of such events was that he witnessed the tragic loss of his sister who died during childbirth in a car on the way to the hospital. He blamed himself for being unable to save his sister's life in that critical situation. "I wish I could have done something to help her!" he said emotionally. Such a desire for the ability to save lives made him want to become a nurse. Other than that, he had been taking care of his grandmother for a month in the hospital where he witnessed the sufferings of people. Due to the limited number of nurses in that hospital, the doctors had to request him to help with simple treatments such as managing intravenous lines for his grandmother and even for some other patients. He felt so happy that he was able to help people, and such happiness made him decide to pursue a career in nursing, as he said, "I think this work is not just money. You know, you need to be happy with what you are doing. That work makes me happy. It is what I want from my heart!"

Adama also reported that the poor quality of obstetric care that she had experienced herself in the refugee camp was a driving force for her to pursue a career in healthcare. When she was giving birth to her child in a health facility in the camp, there was only one nurse who had to care for all the patients. When she had difficulties in delivery, the nurse barely had time to help her, just saying, “You have to choose if you want to survive or if you want to die!” The nurse then left, leaving her alone to give birth to her child. “I feel so bad!” she recalled sadly. Therefore, the need for more nurses in the refugee camp gave her the determination to become a nurse.

Similarly, Christ wanted to become a nurse to help people in his home country. Back then, he witnessed a horrible shooting where many people were injured and dying. Seeing people suffering, he said, “I wish I could help them! Injuries and accidents are bad. I feel happy if I can give someone hope.” Thus, he decided to become a nurse.

Compassion to help others seems to be what the eight students interested in nursing had in common. In particular, Esinam and Aida wanted to become a nurse working with children. For Esinam, she has been concerned that the children in the refugee camp had not been able to receive quality care due to the limited number of nurses. For Aida, she had experience in caring for children as she had been taking care of her younger brother in the refugee camp. In addition to the dedication to help others, Rosine and Aida also felt that a career in nursing agreed with their personality. Being talkative and sociable were two qualities that they thought they possessed to become a nurse.

Most of them would like to go back to help people in their home countries. For example, Esinam decided to return to his home country to open a clinic to help children in the refugee camp. Deba also wanted to contribute to her home country because she thought people there were in desperate need of health care. However, one of them, Olive, preferred to pursue a career in nursing in Canada, considering the good quality of life and the need for nurses in the labour market in Canada, which she found out through her part-time employment in healthcare.

In addition to nursing, English, computer science, electrical engineering, business, accounting, office administration, computer system and networking were the areas that other refugee youths were interested in. Hanan noted that she has been thinking about becoming a teacher since grade six, and after coming to Canada, she realized that her previous English teachers failed to employ effective teaching strategies, and thus she was even more determined to become an English teacher "to teach people English so people won't go through the struggles that I went through." Jamilah, Imani, and Kalifa all reported that they were interested in accounting because they were good at math. Although Roland was studying in a science program, he was thinking about transferring to business because of the influence of businesspeople on social media. "I was from a refugee background, and there were no businessmen that I knew about, so once I came to Canada … I looked at the Business stuff like videos on the internet, that interested me," he said.

It needs to be pointed out that two refugee youths who expressed their interest in pursuing undergraduate programs at university appeared to know little about universities. One is Amare who noted that he wanted to apply to a university to study plumbing. The

other one is Imani who indicated that she would apply to the accounting program at a university to become a cashier. Both seemed to have a vague understanding of the difference between a university program and a college program.

5.1.5 The long-term settlement plans

Eight of the 20 refugee youths who participated in the study reported that their families made decisions to move to a new place in Canada. Despite many years of living in St. John's, their original location of resettlement, they decided to leave for a number of reasons discussed below. Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta seemed to be the top locations that they would move to.

To live in places with relatives and people from the same ethnic background was one of the main reasons for relocation. Esinam and Ray's families decided to move to Calgary, Alberta, and Windsor, Ontario respectively to live close to their relatives and friends there. Hanan noted that her parents "[were] not willing to stay in St. John's for long," even though they have been living there for five years because the population of Arabic people in St. John's was small. She further said, "There are large Arabic communities in Quebec or Toronto, so you don't feel like you are in Canada." Likewise, having lived in St. John's for ten years, Rosine and her family decided to move to Hamilton, Ontario in that summer. In fact, her parents had thought about relocation many years ago, and they were waiting for her to finish high school. The larger population of people from the same ethnic group in Hamilton was the main reason why they would move there.

To be able to visit relatives and friends living in the United States by road was reported as reasons for relocation to the cities in Ontario by two refugee youths. Yohan

noted, “My sisters and my friends live in the United States, but they cannot visit me because they cannot come here by car. If I were somewhere in Ontario, it would be a little easier to go to the US.” Similarly, Olive was moving with her family to Ontario that summer, believing that Ontario would be a more convenient location where they could drive south to visit their friends and relatives in the United States.

To live in places with more employment opportunities was another reason. For instance, Hanan’s parents have been unemployed since they got resettled in Newfoundland and Labrador, and they believed that there would be more job opportunities for them and their children in Quebec or Ontario. Agreeing with her parents, Hanan considered St. John’s as “a transition city” which was “a good place to settle newcomers,” because “it is not overwhelming, and they can slowly get used to a new life in Canada.” However, she thought that “the younger the people, the more they want to get out of here,” considering its gloomy labour market. Likewise, Yohan emphasized that he would remain in Newfoundland and Labrador only if he were to find a decent job there.

To live in places with more educational opportunities was also a reason considered by one refugee student. Kwame was upset about the fact he was being put on CNA’s waiting list. He was not interested in keeping his spot on the list because he did not want to waste time, saying, “I want to go to college right after I finish high school. If [CNA] don’t accept me to their program, thank you, that’s it, thank you, St. John’s. I am gonna move!” He noted that he had friends who moved because they were stuck in the same situation, and eventually, they “got better schools [in other places]!”

To live in French-speaking places was reported by one refugee student as a reason for relocation. Christ comes from a former French colony in Africa where French is an

official language. Right after he came to St. John's, he thought about moving to Quebec because he could speak French there. However, he was not allowed to do so because he was a minor, and he noted that he probably would move there after high school.

Relocation had an impact on refugee youth's post-secondary journeys to different extents. While Hanan's parents decided to move after she completed the undergraduate program at Memorial University, Esinam and Ray decided to move in the middle of their post-secondary education. Though Esinam was happy that she had been accepted into Memorial University, she did not plan to complete her undergraduate degree there, thinking of attending Memorial University for one year and then transferring credits to a university in Alberta. Similarly, Ray was going to transfer credits to a university in Windsor, thinking that it would not be difficult because his cousin had gone through the same process and successfully transferred his credits earned at CNA to the University of Windsor. For Rosine, because of the upcoming move to Hamilton that summer, she did not apply to any university and decided to work or upgrade her marks after settling there. For Olive, because of the upcoming move to Ontario in the same summer, she had applied to another four universities in Ontario in addition to Memorial University, and she noted that she preferred to go to university in Ontario even though she had already been accepted to Memorial University with a bursary.

5.2 Programs and Support Helpful in Preparing Refugee Youth for Accessing Post-Secondary Education

Following the presentation of the refugee youth's aspirations for post-secondary education, this section presents the programs and support identified by refugee youth as having helped them realize their educational goals. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's

bioecological model, these programs and support were grouped into two environmental systems: microsystem and exosystem.

Within the microsystem, eight themes of support were identified, including the support from their parents in the system of the family, the guidance counselor, the ESL teachers, the LEARN (Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers) teachers, the subject teachers, and the settlement workers in the system of the school, their friends in the system of the peer group, and the university fair and scholarships in the system of the post-secondary institution.

It is important to note that at the time of this study, ESL courses were offered in K-12 schools on an itinerant basis, with the exception of ABC High School which has on-site ESL programs. According to curriculum guides, the credit ESL courses in high school consists of three levels, including beginning, intermediate, and high intermediate-advanced ESL courses (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [DEECD], 2012).

A Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN) program was available in four middle schools and one high school (ABC High School) to help newcomer students to fill educational gaps and transition to mainstream courses. The LEARN curriculum consists of two levels (DEECD, 2011). LEARN-1 was designed for refugee students in middle school, covering basic literacy and mathematics, and LEARN-2 two was designed for refugee students in high school, focusing on mathematics, language arts, science and social studies.

In addition, the government-funded resettlement agency assigned one on-site settlement worker to one middle school and one high school (ABC High School) in St.

John's to work closely with refugee students on a daily basis to help them integrate into school environment and community, "ranging from offering orientations on the Canadian school system, assistance with selecting appropriate schools and classes, showing them how to walk or take the school bus or Metrobus to and from school, to helping with homework and English learning" (Li et al., 2017, p. 1113).

Within the exosystem, three themes of educational programs were identified, including Program 1, Program 2, and Program 3.

5.2.1 Programs and support within the microsystem

5.2.1.1 In the system of the family: Parents

Most of the refugee students noted that their parents attached great importance to their education and had high expectations for their academic attainment though themselves had a lower level of education. Hanan said, "In my family, education is a must!" She indicated that her parents hoped that all their children would go to university to fulfill their unfulfilled achievements. Similarly, Yohan referred to his parents as "typical brown parents" because they valued education regardless of their own lower levels of literacy. His initial plan to take a gap year after graduating from high school was rejected by his parents who demanded him to go to university immediately. His elder brother, Zane, also noted, "I grew up all the time that education is everything." Aida's mother, a single parent, would rather work long hours to support the family than allowing her to work part-time because her mother wanted her to focus on her studies.

Refugee youth noted that their parents had learned from their unsuccessful employment experiences in Newfoundland and Labrador that post-secondary education was vital to secure good jobs and live a better life in Canada. For example, Hanan's

mother worked as a chef before coming to Canada; however, she was not able to get a cooking position in local restaurants, which made her realize that "college or university education is the way to achieve your career goals," and thus she encouraged Hanan to set her goals for post-secondary education. Rosine's father used to be an electrician back home; however, her father was not successful in finding a job after moving to Newfoundland and Labrador. Her father kept on reminding her that "If you graduate from university, you can do what you want, and you will be successful." Ray noted that his parents highly valued education in the following statements.

> My parents don't have any education back home to get jobs in Canada. They have a strong desire for me and my brother to get a good education in Canada so that we can get good jobs in the future, and a better life. They always encouraged us to study hard.

In particular, several refugee youths who were the oldest children in their families indicated that their parents had high expectations for their education because they wanted them to be role models for their younger siblings. Feechi's mother hoped that he could achieve a good academic performance in school so that his younger siblings would follow his footsteps. He stated,

> My mother wanted to see me finish my school, and have a good education, and help my brothers and sisters. If I am good in school, they can see me, and they will want to achieve what I have achieved, like a role model. If I did nothing, they would do the same thing."

Aida, a first-year undergraduate student, noted that her younger brother "[was] looking up to [her]" who was working hard and determined to go to university as well under her influence.

5.2.1.2 In the system of the school: The guidance counsellor

In addition to parents, the guidance counsellor, the ESL teachers, the LEARN teacher, and the settlement workers at ABC High School were considered by most refugee youths as important people on their educational journeys. Three of the five ABC High School graduates who were attending CNA or Memorial University indicated that the guidance counsellor helped them with course selection and university application. Aida discussed the importance of the guidance counsellor:

> [The guidance counsellor] will make sure that you had the courses that will help you to get into nursing or you had the courses will help you graduate from high school, because sometimes if you don't do the required courses, they don't give you a diploma. So, if you go to [the guidance counsellor], he will go over your courses you did in grades 9 and 10 and will tell you to do this one. I recommend for everyone.

Ray noted that the guidance counsellor helped him complete his CNA application. Hanan also described the guidance counsellor as "the most important one" and "a very remarkable person" who encouraged her to pursue a university education. She stated, "He was always helping me. If you have any questions about university application, he would explain as much as you want!"

The five refugee youths who were graduating from high school all reported that they had received help from the guidance counsellor. On the one hand, they noted that the

guidance counsellor helped them select courses based on their interests. Oliva and Esinam indicated that they told the guidance counsellor that they were interested in nursing in grade 10, and the guidance counsellor helped them select courses required for admission to a nursing program. Feechi went to the guidance counsellor for help with course selection when he started grade 11.

Rosine described how the guidance counsellor helped her when she felt overwhelmed in grade 12.

> "I went to the guidance counsellor. He really asked me questions, and he was looking at my courses, which I was not doing as good as I would. He said you did really good in your first year, 80 or 90, but my second year, it was just sinking, so he really asked me about my future like what do you wanna do in your life, these courses what you are doing right now will determine and get you to that point. I said I wanna do nursing, and he told me I need to do these courses and need to do better."

On the other hand, they indicated that the guidance counsellor helped them with post-secondary applications. Feechi and Esinam expressed appreciation for the guidance counsellor's help over their general application for admission to Memorial University. Although Olive was never worried about the general application to Memorial University, she found the application for the direct entry into the nursing program was complex. "What I really wanted to do is nursing, so I had to apply to a different application. It was kind of complicated because I didn't know what to do." Therefore, she turned to a guidance counsellor who not only explained the application process to her but also

offered to write an academic reference letter for her which was one of the supporting documentations required by the direct admission.

5.2.1.3 In the system of the school: The ESL teachers

In addition to the guidance counsellor, many refugee youths indicated that they were grateful to the ESL teachers at ABC High School. The five ABC High School graduates who were attending CNA or Memorial University all indicated that the ESL teachers were helpful. For example, Yohan described one of the ESL teachers as “[his] best teacher ever” who “had a great influence on [him] to pursue university.” Similarly, Roland noted that the ESL teachers “gave [him] the direction to university” when he was in grade 11 after understanding his interests. Aida also noted that the ESL teachers helped her with course selection.

> I like ESL teachers because they will tell you what you have to do. If you are in grade 10, but you want to take grade 12 courses, they will tell you your English is not good enough, and if you go to this course, you will fail. They will give you good feedback. You need someone to check it for you to take the right courses.

Four of the five refugee youths who were graduating from ABC High School indicated that they liked turning to the ESL teachers for help because they had close relationships with these teachers. Feechi discussed his preference for seeking help from the ESL teachers in the following statements. “[They] can understand us well. They are really close to us. When I just came here, when I said something, they got it instantly." Similarly, Esinam said, “I feel more comfortable with [the ESL teachers] than regular teachers because they know more about me and my situation.” Olive noted that the ESL teachers were one source of information about the requirements for admission to the

nursing program. Kwame noted that "[he was] close to the ESL teachers." Whenever he had questions, he would talk to the ESL teachers. It was the ESL teachers who referred him to the guidance counsellor for help with his application.

Three of the six refugee youths who were attending high school also noted that they would request information about university applications from the ESL teachers because of their close relationships. Adama thought that the ESL teachers understood her better than other teachers. Jamilah said that she was "much closer with the ESL teachers." Christ also indicated that the ESL teachers were like his parents in the sense that, "I can ask them anything! If you have any problems, just go and ask. They won't say no. They will help you."

5.2.1.4 In the system of the school: The LEARN teachers

Most of the refugee youths who were attending CNA or Memorial University were also grateful to the LEARN teacher at ABC High School though many of them had not taken the LEARN program in high school. Feechi indicated the LEARN teacher was helpful because "He is helping students who have not had schooling in their country" like his sister and "He is the one who is giving faith to those who even don't speak English well." Although neither Olive and Aida took the LEARN program in high school, both of them noted that they had good relationships with the LEARN teacher because they often went to the LEARN classroom to see their friends taking the LEARN program. Olive expressed appreciation for the LEARN teacher's assistance with her university application in terms of helping her better understand the admission requirements. Aida noted that the LEARN teacher had encouraged her to apply for scholarships.

Five of the six refugee youths in high school had taken or were taking the LEARN program, and nearly all of them indicated that they would seek help from the LEARN teacher in preparing for university application because they felt close to the LEARN teacher. For example, Christ also described the LEARN teacher as his parents whom he could ask any questions without fear.

In addition, two refugee youths had taken the LEARN program in the same middle school, and they were also grateful to that LEARN teacher. The one was Esinam who noted that the LEARN teacher helped her catch up with her peers in middle school so that she was able to take the mainstream courses directly in high school. The other one was Rosine who described the LEARN teacher as her "favourite teacher" who "knew [she] could do better, and always pushed [her] to do better."

5.2.1.5 In the system of the school: The subject teachers

Two refugee youths noted that three subject teachers at ABC High School helped them to realize their aspirations for university education. Feechi indicated that he was close to a subject teacher who was fully aware of his goal to attend Memorial University. The teacher encouraged him to apply for the Joyce Foundation Bursary and referred him to the guidance counsellor for help in preparing the application package. When Feechi told the subject teacher that he won the bursary, he said the teacher was so happy that he/she "almost cried!"

Feechi perceived another subject teacher to be helpful.

> She is completely different from other teachers. She really cares about you like a mother. Some other teachers, if you don't do your stuff, it's up to you. In her class, every time, even if I was not really doing good, she saw it and she came to me,

> and she talked to me “Do you have any problems? And I can help you with anything you want. Don’t worry too much about the mark. Just ask me.” Before the test, she gave you something to make you ready, and she tutored you before exams. All the students were very confident when they did the test, and they got at least 70. She connected many things with the subject and gave you nice examples.

Hanan also indicated that the second teacher mentioned by Feechi and another subject teacher played an important role in her successful admission to Memorial University. Hanan explained that the two subject teachers helped her develop interests and motivated her to attend Memorial University. She stated, “Even people who didn’t help me with the entrance of post-secondary, they put the ideas in my mind.”

5.2.1.6 In the system of the school: The settlement workers

In addition to the teachers in school, five of the refugee youths indicated that the settlement workers working in school were helpful. Yohan described one of the settlement workers as his “brother” who helped him with the application for admission to Memorial University. Aida indicated that the same settlement worker helped her with the scholarship application. She stated, “When I applied for the scholarship, [the settlement worker] usually goes over to see if I have everything in the package because if you miss something, you won't get it.” Aida also noted that another settlement worker provided her with a reference letter for scholarship applications.

Feechi also indicated that the settlement workers offered great help to him when he was in high school. He stated, “If we have any problems, we can talk to them. They are for us in there. If they know, they will answer you. If they don’t know, they will bring you to the teacher to get the answer.” In particular, Feechi discussed the close

relationships he had with one of the settlement workers. “We are friends. Sometimes we just sat down and chat.” Feechi indicated that the settlement worker frequently visited his school to help refugee students make plans. He explained, “She was talking about if you were not accepted what we could do like the second plan.”

Adama and Christ who were attending high school also indicated that they would turn to the settlement workers for information about university application.

5.2.1.7 In the system of the peer group: Friends

Some of the refugee youths noted that they followed in the steps of their refugee friends who were attending college or university. Feechi indicated that when he was in high school, one of his refugee friends was attending Memorial University. Feechi used to go to the university to study together with that friend in the library at Memorial University. He emphasized that the experiences of group studying in the university library highly motivated him to aspire to become an undergraduate student. Similarly, Kwame noted that he was influenced by one of his friends whom he met when he fled from his home country. They lived in the same refugee camp for three years. His friend was eventually resettled in the United States and was studying Civil Engineering in a college. Although they were separated during the journey of resettlement, they kept in touch through Skype. Kwame said, “My friend influenced me a lot! He was pushing me to do Engineering.” Therefore, he applied to Electrical Engineering at CNA.

One of the refugee youths discussed the positive influence of their friends who were international students. Hanan indicated that being friends with international students in high school was beneficial to her because she was motivated to aim to go to university under their influence. Hanan explained,

> International students who come here with visa and need to pay for high school are very motivated to do things. You should have connections and interactions with them, so you see what they do, then you will be motivated to do the same thing.

Hanan continued to note that she helped several refugee students with course planning. She stated, “I always told my friends in high school, ‘Look at your schedule! Why you do it next year? Why not do it now? … Sometimes they may get courses on their schedule that doesn’t fit what they want to do.”

Another refugee youth, Yohan, indicated that his local friends influenced his choice of programs in post-secondary education. Yohan noted that most of his local friends who were in the business program at Memorial University, and they offered to help him prepare for application to the business program. Therefore, Yohan decided to apply to it.

In particular, several refugee youths indicated that their refugee friends who had successfully won scholarships were their source of information about scholarships. Esinam who was going to start his university life and Jamilah who was in her last year in high school noted that they would ask Olive and Feechi who are winners of the Joyce Foundation Bursaries for more information on scholarship opportunities offered by Memorial University.

5.2.1.8 In the system of the post-secondary institution: Information fair and scholarship opportunities

Some of the refugee youths indicated that the university fair for the grade 12 students was helpful. According to refugee youth participants, the university fair happens

annually in Fall, where representatives from universities and colleges across Canada come to ABC High School to speak with grade 12 students about programs and anything related to the post-secondary application. Feechi went to the fair and talked to representatives from Memorial University about applying to the nursing program. They told him what specific courses were required for admission to their nursing program. Feechi thought the university fair was informative. He stated,

> All universities in Newfoundland and even from another province come, and if you want to apply for nursing or engineering, you can just go and talk to them. They will tell you what you want to know and give you information.

Rosine also noted that the brochures given at the university fair helped her better understand their admission requirements. Rosine explained, "I saw a brochure about the nursing program. It's very easy to understand the information. It's not like you have to go over many pages to get the information you need. It's a one-page thing."

In addition to the university fair, three of the refugee youths indicated that the scholarships offered by Memorial University were crucial to the realization of their dreams of attending university. Feechi, Olive, and Roland were grateful to be the winners of the Joyce Foundation Bursary. Feechi thought that he would be able to focus on his studies with the bursary. Otherwise, he would have to take several part-time jobs to pay for the tuition. Olive and Roland were pleased to win the bursary because it covers four years of tuition, which alleviated the financial barriers to attending university.

Roland's old brother, Zane, was pleased that his brother was awarded the bursary. He stated, "We are very lucky. We are thankful that my brother won the Joyce

Foundation, which covers his tuition. Otherwise, we won't be able to afford his education. That's a big thing for us. The Joyce Foundation was a big thing!"

Roland was the only refugee youth who mentioned the Ahmed Award when being asked what scholarships or awards are specifically offered to refugee students. He said, "I have heard stories about one guy. He used to go to ABC High School, then came to Memorial University. He died, and then there was an award named after him because he was so great." He continued to note that he was going to search online to check the application requirements for this award.

5.2.2 Programs and support within the exosystem

5.2.2.1 In the system of the community organization: Program 1

Program 1 is a volunteer-led tutoring program designed to help youth aged from five to 18 with homework, application to post-secondary education, scholarship application, and anything related to elementary and secondary education. This program is funded by industry and free for any participants. Three refugee youths indicated their successful admission to Memorial University was closely associated with the help they had received from Program 1. Aida and Roland went to the same junior high school, and both were referred to Program 1 by their ESL teacher. Aida started to participate in Program 1 when she was in grade nine. She used to go to Program 1 two to four days a week after school from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. to receive help with her homework. She praised the transportation services offered by Program 1. "Usually, they picked you up and dropped you back, which is amazing! They do everything!"

Aida continued to comment that Program 1 was the main source providing her with information about scholarships. "They [Program 1] usually dig for application for

scholarships, and then they will let you know like 'Hey [Aida]! This is the scholarship you should apply. It's free money!'" In addition, Aida indicated, "They [Program 1] have a Facebook page, so they posted it [information about scholarships] for everyone, which is awesome!" In addition, Aida noted that she requested a letter of reference from Program 1 for her university application.

Roland reported that the tutors from Program 1 informed him of the Joyce Foundation Bursary and encouraged him to apply for it. Similarly, Roland started to go to Program 1 when he was in grade nine. He had been taking advantage of the program for homework assistance. In particular, Roland was grateful that Program 1 helped him win the Joyce Foundation Bursary. They helped him write the personal statement and collect other documents required for the application for the bursary. Roland stated, "The Joyce Foundation Bursary is the key" because his parents were unemployed and not able to pay for his four years' tuition. Furthermore, Roland indicated, "[Program 1] is the key to the key" because he would not have been aware of the bursary if he had not been informed by Program 1.

Olive also noted that Program 1 helped her with the application for the Joyce Foundation Bursary. She heard of the bursary from one of the tutors. She said, "My tutor told me there is a scholarship. It's $20,000. It covers four years." Olive thought she would not have applied for the bursary if she had not learned of it from the tutor. Without financial aid, it would very hard for her to fulfill her goal of pursuing postsecondary education.

These refugee youths' comments were confirmed by Staff 1 who was a staff member from Program 1. Staff 1 noted that the majority of the students utilize their

program were refugee students because of their collaborative relationship with settlement workers, teachers, and guidance counsellors in schools. Staff 1 discussed their homework support in the following statements:

> We offer homework support, especially for newcomer students, which is the majority of the students come to [Program 1], and we also provide support to revise their assignments to make sure that it all makes sense in English because sometimes the language barriers put our newcomer students behind and they need a little bit of help to make sure the spelling is correct.

Staff 1 confirmed that they offered transportation services by picking up all their students every evening in a van.

Staff 1 continued to indicate that their tutors were an important source of information about scholarships for refugee students taking part in the program. Staff 1 discussed how one of their tutors helped one refugee student with the application for the Joyce Foundation Bursary.

> Last year, he [a refugee student] decided to come to MUN. Early in that year, we had a tutor speak to him about the application, and she mentioned Joyce Foundation. So, we helped him go through the application process and get the reference letters and everything he needed to apply, and he finally got the full Joyce Foundation Scholarship. That means he goes to MUN [Memorial University] for free. If you talked to him, he would say he got the scholarship because of us.

Staff 1 noted that they have helped a few other refugee students apply for the bursary. In particular, they helped refugee students write a winning scholarship essay as they found

that “writing scholarship application is not an easy task, especially when you face that language obstacle and you want to compete with other English speakers.”

5.2.2.2 In the system of the community organization: Program 2

Program 2 is a government-funded literacy program for people aged over 18. It offers free one-on-one tutoring to help learners improve literacy, basic math, or computer skills. One of the refugee youth, Ekon, mentioned the Program 2. As previously mentioned, Ekon was not able to go to high school because he was turning 20 when he moved to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2016. He had to go to the LINC school instead. At the time of our interview, he was taking the LINC Level 6 class. Ekon noted that he would take the ABE program after completing the LINC class. He also noted that he was hoping to learn the subject courses while studying in LINC school. He stated, “I want to learn the courses taught in schools here so I can have some foundation before I take the ABE program. I want to complete the ABE program quickly to get my high school diploma.” He continued to note that he searched on the internet for the programs he could take to learn the subject courses, and he found the Program 2 which he thought might meet his needs. According to his understanding, Program 2 is a tutoring program through which he would be able to be paired with a tutor to teach him the subject courses.

I interviewed Staff 2 who was the staff from the Program 2. According to Staff 2, Program 2 is a literacy program offering one-on-one tutoring services to improve their clients’ reading and writing skills. Staff 2 indicated that they had seen an increase in refugee/immigrant clients over the last 20 years. Staff 2 stated,

> We do have some ESL clients who are also very close to the traditional literacy situation in that they may come from places where they did not have literacy

> infrastructure even in their own language. We also have clients with PhD or multiple credentials, but they are looking for improving their English skills because it is not their mother tongue.

Staff 2 indicated that they offer tutoring services in other areas as well in addition to their focus on literacy. Staff 2 said,

> Our basic mandate is run literacy, so a big part of our service is around language issues, say basic reading and basic writing. They can also request service say for basic math. Sometimes people request service for more advanced math, say senior high school math, but I happen to have a volunteer who is a math teacher, then, by all means, I will make the arrangement. We also sometimes help with basic computer skills, so that would be part of our mandate. We also help with conversational skills as I have some clients who come from regions where they attended school system and went to university, they learn to read and write very well, but there's not a lot conversation, they are just looking for improving their conversation skills.

Staff 2 discussed the similarities and differences between their program and the ABE program. Staff 2 indicated that both two programs target the same groups of people who are 18 and older. Their tutoring program is not credited; however, people who have finished ABE Level III program will receive a diploma which is considered a high school equivalency. Therefore, Staff 2 thought their program is ideal for people who "are not looking for a diploma but their personal development."

In addition, Staff 2 discussed the advantages of their one-on-one tutoring service in comparison with ABE's classroom-based teaching. Staff 2 thought the one-on-one

tutoring service provided their clients with “a safe environment.” Their tutors would be able to offer tailored tutoring services to meet their clients’ needs because they were more likely to “know that student’s strengths and weaknesses. What they respond to and what they don’t respond to.” Staff 2 thought in a classroom setting, “[instructors] know [their] students but [they] cannot know them to that extent.”

Staff 2 continued to indicate that their program and the ABE program are not “an either-or thing.”

> Some people are not ready or not confident to go to the classroom, so sometimes they would come to us, and we provide them with tutors for some time, and then they go back into the classroom and carry on. One of our clients moved into the ABE. They don’t have to give up the tutor. They can have the tutor support on the side, so that’s where we maximize the benefits because I have known some individuals who have gone through the ABE that probably would not have had much success if they never had that extra support on the side for example through our program.

Staff 2 also pointed out that the language proficiency requirements for admission to the ABE program were “a relatively new thing,” which he thought “[was] driving the number here [in their program].”

5.2.2.3 In the system of the community organization: Program 3

Program 3 offers Level II and III of the provincial high school equivalency program (ABE) for adult learners. This program is self-paced and classroom-based, offering five hours of instruction each day from Monday to Friday. This study was not able to involve youth who are taking the ABE Level II and III, but two of the refugee

youths, Imani and Kalifa, were taking the ABE Level I program. Although they were somewhat disappointed that they were not allowed to go to high school in Newfoundland and Labrador because of their age, they were grateful to have the opportunity to take the ABE program after completing the LINC Level 5 class. Both of them decided to continue to take the ABE Level II and III programs to become eligible for applying to post-secondary education. Imani indicated, “The ABE is helpful. I can graduate and have a high school diploma. And it will allow me to go to university or college.” Kalifa made a similar statement. “I wanted to have a diploma to go to university.” Both of them were interested in accounting programs. Imani also noted that the ABE Level I program is free of charge, and they receive 64 dollars every two weeks to buy bus passes to go to school.

In addition, Imani and Kalifa discussed the self-paced learning environments of their ABE Level I classroom. They noted that they were learning at their own pace with support from instructors. Imani said, “You do your Math on yourself, and the teacher will correct you and help you, and I can ask the teacher if I have any questions.” Kalifa also said, “They just give us books, and we study by ourselves. If I have difficulty in understanding words and I go to my teacher, and she will help me. If I can’t finish it today, I can do it tomorrow.”

As previously mentioned, Staff 3 only agreed to respond to the questions related to the description of their program. According to Staff 3, it was confirmed that the ABE program created a flexible and self-paced classroom-based learning environment for their adult learners.

5.3 The Barriers to Refugee Youth’s Pursuit of Post-secondary Education

Following the presentation of the programs and support identified by refugee youth as helpful in preparing them for post-secondary education, this section presented the barriers that still confronted refugee youth as they moved towards post-secondary destinations. In most cases, the barriers indicated by the participants were interrelated. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, these interrelated barriers were grouped into two environmental systems: microsystem and exosystem.

Within the microsystem, four themes of barriers were identified, including the financial difficulties in the system of the family, the lack of information in the system of the school, the negative peer influence and the limited communication with local students in the system of the peer group, and the fear of the unknown and the academic challenges they would face in the system of the post-secondary institution.

Within the exosystem, another four themes of barriers were identified, including the age limit for high school in the system of Canadian educational policy, the multiage classroom and the lack of academic focus in the system of the LINC school, the language proficiency requirements and the multiage classroom in the system of the ABE program, and the non-recognition of refugee youth's prior learning in the Canadian educational system.

5.3.1 The barriers in the microsystem

5.3.1.1 Financial difficulties in the system of the family

Half of the refugee youths reported that they and their families were struggling financially. They had to work part-time jobs to help their families alleviate financial burdens. Feechi, who was the oldest child in his family, was the only breadwinner. He worked as a local newspaper distributor for two years to support his big family of seven.

He worked in the daytime on the weekend, earning 13 dollars per hour. Although his family had been receiving financial assistance from the government, Feechi noted that the income support was not enough to pay for necessities. He explained,

> The government gives us money, but we need to use that money to pay for everything. We need to take Metrobus to school, and we need to buy bus passes for each one. It's a lot of money! It's very hard!

Even though he has been awarded a bursary to pay for four years' tuition at Memorial University, Feechi still intended to continue working part-time. "I need to work. I need to buy books because I know from the ESL students that some books are very expensive, like 100 dollars!"

Kwame had received government financial assistance for one year after moving alone to Newfoundland and Labrador. After that, he relied on himself to make ends meet by taking part-time jobs because he desired to be financially self-sufficient. Kwame described his daily routine which he has been sticking to for one and a half years as follows: "I have to work from 5:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m., and I finish school at 3:00 p.m. I wake up at 6:00 a.m. to study for one hour and a half. Then I take the bus at 8:00 a.m. to school." In addition to paying for basic living expenses, he worked part-time for another two reasons. The first reason was to support his parents and siblings who were living in the refugee camp. "I send back 200 dollars every two months," he said. The second reason was to save up for post-secondary education. He explained,

> Higher education is important because I don't want to live the life I am living now. I am working part-time from 5:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. You should be in bed at 12:00 a.m. If I get more education, I can get a better job.

The responsibility for supporting family members living in their home countries or refugee camps were also indicated by several other refugee youths. Aida lived with her mother and a younger brother, working 16 hours per week to help her mother send 300 dollars back home each month. She stated, “I really want to work, and it’s me who want to work and to be in school too so I can know I am strong enough to support myself and help my mom.” Jamilah, who was the youngest child in her family, also wanted to get a part-time job to help her mother send remittances back home. She explained, “I wanted to have a part-time job because I wanted to help my family back home. My grandparents are old, living there. My mom sends money back a couple of months.”

In addition to the cost of living and the tuition fees of post-secondary education, there was another source of financial stress confronting the refugee youth: the immigration loan. Refugees travelling to Canada are issued with loans by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to pay for the costs of their transportation from overseas to the settlement site in Canada and the medical examination (IRCC, 2016b). The maximum loan amount for each family is $10,000 (IRCC, 2018). Zane, who was the oldest participant among refugee youth, discussed the burden of paying back the transportation loans that are faced by most refugees:

> The government assists refugees. They get some amount of money. For example, when my family came here, it was 850 dollars for one month. I had to use that money to pay for my rent, electricity, internet, food, clothing, but on top of this, there is a transportation loan. We have to pay back the government, but not every people know about this.

When Zane came to Newfoundland and Labrador with his parents and four siblings, they had to repay 7,500 dollars, which was “a big number” for them. Zane’s parents were unemployed, and thus he, who was the oldest child in his family, took over the responsibility to earn money to repay the loan. Zane continued to claim that the transportation loans made it difficult for refugee youth to set post-secondary education as their goals because they were faced with the reality of lacking money to pay tuition and having to get a job to help their families pay back the loans. I posed a question at our interview, “What is the current paths for refugee students after they finish high school? Do they go to post-secondary education or do they just find a job?” His response was, “Who pays for the loans, the tuition, everything? So how would they do that? It’s stressful. So, they have to find a job. It’s a reality. Our system is failing these people.”

From the viewpoint of the staff member participants, two of them considered financial difficulties as the primary barrier preventing refugee youth from pursuing post-secondary education. Staff 1 noted,

> Financial, I think probably the biggest challenge. I think a lot of newcomer students see universities or post-secondary as something that unattainable because of finance. And a lot think I have to go work to save up to go post-secondary.

Staff 2 discussed the limited financial resources for refugee families, giving an example of one of his refugee clients who came to his organization to find a tutor for his wife.

> He was a homemaker. They have four small children. He was here attending post-secondary. Every day he goes to university. At 4:00 o’clock he drives a taxi, and he drives a taxi for 12 hours. I am not sure when he sleeps. If he completes that,

that's a superhuman effort because most of us cannot possibly do that. Family responsibilities, four small kids. That's the issue of resources for him.

5.3.1.2 Lack of information in the system of the school

Although most refugee youths were struggling financially, many of them did not take advantage of the scholarship opportunities and the on-campus employment programs to ease their financial burdens due to their lack of information. In addition, they tended to lack information about post-secondary admission requirements to make informed decisions ahead of time.

Most refugee youths reported that they were not well informed of the scholarship opportunities to fuel their dreams of post-secondary education. Even Hahan, who was offered an entrance scholarship, noted that she lacked information about scholarships. Having had little knowledge of the entrance scholarship, she was surprised when she was told that she had won the scholarship. "I even didn't know anything about it. I didn't do anything. Maybe it's automatic. Maybe you just need to have good marks." Hanan was upset that she missed other scholarship opportunities due to her lack of information. "I sit down at ceremonies, and I see them [other students] getting [scholarships]. Even if I was more qualified than the person on the stage, I just didn't know about. Nobody tells me!" From Hanan's viewpoint, a number of her teachers and staff members in high school were less helpful with scholarship applications because "they don't care. They don't think you are qualified."

Although grade 12 students in her high school were given the opportunity to speak to the advisors from Memorial University about applications, she found these advisors barely touched on the issue of financial assistance for undergraduate students. "They help

you choose courses at Memorial University with you, so they do a good job, but they don't do it properly, because they don't tell you the financial thing. All they ask you is what program you want to do."

After entering Memorial University, she learned to search for scholarships on her own actively. However, she noted that refugee students tended to lack such an initiative. "Not a lot of people have the same spirit and effort to figure out scholarships by themselves. For most newcomer students, they even never thought that they are able to apply to scholarships." Hanan's comments were supported by the examples of Yohan, Ray, and Aida.

Assuming all the scholarships were merit-based, Yohan and Ray thought they were less likely to win any scholarships because they were not straight-A students. Yohan said, "I am not really interested in applying for scholarships. I just feel like I won't get it." Similarly, Ray noted, "I don't have much information about scholarships. I never applied to it. I don't think I could get it."

Although Aida had successfully applied to three scholarships in high school under the help of Program 1 and the settlement workers, she did not apply for any scholarships while attending Memorial University. She explained, "Maybe we don't have much information about scholarships." Besides, she indicated that after she attended Memorial University, there was no one who encouraged her to apply for scholarships like the staff from Program 1 and the settlement workers did when she was in high school.

Aligning with these refugee youths' perspectives, Staff 1 noted that many refugee youths were not aware of the scholarship opportunities. Staff 1 mentioned the Joyce

Foundation Bursary and indicated that many refugee youths “don’t know about it and don’t apply.”

With respect to information about on-campus employment opportunities, although undergraduate students at Memorial University could apply for on-campus jobs through the Memorial Undergraduate Career Experience Program (MUCEP) and the Student Work and Service Program (SWASP), neither the four undergraduate refugee student participants nor the three who have been accepted to Memorial University were aware of the two programs.

Having heard about the two on-campus employment programs at the interview, all the seven refugee youths expressed their interest in working part-time on campus. For example, Oliva noted that she would like to work in the library at Memorial University because the environment was “quiet and peaceful” and it would allow her to continue self-studying in the library after her shifts. Hanan also thought on-campus jobs were much more beneficial to refugee youth compared to working at the local newspaper distributor which she found was “physically and mentally horrible” because of “all night shifts for newcomers.”

Many of them requested me to send them the information about the two on-campus employment programs. After the interview, I emailed them the links to the two programs in the hope that they would make use of the programs to alleviate their financial burdens.

In addition to the lack of information about scholarships and on-campus employment opportunities, some refugee youths appeared to lack knowledge of post-secondary prerequisite requirements during the early stages of high school.

The refugee youth who were attending high school seemed to have little knowledge of courses they would need to get into a post-secondary program in which they were interested. Christ who was taking the grade 11 mainstream courses expressed his concern that he would not be eligible to apply for the nursing program at Memorial University because he had not taken any of the required courses. He said, “I checked the internet to know the requirements. For nursing, I should take biology and chemistry, but I haven’t taken it yet. Maybe I don’t have the time to take it.” Jamilah noted that she was going to ask the guidance counsellor about the application to the accounting program at Memorial University. Awax had asked a support teacher what courses he should take to apply for theology; however, at our interview, he was not able to recall the names of the courses told by the teacher. Like these high school refugee students, the three refugee youths who were taking adult educational programs barely knew course requirements for admission into the post-secondary programs that they wished to pursue.

Among the refugee youth who were taking a post-secondary program and who were graduating from high school, the issues around course selection were noted by Hanan. She commented that she failed to select courses that were consistent with her interests when she began her high school due to the incomplete information about course selection given to her.

> The problem when you are in high school, nobody tells you exactly what you need. Especially for ESL students, for immigrants or refugees, they tell you what to take, but they don’t tell you when to take or what you want to take. When I first came to [ABC] high school, they put stuff on my schedules that I didn’t want, that I didn’t need. What I needed was subjects like geography, but they have for me

> were physics and chemistry, and that was not the thing that I wanted, needed at all. They never asked me. Because there are so many courses, and they can meet any goals you have. You just need people to sit with you to tell you which one is for which. That was the only thing that I really needed but there was nobody tell me that.

She continued to claim that some of the support teachers "won't always tell [refugee students] what [they] should do for [their] university or post-secondary." She found that these teachers tended to have "different expectations" for refugee students. "They wanted [refugee students] to finish high school," which she believed was "the primary issue here."

In addition to the lack of information about course selection, some refugee youths did not understand the requirements of credits and averages. Aida noted that it was when she was in grade 12 that she came to find she needed to earn 36 credits to graduate and achieve over 70% to be considered for acceptance to the university. She described the moment of realization in the following excerpts:

> I think someone said that at least you need to have 36 credits to graduate. I talked to [a settlement worker], and [the settlement worker] said you have to have 36 credits, and if you want to go university your average needs to be at least 70, and then I run to [the guidance counsellor] to check my courses.

She felt relieved when she was told that she would be able to meet these requirements. However, she thought that "it would be better if I went to [the guidance counsellor] earlier" so that she would not have had to worry about her credits and averages at the late stage of high school. Aida continued to comment that that consulting with the guidance counsellor was self-initiated, and not every refugee student well utilized this service.

"Going to the guidance counsellor really depends on the student, like how active you are. If you friendly and nice, you jump around, and you will be fine. But if you are quiet, just following, it might be late."

Similarly, Ray did not know that he had to meet the required averages to apply for a post-secondary program in addition to earning 36 credits until he consulted with the guidance counsellor right before the application deadline at CNA. When he received his final grades, he realized that he failed to earn averages high enough to apply for the program of his choice at CNA. Then, he had to go back to high school for half a year and take the Comprehensive Arts and Science (CAS) transition program at CNA for another year to improve his grades. As previously mentioned, CAS is designed for high school and ABE graduates who do not have enough credits to meet the entrance requirements of the college program they would like to take. He expressed that he should have talked to the guidance counsellor when he entered high school so that he could have better understood the admission requirements and been able to work towards his goals.

Meanwhile, Staff 1 thought that sometimes refugee students failed to meet the admission requirements because they were not aware that meeting the minimum graduation requirements alone was not enough for application to a post-secondary program. Staff 1 noted, "[Their schools] give them basic diploma rather than the full diploma, and I think that sometimes they may not understand what are the differences."

Staff 1 continued to indicate that refugee students' lack of knowledge of the different requirements for different destinations after high school "[had] to do with the honesty of the school administration" and the language barriers.

> When I say to you that you are going to graduate from high school, but you are only going to have 36 credits, but that word graduate that triggers instantly in the head, so they may not really comprehend that it's not enough for post-secondary.

5.3.1.3 Negative peer influence and limited communication with local students in the system of the peer group

In addition to the family and the school, the peer group is also integral to a refugee youth's life. While many of the refugee youths indicated that their friends provided great motivation for them to persevere at their goals for post-secondary, a few indicated that some of their peers were less encouraging or inspiring.

Yohan noted that some of his friends from the same ethnic background in high school had a negative influence on his pursuit of post-secondary education. When Yohan was in grade 11, he "ignored [his] studies" though he had already made up his mind to attend university because he was told by his friends who were in grade 12 that "grade 10 and 11 really doesn't matter and you only need to work hard in grade 12, and that marks only count when you go to the university." Yohan even became interested in driving and bought his first car in grade 11 under the influence of his friends who already owned a vehicle. They hung out frequently, skipping class and idling their time away elsewhere. After he started grade 12, he found the courses were difficult. Furthermore, he noticed none of his friends got accepted to a university. Therefore, he realized he had to work much harder so that he could achieve his goal of continuing education at the university. He then stopped hanging out with these friends and started to concentrate on his studies, working towards his goal.

Hanan also found some refugee students, especially those who were only taking the support programs, were less motivated. “They were learning at a much slower process than other students. They [didn’t] pay for high school, so they are fine staying there for five years. Plus, there’s nobody tell them you should do this you should do that, then you can go to university.” In addition, Hanan thought building friendships with Canadian students was important because “they are very motivated to do things.” She indicated, “I was pretty sure that if I had connections with Canadian students, I would have done so much better [in high school].” However, she found that making friends with local students was difficult.

> It’s so hard for me to be friends with Canadians. I have a lot of Canadian friends, but they are all one kind. They are all very open-minded, and they have been exposed to immigrants before or they have been in international places. With native Canadians who have never been to anywhere, it’s difficult to be friends with them. They all have very different interests than I do.

Hanan continued to indicate she was less likely to receive helpful advice on university applications from her Canadian peers. She argued,

> It’s fairly easy for them. They can apply to several universities. But for us, where I am, where my family is, if it doesn’t work out, it doesn’t work out, because moving is very hard for me and my family. So, they didn’t talk to me about it, no.

5.3.1.4 Fear of the unknown and academic challenges in the system of the post-secondary institution

The three refugee youths who have been accepted to Memorial University were excited about the new chapter in their life; however, at the same time, they were afraid of

the unknown of their first year of college. Neither Feechi nor Esinam knew course selection in their first semester, and both intended to seek advice from their refugee friends who were attending Memorial University. Similarly, Kwame was "scared" of the forthcoming college life, wondering, "How is it gonna be in college? I have good helping teachers here [in high school] and supporting students, but is there any help or support in college?"

The four refugee youths who were attending Memorial University noted that they found university was more challenging than high school. Aide noted that they were no longer given extra time to complete their exams as they were in high school.

> In high school, we don't do our exams in the gym with other students. For Canadians, if it goes for three hours, we got four hours. We got an additional one hour or two hours. It depends on the course. But here, you don't get extra time, which makes it so hard. I believe for newcomers who don't speak English, it's really hard for them to understand the wording and they need more time to understand what the topics about. So, I found it so hard because of that.

Hanan found that educational planning in university was "very different from high school because you have to make your own schedules" and thought "newcomers should be taught a bit on time-management."

In addition, many of the two groups of refugee youth indicated that English would be or was still an obstacle. Although Feechi learned English before he came to Canada and kept improving English through taking the ESL courses in high school, he expressed his concern that his level of English proficiency, especially his vocabulary skills, might not be enough to meet the academic expectations in university.

Aida also noted that academic writing in English was a challenge that she faced in her first year at Memorial University. Aida thought that although the university's writing centre could help students polish their papers, it may be less likely to address the language needs of refugee students. She explained, "There are differences between writing centre and ESL. The writing centre wouldn't help you as much as ESL would help you because they don't really understand second language teaching."

Even for the refugee youth in high school, many of them were worried that they might not be able to meet the strict English requirements in university. For example, Jamilah thought she would face language challenges in tertiary education because "if you go deeper in English, English is not easy."

In addition, another four categories of barriers within the refugee youth's exosystem were identified, which were presented in the following sections.

5.3.2 The barriers in the exosystem

5.3.2.1 Age limit for high school in the system of Canadian educational policy

A few refugee youths discussed the restrictive policy of the maximum age for attending regular high school. Consider the following statement made by Amare: "Send me back to Africa because I can go to high school there!" Amare made this statement when he was told that he could not go to regular high school and had to attend language school instead. When he came to Newfoundland and Labrador with his family in August 2016, he was three months after his 18th birthday. It was the three months that nearly deprived him of the chance of going to high school. Amare recounted, "The social workers said welcome to Canada, but then they said I could not go to high school because I was older. I was turning 19, so I had to go to the language school." The language school

he referred to was the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Both Amare and his mother strongly insisted that he should be allowed to go to regular high school rather than the language school considering his age and prior schooling. Amare argued, “I was just three months past 18 when the high school started. I am still young!” His mother also defended her son’s right to receive a high school education in Canada. “My mom said no. My child can’t go to the language school because my child has finished grade 10 in the camp. How could he go to the language school?” Fortunately, Amare eventually won the battle for his right to receive secondary education under the help of a retired high school teacher with whom he was acquainted by chance in the church. He then enrolled in a local high school in the middle of October 2016. However, due to his limited conversational English skills, it was not made clear to me how that teacher helped him gain access to high school.

Although Kwame and Feechi also came to Newfoundland and Labrador at the age of 18, what happened to Amare did not happen to them somehow. They both felt blessed to be allowed to go to high school. Kwame said, “I was lucky that I went to high school because I was 18. If I was older than 18, I couldn’t go there.” Feechi also indicated,

When I came here, I was almost turning 19. If I came in 19, I couldn’t be accepted by high school. That’s a big problem. Many people want to study in high school, but they couldn’t. I don’t think they take above 20, maybe 19, they don’t take you.

Feechi continued to indicate his assumption that a similar policy in other provinces was less restrictive. He said, “Other provinces they take these students, not the same as here. I

have friends in Ottawa and Alberta. I think they don't see that age. They have more flexible policies."

Three of the four refugee youths who were too old to go to regular high school and ended up going to the LINC school noted that they wish they could have enrolled in a regular high school after moving to Newfoundland and Labrador. Ekon was turning 20 when he came to Newfoundland and Labrador in August 2016. Before the resettlement, he was in the 12th grade and was about to receive his high school diploma. However, after he came to Canada, owing to his age, instead of being allowed to resume or repeat education in a regular high school, he was asked to go to the LINC school instead of the ABE program, which upset him. He argued, "In Canada, you can't choose to go to high school, which made people feel bad." Similarly, Kalifa was 21 and Iman was 23 when they moved to Newfoundland and Labrador. Both of them had finished grade 10 before the resettlement and desired to repeat grade 10 or start from grade 11 to finish high school. However, they had no option but to go to LINC school because of their age and the language proficiency requirements of the ABE program which will be explained in the section 5.3.2.3

In addition, several refugee youths articulated the unsuitability of the current LINC program for young refugees who aim to pursue further education for the reasons presented in the following section 5.3.2.2.

5.3.2.2 Multiage classroom and lack of academic focus in the system of the LINC school

Learning in a multi-age classroom where the majority of the learners were in middle age was a primary reason for the unsuitability of the current LINC program indicated by several refugee youths. Kalifa made the following statement:

> It's hard for me to go to the language school because everyone there is much older than me. Like my mom, she went to the language school with me. I felt bad. I didn't see anyone around my same age in the class.

For Kalifa, sitting in the same classroom with her mother and other learners in her mother's age made her feel embarrassed. Amare indicated that he refused to go to LINC school because he "couldn't study in the same place with [his] mother."

Zane expressed a similar sentiment. He stated,

> When I first came, I was 24, I end up going to school with my parents who were 60, and I was 24 there, not even a youth or a grown-up man, so I am there who is lost in between.

In addition, Zane argued that the current LINC program in Newfoundland and Labrador was not adequate to meet the needs of young refugees with post-secondary goals because he felt the program focused on helping refugee learners meet the language requirements for the citizenship application rather than for further education. He indicated that the learners of the LINC program were only required to complete the level 4 class to meet the language requirements for Canadian citizenship.

Zane continued to discuss the unavailability of the most advanced LINC Level 7 class in Newfoundland and Labrador. He argued that the current highest level of the

LINC Level 6 class available to refugees in Newfoundland and Labrador was not enough to help them meet the language requirements for college or university admission because the LINC Level 6 certificate was not accepted by the post-secondary institutions as a proof of English proficiency. Additionally, Zane mentioned that the LINC Level 7 class was available in some other provinces. One of his refugee friends who got resettled in Manitoba completed the LINC Level 7 class and then directly went to college. Unfortunately, Zane found the LINC-college pathway was not available to refugee youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. He questioned, "they value this benchmark for citizenship, but why don't they value this benchmark for post-secondary education?"

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) are applied by the LINC program for planning curricula and measuring learner progress (IRCC, 2010). The certificate of the completion of the LINC class at CLB 4 or higher is one type of language proof to apply for Canadian citizenship (IRCC, 2013). In other words, newcomers need to complete LINC 3 speaking and listening and LINC 4 reading and writing to meet the language requirements for Canadian citizenship based on LINC CLB alignment (Table 3), (Hajer, Robinson, & Witol, 2002; Hajer, Kaskens, & Stasiak, 2007).

Table 3 *LINC CLB Alignment*

		LINC 1	LINC 2	LINC 3	LINC 4	LINC 5	LINC 6	LINC 7
Speaking	CLB	1	2	3, 4	5	6	7	8
Listening	CLB	1	2	3, 4	5	6	7	8
Reading	CLB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7,8
Writing	CLB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7,8

According to the LINC Curriculum Guidelines (Hajer et al., 2002; Hajer et al., 2007), LINC levels 1 to 4 are foundation programs, LINC levels 5, 6, and 7 programs are

to prepare learners for employment and post-secondary education. In particular, LINC 5-7 can help learners develop language skills for successful participation in post-secondary education by "facilitating the enhancement of general communication skills; offering guidance on how to access post-secondary education preparation programs, academic credentialing services; (and) providing opportunities to develop academic skills such as note-taking, study skills, test taking and essay writing" (p. 22). More specifically, different levels of academic language competencies can be achieved in the LINC 5, 6, and 7 programs respectively (Table 4).

Table 4 *Examples of the Target Competencies of Academic Skills in LINC 5, 6, and 7 Programs*

Note-taking and study skills	
LINC 5	Reduce a page of information to a list of seven to 10 important points.
LINC 6	Take notes from an oral presentation or a page of written information.
LINC 7	Take notes in point form from an oral presentation; & Write an outline or a summary of a longer text.
Writing paragraphs and essays	
LINC 5	Write a paragraph to relate/narrate a sequence of events.
LINC 6	Write one or two paragraphs to: relate a familiar sequence of events, tell a story
LINC 7	Write three or four paragraphs to narrate a historical event; to tell a story; to express or analyze opinions on a familiar abstract topic; or to provide a detailed description and explanation of a phenomenon or a process.

The circumstances of the other three refugee youths who had taken or were taking the LINC program supported Zane's comments. Rather than proceed to pursue further education after the completion of the LINC program, the three of them had no choice but to start again from basic education. Imani and Kalifa started to take the ABE Level I

program after they had finished the LINC Level 5 class. Ekon, the one who was taking the LINC Level 6 class, also intended to the ABE Level I program.

Furthermore, in the following section, several participants discussed two problems with the current ABE program: the language proficiency requirements and the multiage classroom.

5.3.2.3 Language proficiency requirements and multiage classroom in the system of the ABE program

Staff 2, a staff member from a literacy service provider, argued that the entrance requirements for the ABE program in terms of English proficiency were a barrier that prevented refugees from participating in that program. Staff 2 claimed,

> Regarding ABE, it's my understanding now that they only take in clients if they can demonstrate a certain level of English proficiency. So right now, there's a little bit of a hurdle there that wasn't there years ago, because years ago ABE would take people even low in their English proficiency. That's a relatively new thing.

Staff 2's claims were substantiated by Zane's experiences. When Zane came to Newfoundland and Labrador at the age of 24, he was required to go to LINC school. Zane said,

> I couldn't take the ABE program directly because there are protocols. There are so many challenges we don't see. Like we are under the federal assistance, if you are under the federal assistance, you can't apply for other programs, and you have to go to LINC. There are so many things that constrain you that make you small.

Without exception, Kalifa and Imani followed the same LINC-ABE pathway. Kalifa had spent eight months, and Imani had spent one year and seven months in LINC school before they took the ABE program. Once they started to take the ABE Level I courses, they found the courses were not difficult because they had finished grade 10 before coming to Newfoundland and Labrador. Kalifa said, "I have already learned some of the Science and Math back home, just the language is different. Sometimes I saw some words were difficult, but teachers helped us." Kalifa completed the ABE Level I math course in only one month. She thought that she would have made greater progress if she had an opportunity to take the ABE courses while improving language proficiency in LINC school.

In addition, Imani indicated that most of the learners in her ABE classroom were in their middle age. I posed a question at our interview, "Do you talk to other ABE learners?" Her response was, "Not much. We are not at the same age. They are older than us like 50."

Furthermore, in the following section, the lack of credential recognition was referred to by several refugee youths as one of the reasons why they had to repeat schooling after they came to Newfoundland and Labrador.

5.3.2.4 Non-recognition of refugee youth's prior learning before coming to Canada

The three refugee youths who were going to take or were taking the ABE Level I program all went to high school before they moved to Canada. At that time, Ekon was in grade 12, expecting to receive his high school diploma in four months. Both Imani and Kalifa had completed grade 10. Unfortunately, all of them had to repeat schooling from

the basic level in the ABE Level I classrooms. Although the three of them did not link their circumstances with the lack of recognition of their previous educational experiences, Zane perceived the link through working with refugee students. He stated,

> If you don't have valid credentials earned back home which is accepted by the institutions here, ABE is the only option, though you are already there. That's what many newcomers are doing now. They have already done, but unfortunately, their credentials are not accepted, their skills are not valid here.

In addition, Jamilah mentioned that her sister could not go to high school in Newfoundland and Labrador due to that her sister did not bring the high school diploma when they moved there. Zane also explained that refugees usually fled their countries with incomplete proof of educational or professional credentials. Zane indicated, "I have heard all these stories from refugees like they said 'Oh, I had to run, leaving everything behind.'"

Even several refugee students who had brought their high school diplomas noted that their prior education experiences were not recognized by the Canada education system. Feechi who repeated high school in Newfoundland and Labrador complained,

> "I finished high school, and I went to college in my country, but I don't think they accept my high school diploma. That made me a little bit mad because it's just wasting my time. Another three years in [ABC] high school again. I was really confused about that."

Zane pointed out that the credentials of refugees were not recognized because they were in non-English languages. He argued, "Our documents are just counted as a piece of

paper. ‘I can’t understand your language. Take it away.’ It’s just their reaction. It’s very challenging!”

5.4 Recommendations for Increasing Refugee Youth’s Participation in Post-Secondary Education

In addition to the identification of the barriers to refugee youth’s pursuit of post-secondary education, the participants also made a few recommendations to reduce some of these barriers, which will be presented in this section. These recommendations were not grouped into specific systems, considering they are interconnected and require collaboration between various stakeholders in refugee youth’s environmental systems.

5.4.1 Increasing the number of ESL teachers at the secondary level and offering continuous ESL support for college refugee students

Some refugee youths suggested that more ESL teachers should be hired, and more ESL instructional time should be offered to refugee students at ABC High School. Kwame suggested that another two to three ESL teachers should be hired at ABC school to keep up with the increasing number of refugee students. Kwame stated, “When I first came, there were me and a few students from other countries, but now there are so many people in the ESL class. The classes are getting big.” Kwame also suggested that more ESL instructional time should be provided for refugee students once additional ESL teachers are hired. Kwame contended that the current one hour of the ESL class each day was not enough to help refugee students develop the language skills necessary to succeed in the mainstream classes. He stated, “Just one hour with ESL teacher, three or four hours with other teachers, I couldn’t even understand most of the classroom teachers. Those

classes are hard to understand." Kwame thought he would have been able to go to university if he had spent more time with the ESL teachers.

A similar recommendation was made by other refugee youths. Feechi indicated, "There are only two ESL teachers, which is not enough, because there are many refugee students. It is very difficult for them to spend time with each refugee student in the class. They need to add more ESL teachers." Aida also spoke of the need to increase the number of ESL teachers. "We only have three or four teachers helping ESL students. I understand that it's not easy for them. It would be great to have more." It needs to be noted that Aida counted all support teachers and staff here, including the two ESL teachers, one LEARN teacher, and one settlement worker. As discussed in section 5.2.1.3, 5.2.1.4, and 5.2.1.6, these support teachers and staff specialized in helping refugee students fill gaps in education, improve language skills, and integrate into the school system and community respectively. Therefore, the size of ESL and LEARN classes was much larger than regular classes and more support teachers are needed.

Some other refugee youths discussed the need to allocate more ESL teachers and offer more ESL instructional time to refugee students in other schools. For example. Roland indicated that other schools only had one itinerant ESL teacher to work with refugee students a few hours per week, which was inadequate to meet the needs of these students.

In addition to the need to increase the number of ESL teachers at the secondary level, Aida suggested that Memorial University should offer ESL courses to refugee students attending the University free of charge to help them improve academic English writing skills. Aida thought the current ESL courses offered at Memorial University were

not affordable to refugee students. She emphasized, “I believe we shouldn’t pay at all. It’s language.” It is noteworthy that the ESL programs and services offered at Memorial University are mainly geared to international students who need to improve their English for academic purposes to study at a Canadian university. Therefore, it is appropriate to charge program fees to international students. As Memorial University started to receive refugee students, its ESL programs could consider charging lower or waiving fees for refugee students, given their special status and the small number of refugee students attending Memorial University.

5.4.2 Providing assistance with educational planning

A number of participants recommended that refugee students should be provided with the information and assistance they need to make informed decisions along their educational journey. Their recommendations included more encouragement, assistance with course selection and planning, and assistance with applications to programs in post-secondary institutions.

Rosine recommended that the high schools could invite refugee students who successfully transitioned from local high school to Memorial University to give presentations to current refugee students in high school to talk about their experiences. Rosine thought it “would help refugee students build hope, make them aim high, and feel it is possible to go to Memorial University after high school.” Roland also spoke of the importance of “giving [refugee students] the hope that [they] can do whatever they want to do.”

Many participants spoke of the need to help refugee students with course selection and planning. Hanan suggested that high school refugee students should be informed of

the various destinations after high school when they just started high school so that they could work towards the destination of their choice. Aida indicated that it would be better if the teachers could make sure the students have taken the right courses to get into university. Aida noted, “Like in grade 10 you have to have eight courses. It’s better for [the teachers] to go over and make sure this is what you have to do this year, and why it is good to do this course.” Staff 1 found that some refugee students failed to graduate with academic status because they were not aware of the different course requirements for the different types of graduation status. Therefore, Staff 1 suggested that specialists should be allocated to schools to help refugee students with course selection to make sure they are on the right path.

In addition, some refugee youths suggested that refugee students should be provided with more information on and guidance in getting into a post-secondary program. Hanan indicated that “The applications for all the post-secondary are so long, and [refugee students] need so much information, and [they] don’t usually have the knowledge.” Thus, Hanan suggested that there was a need to “assign someone to explain to refugee students how to apply for post-secondary programs.” Similarly, Ray spoke of the need to “have someone to help [refugee students] have a better understanding of what they should do for application.” Awax who was in his first year in high school indicated that he would like to know more about university admission requirements. Awax noted, “That will give me an idea of what to do. It’s better to know earlier so that I can prepare.” Roland spoke of the need to offer workshops to refugee students to give them more information on admission requirements, application procedures, and how to achieve academic success. Staff 1 thought it would be “ideal” if Program 1 could be offered to

refugee students in high school so that they could show them how to get into university and help with their applications.

5.4.3 Eliminating the transportation loans and offering scholarships and bursaries targeting refugee youth pursuing post-secondary education

Zane suggested that the transportation loans hung on refugees should be reduced or waived so that they could take full advantage of the services available to them, and in particular, refugee youth could invest most of their time in their studies to become more successful citizens rather than taking minimum-wage jobs which could trap them in a cycle of poverty.

Many other refugee youths recommended that scholarships and bursaries should be created specifically for refugee students to help them tackle the financial barriers to their access to post-secondary education. As Roland indicated, the Ahmed award was the only scholarship offered by Memorial University specifically for helping refugee students. Roland would like to see more scholarships or other forms of financial assistance provided for refugee students attending Memorial University. He stated, “My parents don’t have good jobs to pay for my tuition and my brother’s tuition.” Aida suggested that scholarships would not only reduce refugee students’ financial concerns but also increase their confidence in their ability to achieve academic success.

Staff 1 also spoke of the need to provide refugee students with more scholarship opportunities. Staff 1 stated, “If we are inviting people to come to our country, we should be supporting them not only when they just get here but for their further study.”

5.4.4 Optimizing language and academic support for refugee young adults with goals of pursuing post-secondary education

Zane made several recommendations to prepare refugee youth at the age of 18 and above for further post-secondary education in Canada. First, Zane suggested that the highest LINC Level 7 class be available to newcomers in Newfoundland and Labrador, considering the LINC Level 7 is the minimum requirement for many professional and academic programs offered at college and university. Take the College of North Atlantic and Memorial University of Newfoundland for example, immigrants, refugees, and other international students must demonstrate their English proficiency through one of the standardized tests such as IELTS. The minimum scores required for IELTS academic are 6.5 with 6.0 in Writing and Reading (College of the North Atlantic, 2018; Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2018), and such language requirements are equivalent to CLB 8 (IDP Education Canada Ltd., 2018). Therefore, further expansion of the LINC program in NL to include level 7 is needed so that young refugees with goals for post-secondary education could take advantage of it, as Zane suggested, “If they could have added more advanced level, and then once they [refugee LINC learners] are done, they could be sent to post-secondary directly, that would be amazing!” Secondly, Zane suggested that the LINC for preparation for IELTS or TOEFL tests be available to newcomers in Newfoundland and Labrador. Zane stated, “I have always been telling why don’t use the IETLS test or TOEFL test. Why don’t put these into the [LINC] curriculum and teach them, make them pass?” Because the IELTS and TOEFL tests are accepted by most post-secondary institutions as proof of English proficiency, Zane thought the LINC academic preparation class would better prepare refugee youth for college or university.

Thirdly, Zane suggested that the ABE program and the LINC program be offered at the same organization or within the same post-secondary institution. Zane thought refugee youth would make rapid progress through simultaneously taking the two programs to get ready for post-secondary studies. He also indicated that it would be easier for refugee youth to take advantage of the two programs if they were delivered in the same location.

5.4.5 Providing more funding to educational programs offered by community organizations

Two staff member participants suggested that funding should be adequately provided for community organizations to ensure the provision of quality services. Staff 1 indicated that their current corporate sponsor who funded Program 1 had fulfilled its five-year funding promise, and they were looking for a new funding commitment. As current funds were going to run out, Staff 1 indicated that they would not be able to continue providing transportation to and from their program, and Staff 1's full-time position probably would be converted to a part-time position. What is worse, Staff 1 noted that they were not able to accept new students before they found the new sponsors to fund their program.

Staff 2 indicated that they received most of their funding from the provincial government; however, they have been receiving the same amount of funding for ten years despite the increase in student numbers. Staff 2 stated, "We kind of got rid of everything that we can possibly get rid of to save money instead of shutting the whole thing down. We are squeezed!" Staff 2 emphasized that the investment in the educational programs

for refugees would make a significant contribution to society in the long run. Staff 2 noted,

> With a little bit extra supports, the differences between people who are successful in post-secondary opposed to being underemployed or unemployed, that's a lot more expensive to give assistance on the way. We see that all the time, people say with a little bit help, a little bit investment, we are able to give back to the community and to raise our families, and we all benefit from that, taxpayer benefit.

5.5 Summary

Findings from the first research question revealed that new life in Canada instilled hope into many participating refugee youths as they aspired to get into university after high school. In their perception, a university education was a prerequisite to secure professional jobs in Canada, whereas a college education would only allow them to get blue-collar jobs. In particular, they wished to attend the local university so that they could stay close with and take care of their families. Not only did they have a strong sense of family obligation, but also compassion for their peoples who were still suffering in refugee camps or their home countries. Because of that, many refugee youths were interested in nursing programs, aiming to improve the quality of healthcare for the refugees in those areas. However, it was bittersweet to hear from a few refugee youths that their families have decided to move to other cities in Canada after their graduation from high school, in the middle of their post-secondary education, or after their graduation from undergraduate programs. Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta were the three provinces where they would relocate so that they would be able to live with relatives and

people from the same ethnic background and be provided with more employment and educational opportunities.

Findings from the second research question presented a number of programs and support within the microsystem (i.e., their family, ABC High School, their friends, and post-secondary institutions) that were identified by refugee youth as having helped them realize their educational goals. First, their parents encouraged them to get into university so that they could open doors to higher-paying and rewarding careers. Second, in ABC High School, a support system comprised of the guidance counselor, ESL teachers, LEARN teacher, settlement workers, and a few subject teachers were considered by most refugee youths as playing an important role in guiding them through their educational journeys such as course selection, university/college application, and application for scholarships. Third, many refugee youths noted that some of their peers had a positive influence on their pursuit of post-secondary education, including refugee youth who were already attending college/university, international students and local students who aimed high to get into university. Lastly, a few refugee youths noted that they received useful information on admission requirements at the university fair, and a few others mentioned the scholarship opportunities offered by Memorial University reduced their financial barriers to post-secondary education.

Within the exosystem, three educational programs (i.e., Program 1, Program 2, and Program 3) were identified by refugee youth as helpful in preparing them for post-secondary education. Two refugee youths who were attending Memorial University reported that they benefited from taking Program 1 through which they received homework assistance and help with their application for post-secondary and scholarships.

According to Staff 1, because of their collaborative relationship with settlement workers, teachers, and guidance counsellors in schools, many refugee youths under the high school age limit have taken advantage of their program. In addition, one refugee youth who was attending the LINC school noted that he was looking for educational programs in which he could learn subject courses taught in local schools. The refugee youth found Program 2 through searching on the internet and intended to take it, thinking this program may be able to meet his needs. According to Staff 2, their program was a literacy program offering one-on-one tutoring, and they could also offer tutoring services in other areas such as high school math as long as they could find a suitable tutor. Furthermore, two refugee youth who were attending the ABE Level 1 program were grateful to have the opportunity to take this program to get a high school diploma and then to pursue post-secondary education. The two of them felt comfortable in the flexible self-paced and classroom-based learning environment, and Staff 3 also confirmed that such a learning environment was beneficial to adult learners.

Findings from the third research question revealed that refugee youth's access to post-secondary education was impeded by financial difficulties, lack of information, negative peer influence and limited communication with local students, and fear of the unknown challenges they would face in post-secondary education within the microsystem. In addition, refugee youth were confronted with a number of barriers in the exosystem, including the policies of high school age limit, the multiage classroom and lack of academic focus of the LINC program, the language proficiency requirements and multiage classroom of the ABE program, and the non-recognition of refugee youth's prior learning.

Findings from the last research question presented a few recommendations made by participants to reduce these barriers, including increasing the number of ESL teachers at the secondary level and continuing to offer ESL support for college refugee students, providing refugee youth with information and assistance they need to make informed decisions, eliminating the transportation loans and offering scholarships/bursaries targeting refugee youth pursuing post-secondary education, helping refugee youth aged 18 and above achieve their educational goals, and providing more funding to educational programs offered by community organizations.

In the next chapter, I will further discuss the major findings through the lens of the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will further discuss the major findings answering each research question through the lens of segmented assimilation theory and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. I first discuss the change of refugee youth's educational aspirations and how it is linked to their pre-migration and post-migration experiences. Then I discuss the centralized support in refugee youth's microsystem and its importance to their transition to post-secondary education. Next, I discuss the primary barriers constraining them from accessing post-secondary education and implications for practice and policy by drawing on the recommendations made by the participants. Lastly, I discuss the theoretical implications of this study.

6.2 Discussion of the Major Findings

6.2.1 Answers to research question one: Dreams turning to hopes

The findings suggest that for many refugee youths, getting into university was a dream before resettlement. A new life in Canada lit a beacon of hope in them. Specifically, according to the distinction between aspirations and expectations indicated by Portes and Rambaut (2001), such change reflects refugee youth's raised expectations.

> Aspirations refer to desired levels of future performance (what people want to happen); expectations are beliefs about a probable future state of affairs (what people think will happen). Aspirations are less realistic than expectations, since what people subjectively desire typically exceeds what they rationally expect (p. 216).

The conceptualization makes it clear that many refugee youth participants had high educational aspirations but lower expectations before resettlement due to the devastating living conditions that had dimmed their prospects. It was not until they settled in Canada that their expectations have gradually risen to the same level as their aspirations because the new life and especially the positive schooling experiences made them believe that they would be able to attain their aspired educational goals.

The formation of refugee youth participants' aspirations was closely associated with the fact that their parents placed a high value on education. Nearly all the refugee youth participants reported that although their parents had lower levels of educational attainment, they valued education and had high goals for them. As Portes and Rambaut (2001) suggested, immigrant children's aspirations and expectations are strongly and positively influenced by their parents' goals for them. Moreover, children's education is immigrant parents' priority regardless of their education or income (Sweet, Anisef, & Walters, 2010). Picot and Hou (2013) also found that immigrant parents' aspirations are a major determinant of their children's participation in university, while their levels of education play a less important role. A similar conclusion was reached by Wilkinson (2002) who indicated that refugee parents place a high value on their children's education, which is not as strongly influenced by their class status and educational attainment as that for Canadian-born parents, and a possible reason behind refugee parents' high aspirations could be that to a large extent they seek resettlement to ensure a brighter future for their children.

Furthermore, the fact that a number of refugee youth participants made a successful transition from high school to post-secondary education is evidence that "the

high ambition displayed by immigrant parents and the high goals that they voice for their children are not just empty words. These beliefs carry forth in the form of higher grades and higher probabilities of graduation" (Portes & Rambaut, 2001, p. 255).

In addition, many refugee youth participants aspired to become healthcare professionals, which was linked to their pre-migration experiences of witnessing death or injuries amid dangerous and unstable living conditions. The findings are consistent with Portes and Rambaut's (2001) premise that life-changing incidents that happened in refugee youth's pre-settlement life strongly influenced their aspirations and expectations. "Difficult experiences of flight and resettlement often provide a spur to greater effort" (Portes & Rambaut, 2001, p. 234). The findings also confirm Shakya et al.'s (2010) conclusion that refugee youth's strong educational aspirations are "a proactive response to the pre-migration educational disruptions and limited opportunities encountered within their lives in war-torn countries or refugee camps" (p. 69).

In particular, refugee youth participants valued a university education much more than a college education, though not all of them had a clear understanding of the differences between the two types of post-secondary institutions. One of the refugee youths drew an interesting comparison between the two types of post-secondary education, referring to university education as preparing people for knowledge-intensive jobs while a college education as leading to labour-intensive jobs. Most refugee youth participants' high educational goals matched their career goals. As previously mentioned, many refugee youth participants wished to pursue a career in healthcare. To achieve it, they were interested in taking a nursing program at university.

However, the mismatch between educational aspirations and career goals, as well as the mismatch between educational aspirations and academic performance among refugee youth were found in this study. For instance, two refugee youth participants who aspired to get into university noted that they wished to become a plumber and a cashier in the future. Such a mismatch is an indication of their vague understanding of university education and their lack of knowledge of other post-secondary pathways such as apprenticeship or college which would be more appropriate for them considering their career goals.

In addition, there is a mismatch between some refugee youths' high educational aspirations and their academic performance. According to one refugee youth participant who also worked in a refugee-serving organization with refugee children and youth, although refugee youth tend to have high goals, in reality, some of them are not able to realize their goals due to their poor academic performance. The mismatch reflected the aspiration-achievement paradox among immigrants revealed by Salikutluk (2013). Salikutluk (2013) indicated that "immigrants may not be able to realize their goals due to language or cultural barriers in the country of residence. Or minority students might verbalize high educational aims without suiting their school-related behaviour to their stated aspirations" (p. 7). Salikutluk further indicated that the aspiration-achievement paradox is largely due to that

> [I]mmigrants' estimation of the probability of successfully completing higher education can be biased by a strong projection of wishes and unrealistic aspirations. The salience of hoping for socio-economic improvement can induce a strong belief of education as the key for upward mobility. (p. 7)

According to the findings, educators play an important role in informing refugee youth and their parents of various post-secondary pathways; instilling in them the mindset that these pathways all equip youth to be productive citizens; and helping them create and refine a realistic path.

6.2.2 Research question two: A web of support in ABC High School

The guidance counsellor, ESL teachers, LEARN teacher, settlement workers, and a few subject teachers have woven a web of support for refugee students. Refugee youth viewed these support teachers and staff as the most important people who guided them along their educational journey. Refugee youth perceived that these support teachers and staff were more approachable and more likely to understand their experiences and educational needs. The effective support provided by some of these support teachers and staff has been indicated in the local literature. For example, refugee students from the same high school who participated in Li and Grineva's (2016) study viewed their ESL and LEARN teachers as most helpful in improving their language skills and subject matter knowledge. Another study by Li et al. (2017) indicated that the settlement workers worked directly with refugee students in school on a daily basis, and the close relations between them strongly and positively help refugee youth integrate into and become more successful in school.

In addition to the web of support in school, some refugee youths identified one educational program (i.e., Program 1) offered by a community organization as helpful in preparing them for the transition to post-secondary education. Staff 1 attributed refugee youth’s high rates of participation in their program to their close connections with settlement workers, support teachers, and school counsellors. This is consistent with the

local study (Li et al., 2017) suggesting that one of the ways to achieve effective collaboration between government and non-government agencies is that “the community agencies in the exosystem not only need to work together but also need to build connections with people who have close relationships with newcomer youth in the microsystems, such as the LEARN teachers and settlement workers at school” (p. 1119). The findings of this study further confirmed that community organizations situated in the refugee youth’s exosystem need to collaborate with the support teachers and staff in their microsystem in order to involve more refugee youth.

6.2.3 Research question three and four: Barriers, practice implications, and policy recommendations

The findings resulting from research question three reveal that the landing age of refugee youth largely determines their educational trajectories. For those refugee youth participants who landed in Canada under the high school age limit, they were likely to benefit from the web of support in school; however, some of them were still faced with financial and informational barriers which impeded their access to post-secondary education. For those refugee youth participants who landed in Canada beyond the high school age limit, their educational trajectories were negatively affected by the inadequate provision of educational programs. In addition, this section discusses the implications for practice and offers recommendations for policy to remove these barriers by incorporating participants’ responses to the research question four regarding their suggestions for increasing refugee youth’s participation in post-secondary.

6.2.3.1 Financial barriers: Requiring further amendments to transportation loans and targeted scholarships and bursaries

Most of the refugee youth participants are from low-income families, worrying about the cost of post-secondary education. Many had to work part-time to support themselves, their family members in Canada, and even their family members in home countries. The financial struggles faced by refugee youth have been well documented in the literature (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Kanu, 2008; Mangan & Winter, 2017; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Shakya et al., 2010; Stevenson & Willott, 2007). Despite that financing post-secondary education is a common struggle faced by low-income families, refugee youth and their families' financial burdens are complicated by two particular factors: the repayment of transportation loans and a limited number of targeted scholarships and bursaries for refugee youth offered by post-secondary institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The negative influences of transportation loans have been demonstrated in the literature. For example, over two-thirds of refugees who participated in Simich, Hamilton, and Baya's study (2006) reported that they had difficulty repaying the transportation loan. Paying back transportation loans not only is a major source of economic stress but also a cause of mental health issues for refugees (Access Alliance, 2008). Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) (2017) argued that "The loan is a significant obstacle to the settlement and integration of resettled refugees" (p. 1). With regard to the impact of the transportation loans on refugee youth's education, CCR highlighted that "Refugee youth are forced to work long hours while going to school, or even postpone further education, because of the need to pay back the debt" (CCR, n.d., para. 2).

Fortunately, the federal government (IRCC, 2018) made changes to transportation loans on February 21, 2018, aiming to alleviate the loan repayment burdens for refugees. Previously, refugees were expected to start paying back the interest-laden loans 30 days after arrival in Canada. After the changes came into effect, the repayment period begins one year after arrival, the charge of interest has been abolished, and the loan term has been extended by two years (see Table 5).

Table 5 *The Loan Term Start Date before and after the Changes*

	Before the changes	After the changes
Amount of loan	Loan term	New loan term
Up to $1,200	12 months	36 months
$1,201 to $2,400	24 months	48 months
$2,401 to $3,600	36 months	60 months
$3,601 to $4,800	48 months	72 months
Over $4,800	72 months	96 months

Despite the changes made to transportation loans, several scholars and CCR advocated for the elimination of such loans. Kanu (2008) suggested that the Canadian federal government should implement policies to reduce the educational, financial, and psychosocial challenges faced by refugees, such as forgiving transportation loans. Shakya et al., (2010) also emphasized that policy interventions can minimize financial barriers to education, and the elimination of transportation loans is one effective solution. CCR (2017) recommended that “The government should absorb the costs of transportation” (p.1), or “If the loans are not eliminated, the government should introduce more waivers” (p. 2).

It is noteworthy that the Liberal Party of Canada waived transportation loans for the 25,000 Syrian refugees who came to Canada between November 4, 2015, and

February 29, 2016 (Hogeterp, Gunn, Dyck, & Walker, 2018). While the exemption deserved praise, Syrian refugees who were not lucky enough to arrive in Canada in this period and refugees from other areas are still under the stress of paying back transportation loans. Lynch (2016) argued that the exemption of the loans for a specific cohort of refugees is unfair to other refugees who came from the same miserable situations. Unfortunately, none of the refugee youth participants in the study were exempted from the immigration loans.

Considering the policy recommendations made by researchers (CCR, 2017; Kanu, 2008, & Shakya et al., 2010) and the results from this study, I maintain that the federal and provincial governments should ensure active encouragement of refugees' resettlement in Canada. It is imperative for the Canadian government to extend the generosity to cover transportation loans of all refugees to allow them to take full advantage of the first few years after arrival in Canada to acquire the knowledge and skills required not only for surviving but more importantly for thriving. Requesting refugees to repay transportation loans is merely a short-term view. Refugees would be more likely to achieve upward assimilation and make long-term positive contributions to Canadian society if they are given the opportunity to advance education or receive training.

In addition to transportation loans, the limited number of targeted scholarships and bursaries also impedes refugee youth's access to post-secondary education. Although most refugee youth participants preferred to attend the local university, Memorial University appears to lack financial assistance to target this group of youth.

After reviewing the scholarships for undergraduate students enrolled at Memorial University, the Ahmed Award was found to be the only scholarship specifically for refugee students (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2018).

> This award is to honour the memory of a young boy from Darfur, Sudan, who came to Newfoundland alone as a refugee. He was blessed with an indomitable spirit, a warm heart and an incredible desire for higher education. He died tragically by drowning in August of 2008. The award is to help others with similar backgrounds and desires to pursue their dream of a higher education. (under section Ahmed Award, para. 1)

Both the refugee youth participants and the staff member participants suggested more financial assistance be available to refugee students attending Memorial University. A number of researchers made similar recommendations. For instance, Shakya et al. (2010) suggested that policymakers and educators working at post-secondary institutions should help refugee youth overcome financial barriers, such as providing targeted scholarships. Anselme and Hands (2010) recommended that the donor community should not only offer funds helping refugees survive but also provide funds critical to human development. In particular, “Individual refugee scholarship programs should be expanded, aiming to make access to tertiary education a right and not a luxurious opportunity for a very small elite group” (Anselme & Hands, 2010, p. 95). Naidoo et al. (2018) also argued that “scholarships and access to finances were identified as critical forms of assistance” (p. 104). Some teaching staff members in Naidoo et al.’s study (2018) suggested that “funding models that assist Indigenous students would be valuable for refugee background students as well” (p. 83).

What is worth mentioning is that a number of scholarships and bursaries for refugee students have been launched by many other universities in Canada since late 2015 when the Syrian refugee crisis captured the world's attention and the Liberal government committed to welcoming 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2015 (University Affairs, 2015). For example, the President's Award for Refugees and Displaced Persons was launched by the University of Alberta which aims to cover the tuition and two years' living expenses for undergraduate or graduate students from refugee backgrounds (University of Alberta, 2018). A bursary fund was created by Concordia University, aiming to initially support Syrian refugees and ultimately help refugee students of any nationality. Additionally, the War Refugee Student Scholarship Fund was initiated by the University of Ottawa for the same purpose of assisting refugee students (University of Ottawa, 2015).

The majority of Government-assisted refugees (GARs) coming to Newfoundland and Labrador annually in the past few years were children and youth. In 2016, 55% of the 275 GARs landed in this province were under the age of 18 (ANC, 2016). In 2017, 49.4% of the 178 GARs resettled in Newfoundland and Labrador were under the age of 19. In 2018 up to September 30, the percentage was 59.3% (ANC, 2017; 2018). Therefore, a growing number of refugee children and youth will be graduating from high school and transitioning to college or university. Memorial University, the only university in Newfoundland and Labrador, ought to take the initiative to create targeted scholarships and bursaries for refugee youth to help them reduce financial barriers when they access post-secondary education.

6.2.3.2 Informational barriers: Requiring sufficient navigational and guidance services

Although support teachers and staff in their microsystem were dedicated to helping refugee students, many refugee youth participants appeared to be ill-informed about the possible destinations after high school. In addition, they tended to have little knowledge about the requirements that they need to meet in order to reach a specific destination. In particular, early in high school, they were not well-informed about what courses they would need to take to get into a post-secondary program. Therefore, refugee youth appeared to be less likely to begin high school with an end in mind.

The findings are consistent with previous research (Bajwa et al., 2017; Cassidy, 2015; Naidoo et al., 2018; Shakya et al., 2010; Stevenson & Willott, 2007) indicating that inadequate or inaccurate information received by refugee students on the school system and the paths after high school in the host countries is one of the barriers to their access to post-secondary education. Usually, parents, guidance counsellors, together with teachers, are the sources of information helping students with setting post-secondary goals and identifying steps to achieve these goals. However, with regard to refugee youth, their parents are less likely to play such roles due to their lower level of education attainment and English proficiency though they value education and have high expectations for their children. Therefore, on most occasions, refugee youth's sources of information are limited to guidance counsellors and teachers. As many refugee youth participants indicated, they sought help with course selection and planning mainly from one of the guidance counsellors at ABC High School.

The finding is not highlighted to blame the guidance counsellors at ABC High School for failing to provide adequate information for refugee youth. Indeed, the informational barriers are a reflection that neither the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) at the macrosystem level nor the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) at the exosystem level have paid enough attention to the guidance needs of refugee youth. As a result, schools failed to be staffed with an appropriate number of guidance counsellors to respond effectively to the navigational and guidance needs of the growing number of refugee students. In ABC High School, three guidance counsellors are working with over 1,000 students, which translates into a ratio of over 333 to one. This is much higher than the ratio of 250-to-1 recommended by the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2018). Thereby, the guidance counsellors can hardly give every student the necessary attention to shepherd them towards post-secondary destinations under this troubling ratio. Moreover, according to the refugee youth participants, they received support from one of the guidance counsellors who appeared to have a closer relationship with the group of refugee students than the other guidance counsellors. This particular guidance counsellor could be overburdened with the expanding roles, having to meet the needs of both local and refugee students.

Meanwhile, the participants articulated possible solutions to remove the informational barriers. The core of their suggestions was that the school system and the broad community need to make a commitment to address the guidance gap, which has practical implications for our school system. First, it is imperative for the DEECD and the NLESD to realize the important role of guidance counsellors in the lives of students,

especially those whose parents are not able to act as their in-house advisors such as refugee students and other low-income students. Second, the DEECD and the NLESD should ensure that each school is appropriately staffed with guidance counsellors according to the number and the demographics of their students. Lastly, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should make a funding commitment to community organizations to encourage them to offer navigational support and other academic support to refugee students. As Rae (2018) suggested,

> Community-based programs can play an important role in ensuring that immigrant youth receive the supports they need to reach their full academic potential … [They] can provide immigrant youth with information and guidance about the Canadian education system and the process of searching for, deciding on, and applying to college and university programs. (p. 10-11)

6.2.3.3 Academic challenges faced in post-secondary education: Requiring consistent ESL and academic support

Although the refugee youth who were attending or have been accepted to Memorial University had taken ESL courses in high school, they were still concerned over or struggling with academic English. The finding corresponds with a number of studies that revealed the challenge of academic English experienced by refugee students in universities, especially in reading and writing (Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Kanno & Varghese, 2016; Naidoo et al., 2018; Wilkinson, 2002).

To address the linguistic barriers, the participants suggested that Memorial University should offer continuous ESL support to refugee students. The suggestion is supported by Cummins' conceptual distinction between basic interpersonal

conversational skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1981). As mentioned in the literature review chapter, Cummins' research findings suggested that immigrant students are likely to achieve peer-appropriate levels in conversational skills within about two years; however, they require at least five years to attain academic English proficiency (Cummins, 1981; Cummins, 1989). Collier and Thomas (1989) reached a similar conclusion that even for advantaged second language learners, five to ten years are required to develop proficiency in second language cognitive-academic skills and content area subjects.

In the context of Newfoundland and Labrador, ABC High School is the only school across the province staffed with two full-time ESL teachers offering ESL courses on a daily basis, and most other ESL teachers work on an itinerant basis, offering two to four hours of instruction per seven-day cycle (Li & Que, 2018). In other words, most refugee students would be able to take advantage of the intensive and formalized ESL instruction for three years at ABC High School. Drawing on the BICS/CALP distinction, I argue that the three-year ESL class in high school alone would not adequately address the language needs of refugee youth pursuing post-secondary education, and consistent ESL support in university would be needed.

Fortunately, the provincial government announced $150,000 in funding for Memorial University to develop eight modules for an online ESL course for newcomers before and after they arrive in Newfoundland and Labrador (Advanced Education Skills and Labour, 2017). I recommend that the provincial government should take similar initiatives to meet the CALP needs of refugee youth attending university. Kanno and

Varghese's (2010) recommendations on linguistic support for refugee student in university provide useful insights, including

> a separate ESL track of the freshman composition course, integrating ESL students into regular composition classes with instructors who are aware of the needs of L2 writers, and optional ESL courses for specific skill areas for which ESL students can voluntarily sign up." (p. 324)

Kanno and Varghese emphasized that refugee students should be given academic credits for the ESL programs; otherwise it would "send them a strong message that they have arrived at the university with a deficit" (p. 324). Considering its small number of refugee students attending Memorial University, it might be more financially feasible to allow refugee students to audit their existing academic ESL programs for international students, free of charge.

In addition to consistent ESL support, universities should provide refugee students with specialized academic advising to address their academic challenges and help them make the most of their university experience. As Fagan et al. (2018) argued, "[F]or many students, both Australian-born and from refugee backgrounds, understanding and uncovering the 'hidden' curriculum of a particular educational context such as higher education is challenging" (p. vii). Baker and Dantas (2018) suggested that universities should designate a specialist to offer "consistent navigational and pastoral support to refugee students" ("Recommendations," para. 3). Naidoo et al. (2018) also spoke of the importance of "recognizing and negotiating the hidden curriculum of assessment and learning" (p. 107) in meaningful communication and participation in university, suggesting, "universities need to ensure that relevant policies and guidelines regarding

pastoral care and student well-being are put in place. Such policies will create a conducive learning environment, especially for students who are transitioning from school to university" (p. 107). Therefore, academic advisors working closely with refugee students especially in their first year to offer navigational and academic support should be made available and accessible at university.

Furthermore, to help refugee youth achieve academic success at university, faculty members and support staff play an important role. As Fagan et al. (2018) recommended, faculty members should be provided with professional development around "equity and pedagogic implications involved in teaching [refugee students], particularly with regard to unpacking assumptions about language, literacies and cultural aspects of teaching and learning in the disciplines" (p. 33). Since refugee children and youth increasingly enter the school system in Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial University is expected to receive more students from refugee backgrounds. The university, therefore, should provide targeted professional development for faculty members and support staff.

6.2.3.4 Lack of appropriate educational programs for refugee youth beyond high school age limit: Requiring the creation of new opportunities

Compared with refugee youth younger than 19 who were eligible to attend the regular high school program, refugee youth aged 19 or over with goals of furthering their education appeared to be placed at a disadvantage because the current programs and services in the language and the adult education sectors are less suited to their needs. Consequently, refugee youth in this age range appeared to be falling through the cracks, given that far from adequate attention has been paid to their educational goals.

With respect to the lack of appropriate language programs for this group of refugee youth, Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province in the country that only offers the LINC program at one resettlement agency without the involvement of educational institutions. The resettlement agency in the eastern region and its satellite office in the western region offer access to on-site LINC programs at one location respectively. However, the sole delivering of the LINC program at the resettlement agency in this province contradicts the benefits of the LINC program described by IRCC. According to IRCC (2017), refugee learners can take the LINC program at flexible locations, including schools, colleges, and community organizations. However, such flexibility is not available to refugees in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is no surprise that refugee young adults reported the embarrassment of attending the same school with their parents and their keenness to learn with their peers.

In most other provinces in Canada, besides the resettlement agencies, the LINC program is delivered through school boards as well. For example, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) (2018) provides the LINC program at a public school, a technical secondary school, and two continuing education centres. Toronto District School Board (TDSB) (2014) also offers the LINC program at 13 locations.

Additionally, a number of colleges and universities in the rest of Canada offer a variety of LINC programs. For instance, Vancouver Community College in Vancouver, British Columbia (2018) offers the LINC program with the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels 1 to 8. Bowvalley College (2019c) in Calgary, Alberta offers different types of full-time LINC programs, including LINC Literacy for learners with little formal education, LINC Practical for learners with five to nine years of formal

education, LINC Academic for learners with ten and more years of education, and LINC for youth between 18 and 24. University of Regina (2018) in Regina, Saskatchewan, offers the LINC program with CLB levels 1 to 4, aiming to "improve [refugees] English and integrate into Canadian culture while enjoying a university atmosphere" (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada section, para. 1). Assiniboine Community College (2018a) in Brandon, Manitoba, offers classes for CLB levels 5 through 8. Mohawk College (n.d.) in Hamilton, Ontario, offers full-time LINC classes for students with CLB 4 to 8, full-time LINC for academic preparation with CLB 6 to 8, and part-time LINC listening and writing course with CLB 5.

Some may argue that Newfoundland and Labrador welcomes a smaller number of refugees each year than provinces in mainland Canada, and therefore the centralized LINC program provided at one location would be more feasible. However, even Prince Edward Island, which received the least number of refugees yearly across Canada (IRCC, 2017), offers the LINC program at two educational institutions: Holland College and Study Abroad Canada Language Institute (PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada, n.d.). In addition, statistically, the number of young refugees who came to Newfoundland and Labrador was more than the number of secondary-school-age refugee children. In 2017, of the 178 GARs came to Newfoundland and Labrador, 17.4% were 19 to 24 years of age, 13.5% were 25 to 35 years of age, and 18.5% were 13 to 18 years of age (ANC, 2017). In 2018 up to September 30, among the 167 GARs, 7.8%, 18%, and 9.6% were in the three age ranges respectively (ANC, 2018). Therefore, the small number of refugees living in Newfoundland and Labrador cannot justify the centralization of the LINC

program, and the educational needs of young refugees between the ages of 18 and 29 should be given equal attention.

Due to the lack of appropriate adult education programs for refugee youth in this age range, these youths have no option but to take the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program Level I after completing the LINC program if they wish to further their education. As previously mentioned, the ABE Level 1 program teaches elementary-level literacy and numeracy. However, the repetition of education from the basic level is not included in the post-LINC education options suggested in the LINC curriculum guidelines which include "college academic upgrading program, college English for academic purposes program, direct entry to college or university, English proficiency exam preparation, and ESL class with a focus on academic preparation" (Hajer et al., 2007, p. 22).

The ABE program is currently offered by non-profit community-based centres and private institutions (DAESL, 2018). In comparison, in the rest of Canada, a variety of adult education programs are delivered in adult high schools and public colleges. For example, Toronto District School Board (TDSB) governs five adult high schools which "offer a variety of credit courses for learners who want to complete their Ontario Secondary School Diploma, prepare for college or university, or gain job-related training, along with specialty programs like Personal Support Worker and Practical Nursing" (TDSB, 2014a, para. 2). In addition, all five adult high schools offer ESL classes (TDSB, 2014b). As another example, OCDSB governs an Adult High School which "is a full-time regular high school that specializes in working with adults from a wide variety of backgrounds" (OCDSB, 2018b, para. 1). In particular, they "offer ESL to help adult

students who are new to Canada or who have been in Canada for a while but still need help to acquire English skills required for success in the workplace or post-secondary education" (OCDSB, 2018b, para. 5). Moreover, they offer a variety of student services, including "educational planning, career counselling/resources, post-secondary planning/information, and personal counselling/referrals" (OCDSB, 2018a, Services Available section, para. 1).

In addition, public colleges play an important role in offering adult education programs in other provinces in Canada. To name a few, Bowvalley College in Calgary, Alberta offers a Bridge program especially "for immigrant youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who have not completed high school. In Bridge, you will develop reading, writing, math, technology, and school strategies" (Bowvalley College, 2019b, Bridge section, para. 1), along with a variety of other adult education programs (Bowvalley College, 2019a). Holland College in Charlottetown, PEI also offers an adult education program (Holland College, 2018).

In fact, the ABE program used to be offered at the College of North Atlantic's (CNA) 12 campuses across Newfoundland. However, due to the budget cuts, the government eliminated the program from CNA and turned it over to the private college system in 2013 ("Adult Basic Education program to be privatized," 2013). The privatization of the program provoked heavy criticism from students who were concerned over the higher tuition fees and the reduced supports like guidance counselling (Jones, 2017; Howells, 2016). The former minister of DAESL also acknowledged that "it was a mistake to cut the College of the North Atlantic's adult basic education (ABE) program (Jones, 2017, para. 2), and his department was "seriously considering bringing it back"

(Jones, 2017, para. 2). However, up to now, the program has not been moved back to the public college system.

Worse still, refugee youth beyond the cut-off age for high school are not permitted to take the ABE program as soon as they land in Newfoundland and Labrador due to the ABE entrance requirements of language proficiency. Three refugee youth participants and one staff member participant indicated that refugees have to attain CLB 5 in order to get into the ABE program. The language prerequisites are also clearly stated on the website of Rabbittown Learners Centre which is one of the ABE I programs providers: "Any New Canadians wishing to attend the Rabbittown Learners Program, to complete level I, must enter the program with a Canadian Language Benchmark 5" (Rabbittown Learners Program Inc., n.d., New Canadian Requirements section, para. 3). It is noteworthy that DAESL, which is in charge of the ABE programs, does not include the language proficiency in the ABE entrance requirements on their website. Age and residency status seem to be the only requirements: "To be eligible for admission to ABE, an individual must be 19 years of age or older and a resident of Canada (includes permanent residents, landed immigrants or persons with refugee status" (DAESL, 2018, What is ABE section, para. 1). It remains unknown whether the language admission requirements are a hidden rule or a misalignment of policy and practice.

In the past, there were no such language requirements for admission to the ABE program when it was offered by CNA. According to The Coalition on Richer Diversity and The Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council (Burnaby, 2010), "an ESL version" (p. 22) of ABE Level I was offered at CNA which had an ESL component and accepted students with little English proficiency:

> The CNA ABE Level I ESL program is similar to the Foundation Level teaching in the LINC program. It fits the province's description of ABE Level I, but it admits newcomer students who have little or no literacy in any language and who need support in learning ESL as well. (p. 22)

It is uncertain when the new language requirements become effective or if they bear relation to the change of the ABE providers. Such language requirements could delay the academic development of these refugee youths, preventing them from improving literacy and learning language simultaneously.

Such a situation forms a sharp contrast to the simultaneous language, literacy, and numeracy support to refugee students in secondary schools. As mentioned previously, ABC High School is staffed with two full-time ESL teachers, and other schools offer ESL classes delivered by itinerant ESL teachers. In addition, the LEARN program which is a bridging program to close the educational gaps of refugee students with little prior schooling and to prepare them for mainstream classes (DEECE, 2011) is delivered at five middle schools and one high school across the province. Therefore, refugee students in secondary schools are given the opportunity to learn language and content simultaneously.

The provision of the ESL and LEARN programs is an implementation of content-based instruction (CBI) in second language teaching which "is a form of communicative language teaching (CLT) in which language instruction is integrated with school or academic content instruction" (Wesche, 2012, p. 1). In recent decades, CBI has been considered an important approach to ensure second language learners' academic success (Blanton, 1992; Brown, 2001; Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003). "A major advantage of CBI over other CLT approaches is that the use of school or postsecondary subject matter

as the content for language learning maximizes learners' exposure to the second language because they study both language and content at the same time" (Wesche, 2012, p. 3). Therefore, the current LINC-ABE path for refugee youth beyond the high school cut-off age is contradictory to CBI because they have to wait to learn content in the ABE program until they have reached a certain level of English proficiency through taking the LINC program. Furthermore, developing new programs geared to the specific educational needs of refugee youth beyond high school age or adapting current programs would be essential to meet their educational needs. Specifically, the provision of the LINC program at post-secondary institutions would be more suited to the needs of this group of refugee youth, because they could learn with peers of similar age group, gain exposure to college life, and transition to trade or undergraduate programs offered at the same institution after completing the advanced LINC class. In addition, to help these refugee youths realize their full potential, a LINC program focusing on academic English or CALP should be made available to refugee youth to better prepare them for advanced education. More importantly, considering the pressing needs of refugee youth in this age range are to upgrade their academic skills to acquire Canadian high school credentials for employment or further education, the ABE program with ESL support such as the CNA ABE Level I ESL program would be more suitable for them through which they could improve their language skills and learn content at the same time.

6.3 Theoretical implications

6.3.1 Implications for segmented assimilation theory

In this study, a few refugee youths made a successful transition to post-secondary with the support from school and community despite the fact that their parents had a

lower level of education and were unemployed or worked in low-wage jobs. The findings confirm Portes and Rambaut's (2001) assertion that

> High human capital in the first generation can be expected to play a powerful role, but even immigrants of modest endowments can successfully overcome challenges to their children's mobility when they can count on strong families and communities supporting their efforts. Groups … benefited from a favourable reception are usually in a better position to restructure themselves along solidary lines. (p. 69)

The correlation reinforces the importance of enhancing reception at the levels of government, society, and the co-ethnic community in the host country.

It is important to note that financial difficulties resulting from the repayment of transportation loans greatly impact refugee youth's access to post-secondary education. The findings confirm segmented assimilation theory in terms that unfavourable reception from the host government considerably contributes to immigrant children's lower levels of educational attainment.

According to segmented assimilation theory, whether the children of immigrants will move up or move down the social ladder in the host society is greatly influenced by their parents' post-immigration socioeconomic attainment which is largely determined by the contextual factors in terms of the reception from the host government, society, and co-ethnic community (Portes & Rambaut, 2001). Meanwhile, immigrant children are also directly influenced by these contextual factors because they live in the same social context as their parents. Specifically, governmental responses are an overarching contextual factor (Portes & Rambaut, 2001), varying from exclusion (i.e., "[authorities]

preclude immigration or forces immigrants into a … disadvantaged existence" (p. 46-47), passive acceptance (i.e., "[authorities] grant immigrants legal access to the country without any additional effort … to facilitate their adaptation" (p. 47), to active encouragement (i.e., "authorities take active steps to encourage a particular inflow or facilitate its resettlement" (p. 47). Portes and Rambaut further posit,

> Government support is important because it gives newcomers access to an array of resources that do not exist for other immigrants … It also improves the economic condition of those from modest backgrounds by providing job apprenticeships and direct economic assistance. (p. 47)

Therefore, it is imperative for the Government of Canada to further ensure active encouragement of refugees' resettlement in Canada by waiving transportation loans.

6.3.2 Implications for the bioecological model

Successful transition to college or university made by a few refugee youths in this study is closely associated with their high aspirations for pursuing post-secondary education. This confirms the bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) which posits that "developmentally generative characteristics" (p. 810) strongly and positively influence human development because they "can set proximal processes in motion and sustain their operation" (p. 810). As mentioned in the theoretical framework chapter, these characteristics include curiosity, propensity to initiate and engage in activities alone or with others, responsiveness, and the pursuit of long-term goals (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). According to the conceptualization, aspirations are a type of developmentally generative characteristic, and therefore refugee youth possessing high educational aspirations are more likely to initiate

and engage in proximal processes in the microsystem which further drives their development.

The enduring interactions between refugee students and support teachers and staff are one of the proximal processes that contribute to refugee youth's successful high school to post-secondary transition. The findings supported Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (2006) notion that proximal processes are the driving force of human development. Further, three refugee youths attributed their successful transition to university to Program 1 which was provided by a community organization. Each of them participated in this program regularly after school throughout three-year high school studies. The findings expand the bioecological model by revealing that proximal processes can occur in individuals' exosystem such as community organizations. In contrast, the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) suggests that proximal processes usually take place in individuals' microsystem (i.e., home or school). However, the findings reveal that interactions continuing for a long time in individuals' exosystem can also generate proximal processes and exert considerable influence on human development.

Since refugee youth's enduring interactions with educators in high school and in Program 1 usually end when they transition to college or university, refugee youth suggested that post-secondary institutions should continue to provide support and resources to help them thrive and find their path to academic success. In addition, as current adult educational programs in Newfoundland and Labrador were not adequate to meet the particular needs of refugee young adults, adult education sectors in this province need to improve or develop educational programs to meet the educational and career goals of this group of refugees. Therefore, while the bioecological model

(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) only emphasizes the influence of human developmental outcomes on broader society (i.e., macrosystem), the findings expand the bioecological model by indicating that the outcomes of human development have counter influence on changes in individuals' microsystem (e.g., college or university) and exosystem (e.g., community organizations) as well.

6.4 Summary

Refugee youth are inclined to have high educational aspirations because they understand that advanced education is an essential tool to improve their lower socio-economic status. Although this kind of intrinsic generative characteristic can positively and strongly influence human development, refugee youth are likely to fall into aspiration-achievement paradox without support. Therefore, high schools need to better help refugee students choose, refine, and realize their options for post-secondary destinations.

High school refugee youth are comparatively better supported through the effort of support teachers and staff in the school. The close relationships fostered between them are a major driving force of their educational outcomes. Nonetheless, not many community organizations offer educational programs accommodating high school refugee youth. Such programs and more collaboration between community organizations and schools are needed, which would expand the web of support for refugee youth.

Financial and informational barriers are identified as two major obstacles that impede high school refugee youth from accessing post-secondary education. Their financial burdens are complicated by the repayment of transportation loans and a limited number of targeted scholarships and bursaries offered by local post-secondary institutions.

Therefore, it is suggested that transportation loans should be alleviated, not just reduced. Considering refugee youth's preference for attending the local post-secondary institutions, Memorial University should offer scholarships and bursaries targeting refugee youth. In addition, the local educational authorities should pay more attention to refugee youth's guidance needs to shepherd them towards post-secondary destinations informed by and aligned with their aspirations and performance.

Refugee youth who are going to attend or are attending university are likely to have concerns over their skills in English academic reading and writing and be unfamiliar with the hidden curriculum of educational context at university. Therefore, it is essential to offer them consistent ESL support and academic advising services.

Refugee youth who landed in Newfoundland and Labrador beyond the high school age limit appear to be least likely to realize their educational goals because the current language and the adult education programs are not geared to meet their special educational needs. LINC programs housed in educational institutions, specialized for youth, or focusing on academic English, which are offered in most other Canadian cities, are not available in Newfoundland and Labrador. The refugee youth in this province have no option but to take the LINC program focusing on improving basic English skills for adult refugees delivered at the resettlement agency.

In addition, Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province across Canada that does not offer adult education programs in adult high schools or public colleges. Its ABE program is delivered in non-profit community-based centres and private institutions, which may not be able to offer student services. Furthermore, the ABE entrance requirements of the language proficiency are another hurdle for these refugee youths

because they are not allowed to take the ABE program without taking the LINC program, and they have to follow the LINC-ABE pathway, which deprives them of the opportunity to learn language and content simultaneously. Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop new adult learning programs addressing the specific needs of refugee young adults.

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Implications

In this final chapter, I first present a summary of this research project. Then I discuss its significance, including contribution to literature and theory, recommendations for further research, and implications for practice. Lastly, I end this dissertation with a few key messages that I wish to deliver to my readers.

7.1 Summary of the Research Project

The purpose of this study was to investigate refugee youth' aspirations for and access to post-secondary education in a smaller centre in Canada. The research questions that served as the basis of this study were:

- To what extent do refugee youth aspire to pursue post-secondary education?
- What programs and support are in place for helping refugee youth pursue post-secondary education?
- What are the barriers to post-secondary education faced by refugee youth?
- What recommendations could be made to increase refugee youth's participation in education beyond high school?

The theoretical framework that underpins this study consists of segmented assimilation theory (Portes & Zhou, 1993) and the bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Segmented assimilation theory provides an overarching framework to justify the importance and necessity of conducting this study because it emphasizes that immigrant children's upward or downward mobility in the host society is largely determined by their academic performance, especially, their academic performance in their late adolescence (Portes & Rambaut, 2001). The bioecological model draws attention to factors that strongly influence human

development, including person characteristics, proximal processes, and contextual environments (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

This study used a basic qualitative research approach. 20 refugee youths volunteered to participate in the study. Four of them were attending Memorial University; two were attending CNA; five were graduating from ABC High School; one was taking the LINC program, and two were taking the ABE program. In addition, three educational service providers were identified by the refugee youth as being helpful in preparing them for their transition to post-secondary education. One staff member from each organization was interviewed. Overall, the study included 20 refugee youths and three staff members.

Data were collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Twenty-two of the participants consented to be audiotaped and agreed to answer all the questions listed on the interview protocols and the follow-up probes in response to their accounts. One staff member did not wish to be audiotaped and only agreed to respond to the questions related to the description of their program. Each of the interviews was transcribed by myself immediately after it was completed. A constant comparative analysis was used to analyze the semi-structured interview data.

Findings revealed that new life in Canada instilled hope into many refugee youth participants as they aspired to get into university after high school. In particular, they wished to attend the local university so that they would be able to live with and take care of their families. However, few of them had a plan to seek long-term resettlement in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Within the microsystem, many of them referred to their parents, support teachers and staff at ABC High School, their friends, and academic advisors met at the university

fair as important people shaping their educational goals. Within the exosystem, three educational programs (i.e., Program 1, Program 2, and Program 3) were identified by refugee youth as helpful in preparing them for post-secondary education.

Refugee youth's access to post-secondary education was impeded by a number of barriers, including financial difficulties, lack of information, negative peer influence and limited communication with local peers, and concerns over the academic challenges they would face in post-secondary education. In addition, refugee youth aged 19 and over found it difficult to further their education due to the policy of high school age limit and a lack of appropriate adult educational programs geared to their needs. To remove these barriers, participants made a few suggestions that are presented and synthesized in section 7.2.4.

7.2 Significance of Research

7.2.1 Contribution to the literature

Previous studies have focused on post-secondary education for refugee youth in large cities in Canada (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009; Shakya et al., 2010), while little attention has been paid to the transition to post-secondary education experienced by refugee youth in smaller cities in Canada. My study has addressed these issues by focusing on refugee youth's aspirations for and access to post-secondary in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. According to the Canada 2016 Census (Statistics Canada, 2017c), St. John's was the 20th largest metropolitan area in Canada with a population of 205,955.

In addition, prior studies on refugee youth often included older refugee youth aged 19 and over in the same age group as younger refugee youth aged 18 and under; however,

lumping the two groups together fails to recognize that the adolescence-to-adulthood transition from the late teens to early twenties is a distinct stage of human development (Erikson, 1968). Individuals in this stage aspire to continue their education to secure more promising work opportunities, imbuing this transition stage with anxiety and instability (Arnett, 2004). Refugee young adults in Canada, at the intersection of transition and resettlement, are likely to face particular educational challenges. In most Canadian provinces, senior secondary education is limited to those aged 18 or under (Wilkinson, 2002). While refugee adolescents are entitled to compulsory education upon arrival in Canada, refugee young adults may thus find themselves excluded from public education. My study revealed, significantly, that refugee youth who were resettled in Newfoundland and Labrador at age 19 or older are less likely to fulfill their educational goals because the province's current adult education programs are not geared to this demographic's needs. As a result, refugee young adults are more likely to be trapped in low-wage jobs and are less likely to achieve upward social mobility without appropriate educational provision.

7.2.2 Contribution to theory

This study confirms the segmented assimilation theory in terms that reception in the host society plays a significant role in refugee youth's educational attainment and social mobility. Even if their parents have lower levels of human capital, refugee youth are likely to achieve academic success and move up the social ladder in the host society with adequate support from government, society, and co-ethnic community. Therefore, the study emphasizes the importance of improving reception at the three levels.

In addition, this study confirms the bioecological model by indicating that refugee youth's high educational aspirations and their enduring interactions with educators in

school and community significantly contributes to their successful transition from high school to post-secondary education. Further, this study expands the bioecological model by revealing that proximal processes can take place in individuals' exosystem (e.g., community organizations) as long as interactions occur on a regular basis for a long period of time, which in turn, exerts considerable influence on human development. This study also expands the bioecological model by revealing that the outcomes of human development not only have counter influence on changes in the macrosystem (e.g., broader society) but also on changes in individuals' microsystem (e.g., college or university) and exosystem (e.g., community organizations).

7.2.3 Recommendations for further research

Given the relatively small number of refugee youth and community-based educational service providers who participated in this research, the findings may not be generalized to the whole population of refugee youth in Canada. It was possible that refugee youth who aspired for post-secondary education would be more interested in participating in the study. Despite the limitation, refugee youth in other smaller centres in Canada are likely to face similar challenges when they pursue post-secondary education, and the findings may have significant implications for these population. Furthermore, the limitation necessitates future studies involving a broad spectrum of refugee youth and staff members. In particular, future studies should include refugee youth who have entered the labour market after graduating from high school and those who have dropped out of high school. According to segmented assimilation theory (Portes & Rambaut, 2001), these refugee youths are more likely to experience downward assimilation and unlikely to rise from lower rungs. Therefore, future investigations are needed to look at

the educational and life trajectories of these students in order to come up with an early intervention that can keep them in school and help them become more successful in society.

It is noteworthy that researchers need to be prepared for the potential challenges of recruiting these refugee youths to research studies because they are not affiliated with any specific organizations. In addition, because privacy and confidentiality are likely to be of great importance for students at the secondary level, schools would not disclose information on their dropouts. It could be particularly difficult for researchers to find refugee youth who have dropped out of school. Besides, these refugee youths may feel somewhat uncomfortable talking about their unsuccessful learning experiences and have concerns over their participation. These potential recruitment difficulties would need researchers to consider their recruitment plans and strategies carefully.

In addition, findings of this study show that refugee youth aged out of high school are left at a disadvantage. However, this study only includes three refugee youths in this age range and one ABE staff member who only agreed to respond to questions related to the description of their program. Therefore, future research should further investigate refugee learners' post-LINC destinations and ABE-to-college/university transition by including more refugee adult learners as well as LINC/ABE staff members.

Although the findings of this study paint a comparatively positive picture in that half of the refugee youth participants have made a successful transition from high school to post-secondary, it is noteworthy that most of them did not appear to have significant educational gaps when they started schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador because only two of them were required to take the LEARN program before joining the

mainstream classes, while the rest eight refugee youths took the mainstream classes directly. It is uncertain what the educational trajectories of refugee youth with limited or interrupted prior schooling would be. Therefore, further longitudinal research is needed to investigate whether the education system supports these refugee youths' successful transition to post-secondary education.

7.2.4 Implications for practice

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications for many persons interested in making post-secondary education more accessible for refugee youth. This study identified major barriers faced by refugee youth at different educational stages: financial difficulties and the lack of information are the biggest barriers that hinder high school refugee youth from reaching their full potential; how to adapt successfully to the academic environment of post-secondary education largely perplexes refugee youth who are going to attend or are attending college/university; and lack of educational programs geared to the needs of refugee youth who were beyond high school age limit when they came to Canada inhibits their development.

For local educational authorities, this study emphasizes that high school refugee youth's navigational and guidance needs are not being sufficiently addressed. They need to help and provide refugee youth with information and tools to make informed decisions and move forward along the appropriate post-secondary path they choose. Specifically, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board should design a complete high school course selection and planning guide for public access. In addition, given that nearly all the high school refugee youth go to the same high school, it is essential to staff the school with another guidance counsellor specializing in helping refugee students.

Moreover, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) should allocate funds to community organizations to encourage them to become more involved in helping high school refugee youth achieve academic success.

The refugee youth's preference for attending university in Newfoundland and Labrador is useful to administrators, faculty, and staff at Memorial University. Specifically, Memorial University should create more scholarships/bursaries targeting refugee youth and more importantly make refugee youth well informed of these opportunities. Academic advisors should inform refugee students of such opportunities at the university fair and collaborate with high school educators and staff to distribute the scholarship information among their students. In addition, Memorial University should provide ESL and academic advising support for admitted refugee youth to help them better adapt to its academic environment and thrive at university. Unquestionably, Memorial University, as a public university, will need the provincial government's funding commitment to take up this initiative.

For the LINC program providers, this study indicates the necessity of offering the LINC program specializing in youth and the LINC program focusing on academic English to meet the needs of those who wish to further their education. In addition, LINC program providers should consider delivering the program at public schools and post-secondary institutions to allow young refugee learners to become familiar with a school/college atmosphere.

For the provincial government, this study indicates the gaps in the delivery of current adult education programs. The situation that Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province across Canada that does not offer adult education programs in adult high

schools or public colleges calls for urgent action to better help adult learners advance their education. With respect to refugee adult learners, the ABE entrance requirements of language proficiency should be removed to allow refugee adult learners to take ABE programs as soon as they land in Newfoundland and Labrador. It would be ideal if the ABE program and the LINC program could be delivered at the same location so that refugee learners would be able to take the two programs simultaneously to improve their content knowledge and language skills efficiently.

For federal immigration and resettlement policymakers, this study makes it evident that the repayment of travel loans negatively influences refugee youth's pursuit of post-secondary education, which in turn, may hurt Canada's economic growth in the near future. Considering a skilled workforce is key to a country's strong and sustainable development, forgiving travel loans owed by refugees is a pressing need.

7.3 Key Messages of the Study

Despite their pre-resettlement traumatic experiences, refugee youth are able to make a transition to and succeed in post-secondary education after resettlement in Canada with adequate support from government, society, and community. Post-secondary education lays the foundation for refugee youth's upward social mobility. Their enhanced socioeconomic status will allow their children to start from a better position and be more likely to succeed in and contribute to Canadian society. As an effective mechanism to achieving upward social mobility, the gateways to post-secondary education should be kept open and wide for refugee youth.

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Appendix A Recruitment Poster

I am looking for newcomer youths (between the age of 15 to 34) from refugee backgrounds to take part in a study of

Surviving to Thriving: Post-secondary Education for Refugee Youth in Smaller Centres in Canada

Your participation would involve:
One face-to-face interview lasting about 60 minutes

During the interview, you would be asked to talk about your aspirations for and your access to post-secondary education.

For more information or to volunteer for this study, please contact:
Hua Que
PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Email: hua.que@mun.ca *or*
Tel: (709)682-6808

This study has been reviewed by, and has received ethics clearance through Memorial University Ethics Committee.

Appendix B Informed Consent Form for Students

Informed Consent Form

Title: *Surviving to Thriving: Post-secondary Education for Refugee Youth in Smaller Centres in Canada*

Researcher: **Hua Que**
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Tel: (709)682-6808
Office: (709)864-6926
Email: hua.que@mun.ca

Supervisor: **Dr. Xuemei Li**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NL. A1B 3X8
Office: ED 4029
Phone: (709)864-6224

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "Surviving to Thriving: Post-secondary Education for Refugee Youth in Smaller Centres in Canada."

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Hua Que, if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:

I am a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. As part of my Doctoral dissertation I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Xuemei Li.

Purpose of study:
This research aims to investigate refugee youth's aspirations for and access to post-secondary education in St. John's Newfoundland. The ultimate goal is to provide research-based insights into improving access to post-secondary education for refugee youth in smaller centres in Canada.

The research addresses the following questions:

1. To what extent do refugee youth aspire to pursue post-secondary education?
2. What programs and support are in place for helping refugee youth pursue post-secondary education?
3. What are the barriers to post-secondary education faced by refugee youth?
4. What recommendations could be made to increase refugee youth's participation in education beyond high school?

What you will do in this study:
To answer these questions, I invite you to participate in the interview. You will be required to take part in one interview. When convenient to and agreed upon by participants, interviews can be conducted at the researcher's office or at any vacant classroom in the education building with prior confirmation with the staff. I have a few questions that I have prepared to guide the conversation, but you will be free to add anything you want or to avoid answering a specific question.

Length of time:
The interview will last for about one hour.

Withdrawal from the study:
If you wish to withdraw, you may use the above contact information to do so before, during, or after the interview starts or before, during, or after the completion of the interview. You do not need to explain why.

Interviews will be transcribed by the researcher, and you will be provided with a copy of the transcript to check and if you wish to change information, you will be given the opportunity to do this. Once you have checked the transcript of the interview, it will be the last point to withdraw from the study.

All data collected relevant to you will be destroyed if you decide to withdraw. There will be no consequences for your withdrawal.

Possible benefits:
My study will give refugee youth in small centres in Canada a voice on their educational experiences after high school. The dissemination of my written report and presentations will make their voice heard, attract public attention to post-secondary education for

refugee youth, and provide research-based insights into improving access to post-secondary education for refugee youth in smaller centres in Canada.

The results will contribute to the existing literature on the educational needs of refugee children and youth in Canada's small-sized cities.

Possible risks:
There are no apparent risks for you to participate. However, it is possible that you may feel stress talking about unsuccessful applications to university or difficulties finding work. If you feel uncomfortable during the discussion, I will stop right away. If you wish to confide in a counsellor, I will connect you with newcomer/refugee agencies in the city.

Your participation is not a requirement of the school/university/college or the government, and it will not be reported to anyone.

Confidentiality:
Your identity will be protected during and after the research. I will use a pseudonym for you in transcripts, notes, reports, presentations, and publications. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

Anonymity:
I will not use your real name in any publications or on any publication occasions. Any identifying information regarding your characteristics, physical appearance, etc. will be removed.

Recording of Data:
With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and direct quotations from you may be used to support research findings or to explain a point. You will have the opportunity to review your part of the discussion transcript and delete/change any of your comments that you do not want to remain part of the study.

Storage of Data:
All notes and audio recordings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the residence of the researcher. All electronic documents will be password protected and stored in a hard drive which will be locked in the same filing cabinet where all documents will be stored.

Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research requires that data be kept for a minimum of 5 years. Data for this project will be kept for 5 years and then be destroyed.

Reporting of Results:
Data collected will be published in journal articles, presented at conferences and workshops. I may use direct quotes from you without identifying you. In most cases, I will report the data in a summarized form.

Sharing of Results with Participants:
The data will be used for my doctoral dissertation. Upon completion, my dissertation will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library, and can be accessed online at: http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses.

Questions:
You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact Hua Que at hua.que@mun.ca or 709-682-6808.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:
Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study without having to give a reason and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation during data collection, any data collected from you up to that point will be destroyed.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw after data collection has ended, your data can be removed from the study up to the last point of withdrawal.

Your signature:

I agree to be audio-recorded ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to the use of direct quotations ☐ Yes ☐ No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:
☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.
☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

Researcher's Signature:
I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____ _____
Signature of Principal Investigator Date

Appendix C Informed Consent Form for Parents/Guardian

Informed Consent Form
(Parent/Guardian, for students under the age of 19)

Title: *Surviving to Thriving: Post-secondary Education for Refugee Youth in Smaller Centres in Canada*

Researcher: **Hua Que**
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Tel: (709)682-6808
Office: (709)864-6926
Email: hua.que@mun.ca

Supervisor: **Dr. Xuemei Li**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NL. A1B 3X8
Office: ED 4029
Phone: (709)864-6224

Your child is invited to take part in a research project entitled "Surviving to Thriving: Post-secondary Education for Refugee Youth in Smaller Centres in Canada."

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your child's participation will involve. It also describes your child's right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you allow your child to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Hua Que, if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to allow your child to take part in this research. If you choose not to allow your child to take part in this research or if you decide to

withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you and your child, now or in the future.

Introduction:
I am a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. As part of my Doctoral dissertation I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Xuemei Li.

Purpose of study:
This research aims to investigate refugee youth's aspirations for and access to post-secondary education in St. John's Newfoundland. The ultimate goal is to provide research-based insights into improving access to post-secondary education for refugee youth in smaller centres in Canada.

The research addresses the following questions:

1. To what extent do refugee youth aspire to pursue post-secondary education?
2. What programs and support are in place for helping refugee youth pursue post-secondary education?
3. What are the barriers to post-secondary education faced by refugee youth?
4. What recommendations could be made to increase refugee youth's participation in education beyond high school?

What your child will do in this study:
To answer these questions, I invite your child to participate in the interview. He/she will be required to take part in one interview. When convenient to and agreed upon by participants, interviews can be conducted at the researcher's office or at any vacant classroom in the education building with prior confirmation with the staff. I have a few questions that I have prepared to guide the conversation, but your child will be free to add anything he/she wants or to avoid answering a specific question.

Length of time:
The interview will last for about one hour.

Withdrawal from the study:
If you wish to withdraw your child, you may use the above contact information to do so before, during, or after the interview starts or before, during, or after the completion of the interview. You do not need to explain why.

Interviews will be transcribed by the researcher, and you will be provided with a copy of the transcript to check and if you wish to change information, you will be given the opportunity to do this. Once you have checked the transcript of the interview, it will be the last point to withdraw from the study.

All data collected relevant to your child will be destroyed if you decide to withdraw your child. There will be no consequences for you withdrawing your child.

Possible benefits:
My study will give refugee youth in small centres in Canada a voice on their educational experiences after high school. The dissemination of my written report and presentations will make their voice heard, attract public attention to post-secondary education for refugee youth, and provide research-based insights into improving access to post-secondary education for refugee youth in smaller centres in Canada.

The results will contribute to the existing literature on the educational needs of refugee children and youth in Canada's smaller cities.

Possible risks:
There are no apparent risks for your child to participate. However, it is possible that your child may feel stress talking about unsuccessful applications to university or difficulties finding work. If your child feels uncomfortable during the discussion, I will stop right away. If you wish to confide in a counsellor, I will connect you with newcomer/refugee agencies in the city.

Your child's participation is not a requirement of the school/university/college or the government, and it will not be reported to anyone.

Confidentiality:
Your child's identity will be protected during and after the research. I will use a pseudonym for your child in transcripts, notes, reports, presentations, and publications. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

Anonymity:
I will not use your real name in any publications or on any publication occasions. Any identifying information regarding your child's characteristics, physical appearance, etc. will be removed.

Recording of Data:
With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and direct quotations from your child may be used to support research findings or to explain a point. You will have the opportunity to review your child's part of the discussion transcript and delete/change any of your child's comments that you do not want to remain part of the study.

Storage of Data:
All notes and audio recordings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the residence of the researcher. All electronic documents will be password protected and stored in a hard drive which will be locked in the same filing cabinet where all documents will be stored.

Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research requires that data be kept for a minimum of 5 years. Data for this project will be kept for 5 years and then be destroyed.

Reporting of Results:
Data collected will be published in journal articles, presented at conferences and workshops. I may use direct quotes from you without identifying you. In most cases, I will report the data in a summarized form.

Sharing of Results with Participants:
The data will be used for my doctoral dissertation. Upon completion, my dissertation will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library, and can be accessed online at: http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses.

Questions:
You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact Hua Que at hua.que@mun.ca or 709-682-6808.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:
Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what your child will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw your child from the study without having to give a reason and that doing so will not affect you and your child now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end your child's participation during data collection, any data collected from your child up to that point will be destroyed.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw your child after data collection has ended, your child's data can be removed from the study up to the last point of withdrawal.

Your signature:

I allow my child to be audio-recorded ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to the use of direct quotations from my child ☐ Yes ☐ No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to allow my child to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my child's participation, that my child's participation is voluntary, and that I may end my child's participation.

☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____	_____
Name of parent/guardian	Relationship to student
_____	_____
Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____	_____
Signature of Principal Investigator	Date

Appendix D Interview Protocol for Refugee Youth

Part 1: Demographic information

1. How old are you? Where are you from?
2. When did you come to Newfoundland? Whom did you come with?
3. Which school do you go to? What grade are you in?

Part 2: Pre- and post-settlement educational experiences

4. Did you go to school before coming to Canada?
5. Did you aspire to attend university before coming to Canada?
6. What were your career goals back then?
7. Which school did you go to when you just moved to Newfoundland? You were placed at which grade level?
8. What do you want to do after graduating from high school?
9. What do you want to do after graduating from university?

Part 3: Support and challenges

10. Have you applied to an undergraduate program?
11. Have you heard back from any universities or colleges?
12. If you are successful in the application, who are the people you would like to thank? What do you think you should do to make your post-secondary education meaningful to your life? What do you plan to achieve through your post-secondary education?
13. If you are not successful in the application, what do you think are the reasons? Will you try again next year, or will you find a job? Will you seek help from any person or organization?
14. Do you think post-secondary education is important to you? Why or why not?
15. Have you encountered any difficulties in your pursuit of post-secondary education?
16. Have you ever sought help from any person or organization to get help with the post-secondary application?
17. Do you think the education system is favourable to refugee students in terms of pursuing post-secondary education in St. John's, NL, or Canada?
18. Are you aware of any existing services or resources supporting the aspirations of refugee youth for post-secondary education in St. John's?

Part 4: Recommendations

19. What suggestions do you have to make it more possible for refugee youth to access post-secondary education in smaller cities such as St. John's?
20. What is your career goal? Do you feel optimistic that you can achieve it? Do you know how to achieve it?

Appendix E Informed Consent Form for Educational Service Providers

Informed Consent Form

Title: *Surviving to Thriving: Post-secondary Education for Refugee Youth in Smaller Centres in Canada*

Researcher: **Hua Que**
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Tel: (709)682-6808
Office: (709)864-6926
Email: hua.que@mun.ca

Supervisor: **Dr. Xuemei Li**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NL. A1B 3X8
Office: ED 4029
Phone: (709)864-6224

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "Surviving to Thriving: Post-secondary Education for Refugee Youth in Smaller Centres in Canada."

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Hua Que, if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:
I am a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. As part of my Doctoral dissertation I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Xuemei Li.

Purpose of study:
This research aims to investigate refugee youth's aspirations for and access to post-secondary education in St. John's Newfoundland. The ultimate goal is to provide research-based insights into improving access to post-secondary education for refugee youth in smaller centres in Canada.

The research addresses the following questions:

1. To what extent do refugee youth aspire to pursue post-secondary education?
2. What programs and support are in place for helping refugee youth pursue post-secondary education?
3. What are the barriers to post-secondary education faced by refugee youth?
4. What recommendations could be made to increase refugee youth's participation in education beyond high school?

What you will do in this study:
To answer these questions, I invite you to participate in the interview. You will be required to take part in one interview. When convenient to and agreed upon by participants, interviews can be conducted at the researcher's office or at any vacant classroom in the education building with prior confirmation with the staff. I have a few questions that I have prepared to guide the conversation, but you will be free to add anything you want or to avoid answering a specific question.

Length of time:
The interview will last for about one hour.

Withdrawal from the study:
If you wish to withdraw, you may use the above contact information to do so before, during, or after the interview starts or before, during, or after the completion of the interview. You do not need to explain why.

Interviews will be transcribed by the researcher, and you will be provided with a copy of the transcript to check and if you wish to change information, you will be given the opportunity to do this. Once you have checked the transcript of the interview, it will be the last point to withdraw from the study.

All data collected relevant to you will be destroyed if you decide to withdraw. There will be no consequences for your withdrawal.

Possible benefits:

My study will give refugee youth in small centres in Canada a voice on their educational experiences after high school. The dissemination of my written report and presentations will make their voice heard, attract public attention to post-secondary education for refugee youth, and provide research-based insights into improving access to post-secondary education for refugee youth in smaller centres in Canada.

The results will contribute to the existing literature on the educational needs of refugee children and youth in Canada's small-sized cities.

Possible risks:
There are no apparent risks for you to participate. However, it is possible that you may feel stress talking about gaps in support and services for refugee youth. If you feel uncomfortable during the discussion, I will stop right away.

Your participation is not a requirement of the school/university/college or the government, and it will not be reported to anyone.

Confidentiality:
Your identity will be protected during and after the research. I will use a pseudonym for you in transcripts, notes, reports, presentations, and publications. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

Anonymity:
I will not use your real name in any publications or on any publication occasions. Any identifying information regarding your characteristics, physical appearance, etc. will be removed.

Recording of Data:
With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and direct quotations from you may be used to support research findings or to explain a point. You will have the opportunity to review your part of the discussion transcript and delete/change any of your comments that you do not want to remain part of the study.

Storage of Data:
All notes and audio recordings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the residence of the researcher. All electronic documents will be password protected and stored in a hard drive which will be locked in the same filing cabinet where all documents will be stored.

Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research requires that data be kept for a minimum of 5 years. Data for this project will be kept for 5 years and then be destroyed.

Reporting of Results:

Data collected will be published in journal articles, presented at conferences and workshops. I may use direct quotes from you without identifying you. In most cases, I will report the data in a summarized form.

Sharing of Results with Participants:
The data will be used for my doctoral dissertation. Upon completion, my dissertation will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library, and can be accessed online at: http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses.

Questions:
You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact Hua Que at hua.que@mun.ca or 709-682-6808.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:
Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study without having to give a reason and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation during data collection, any data collected from you up to that point will be destroyed.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw after data collection has ended, your data can be removed from the study up to the last point of withdrawal.

Your signature:

I agree to be audio-recorded ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to the use of direct quotations ☐ Yes ☐ No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.
☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.
☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

Researcher's Signature:
I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____ _____
Signature of Principal Investigator Date

Appendix F Interview Protocol for Educational Service Providers

Part 1: Description of programs

1. Could you tell me a little about your program?
2. How many newcomer students in your program?
3. How did they get to know your program?
4. What kind of educational services you can provide to these students?
5. Are you collaborating with other government or non-government organizations?
6. Could you give me some success stories that newcomer students who are in your program and have achieved their educational goals?

Part 2: Perception of refugee youth's aspirations for post-secondary education

7. Do you think post-secondary education is important for newcomers in NL?
8. How many newcomer students got acceptance to university through your program?
9. What are the scholarship opportunities that newcomer students can apply to?
10. Do you feel refugee students in your program have a strong desire for post-secondary?

Part 3: Identification of the challenges faced by refugee youth

11. What are the difficulties or challenges that you think refugee students are faced with in terms of getting university education?

Part 4: Recommendations

12. What do you think we can do to make post-secondary education more accessible for newcomer students?