

EXAMINING THE TRANSITIONAL EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
STUDYING IN WESTCOAST (BC) CANADA

(Transitional Experiences of African Students in Canada)

(Thesis Format: Monograph)

By Toyosi Bamgboye

Graduate Program in Education

A thesis submitted in partial of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education
Educational Leadership

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Memorial University

St John's

Newfoundland and Labrador

Canada

August 2022

Table of Contents

Title Page	
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgement	v
Abstract	vi
Table of Content	
Chapter 1: Background	
Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	1
Context of the Study	2
Research Questions	3
Significance of the Study	4
Defining International and African Students	5
Summary	6
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	
Introduction	7
Studies on African Students' Transitional Experiences in Higher Education outside Canada.....	8
Studies on African Students' Transitional Experiences in Higher Education within Canada	14
Studies on What Universities Are Currently Doing	17
Summary	18
Chapter 3: Methodology	
Introduction	21
Overview of Methodology	21
Participant Recruitment	23

Sampling Method	23
Data Collection	24
Interviews	24
Data Analysis	26
Research Participants	28
Ethical Considerations	30
Situating the Researcher	30
Summary	31
Chapter 4: Presentation and Research Findings	
Introduction	33
Themes from Findings:	
The Effect of Finances in Transitioning for International Students from Africa	34
The Expensive Nature of British Columbia and the Pressure on Students	35
Importance of Social Support in Transition	37
Mode of Teaching and Learning in Canada	39
The Role of Institutions in Helping International Students Transition	40
Summary	42
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Implications for Further Research	
Introduction	44
Conclusions Drawn from the Research	44
What can West Coast (BC) Universities do to help International Students	
Pre-arrival Support	45
Mandatory Transition Course for International Students	46
Connecting Students to Community Based Organizations	47
Internationalizing Methods of Teaching	47

Increase Financial Opportunities	48
Limitations of the Research	48
Implications for Future Research	50
Recommendation	51
References	53
Appendix A: Letter of Information	65
Appendix B: Consent Form	67
Appendix C: Research Questions	68
Appendix D: Resume	69
Appendix E: TCPC 2 Certificate	72

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my loving wife, daughter, mother and siblings for all their love and support.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank all the participants in my study for their contribution and assistance in its completion. It was a pleasure listening to their unique stories which will add to the depth of knowledge of this population.

I would like to express my appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Noel Hurley, whose guidance was invaluable all through my study. It was a delight and pleasure to be able to work on such a project with a professor with such wealth and depth of knowledge in education.

I would like especially to thank my wife who had to look after our young daughter while I worked on the completion of my thesis. Her hard work and love were part of the fuel that drove me all through this study. I would like to thank my mother for investing her time and money in raising me and becoming the man I am today. I would like to thank all my siblings for their support and encouragement.

Abstract

Drawing upon previous research around the transitional experiences of international students studying abroad, this research examines the transitional experiences of African International students studying in British Columbia, Canada. These transitional experiences could be cultural, academic, social, or financial. The main aim of this research is to investigate transitional experiences and to give the participants a voice. I interviewed six African undergraduate students regarding their transitional experiences while studying in British Columbia using a case study methodology. This research shows that all six of the students were concerned about their experiences in British Columbia, including at the university, and discusses potential remedies for future incoming students. The students' stories communicated that current deficiencies hinder students' ability to transition appropriately to their environment. This research aims to increase awareness among universities, educators, and society about the circumstances that adversely affect African international students studying in British Columbia by exploring these inadequacies.

Keywords: transitional experiences, university inadequacies, international, African international students, British Columbia, West Coast Canada

Chapter 1

Introduction

In Chapter One, I provide the purpose for completing my research while identifying my research questions based on previous research and literature sources. I introduce some essential terms that are present in my research. My research examines the Transitional experiences of African undergraduate students studying and living in West Coast Canada (British Columbia). This study is guided by previous research that speaks to the transitional experiences that international students go through upon arrival in Canada. The data for the study were obtained using structured interviews conducted with seven international undergraduate students from African countries attending a particular university in British Columbia.

Purpose of Study

This research aims to examine the transitional experiences of African International students studying in British Columbia and use these experiences to help universities in British Columbia develop more effective programs to assist these international students in transitioning more smoothly to their new environment. Research looking at the experiences of African international students studying in Canada has been minimal. This is a surprise because of the large number of international students from African countries attending post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. As opposed to previous research on international students, the present study focused on African students' transitional experiences and how universities in British Columbia can learn from these experiences to ensure settling and success. While utilizing qualitative research, I sought to examine the experiences of African students living and studying in British Columbia. An essential part of this research was also to educate universities on how peculiar the student population is and how better to cater to them. One of the most

underutilized methods of supporting students is asking them what that support should look like, and that is another reason why this research is crucial. According to Altbach (1991), the experiences of international students have not been a subject of research and have been limited to peripheral concerns. With the influx of African international students to British Columbia, there is no better time to conduct an in-depth study on the student experience. According to Heslop (2018), as of 2016/17, there were 58 591 international students in the BC post-secondary school system, with two of BC's biggest universities (Simon Fraser University & University of British Columbia) hosting nearly half of these students (p. 12). This research aims to give a voice and advocate for many African undergraduate students in British Columbia who believe that universities could do better in helping them adapt to their environment and enhance their likelihood of student success. This study could provide an impetus for further research on a larger scale to gain more insight into the experiences of African undergraduate students in British Columbia.

Context of Study

The number of African students choosing to study in British Columbia has increased in recent years. Many institutions in British Columbia are fully aware of this increase and are working hard to attract these students. Nigeria is among Canada's top ten sources of international students (El-Assal, 2020). The University of British Columbia (UBC) recently launched a scholarship program called "Beyond Tomorrow Scholars Program" and the "MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program" to attract black students. The scholarships provide extensive financial support to help black students while studying. Undoubtedly, finance is a significant challenge that many African students encounter, but there are many more issues that these students must face. Some of these issues are highlighted throughout this paper. According to Carroll and Ryan (2005),

Many international students face significant difficulties having taken the decision to study abroad, many encounter difficulties in their quest to be academically successful in the learning environment...Even students with a good command of English can struggle with local peculiarities and lack discipline-specific vocabulary. However, international students must deal with all these things and more: they have different social and cultural mores and customs, norms and values from the ones they have known; different modes of teaching and learning; and different expectations and conventions about participation and performance. They must cope without their usual support systems...often each problem exacerbates the others and can become overwhelming. (p.5)

Despite the good intentions of these universities to attract African students, it is easy to overlook the students themselves.

In 2018, the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) conducted an extensive survey of international students in Canada. Over 14,000 students completed the survey, of which 14% were African students. It is also important to note that British Columbia had the highest respondents. Despite an increased number of international students (95%) stating that their academic demands are being met, a lesser number of students indicated that they were involved in campus activities (29% - 73%) (CBIE, 2018). Engagement on campus usually shows that students settle and adapt well to their environment. These data from CBIE are another important indication that there is a need to examine the experiences of African students studying in British Columbia.

Research Questions

I chose to use qualitative research for this study because I believe it is the most appropriate research methodology to achieve the study's aims. According to Robson (2002), "three major aspects a researcher should consider in determining the purpose of the research one of which is exploratory. All three aspects highlighted by Robson are areas I hope to shed more light on as they relate to these student experiences.

My research questions are as follows:

How are the transitional experiences of African undergraduate students different from other international students studying in West Coast Canada?

How can universities in BC learn from these transitional experiences to ensure student success for African students?

What are some practical programming plans universities in BC could put in place to ensure the success of African students?

Significance of Study

The reasons for choosing this research are deep-rooted in my personal and professional work experience. I used to be an international student many years ago. I still remember some issues that significantly affected me and delayed my ability to graduate and settle in Canada. After graduation and working in post-secondary, I can see firsthand how we can do more to support international students, especially students from Africa. The literature review would suggest limited research on African undergraduate students across Canada. A few studies on African postgraduate students exist, but minimal research on undergraduate students. Canada's diversity can be seen amongst African students studying in BC. Despite this diversity, these

African students have in common that they encounter similar challenges during their studies. I am confident that my research will help my participants share their challenges and affect their transition from their home country to study in British Columbia.

Studies have proven that international students encounter hardship compared to their domestic peers, attributed to cultural differences (Andrade 2006). One of those hardships includes feelings of marginalization outside and inside of classrooms. As mentioned by Hernandez-Ramdwar in his 2009 research on Caribbean students studying in Canada, feelings of marginalization are more common in classrooms among international students than in their Canadian counterparts. Many African students find it hard to interpret these feelings of marginalization, while some do not even understand it. It is important to hear how students experience marginalization in their day-to-day lives. Voicing and interpreting these feelings of marginalization is one of the reasons why my study will be significant in helping African students. Understanding how marginalization could affect the ability of students to transition to their environment is another crucial part of my study.

Aside from the abovementioned issues, many other factors could hinder African students' transition to their new environment. Many of these factors will emerge from the interview questions that will be asked of the participants in the study. The results from this study may require further research to understand how transitional experiences affect students from Africa fully.

Defining International and African Students

According to Citizen and Immigration Canada (2012), international students are defined as foreign students who require a study permit to study a program that is six months or longer in Canada. The Canadian Bureau of International Education also defines international students as neither citizens nor permanent residents in Canada. Statistics Canada (2011) defines

international students as those who have come to Canada to pursue education. Regarding my study, African students are from African countries and are on study permits. Based on these various definitions, African students in Canada are international students.

Summary

This chapter introduced the purpose of the research and some of the emerging themes evident in the supporting research. Based on current literature, there is little research on the transitional experience of African undergraduates studying and living in British Columbia. This research will serve as a voice for these students and help them make impactful changes to help future African students learn in BC. We can anticipate that transitional experiences will vary amongst our student participants. Some of them might be positive, while some will be negative. I hope that universities can learn from the transitional experiences of these students and start working toward making necessary changes to the current system. This thesis contains five chapters, the first of which explains the background and purpose of the research, including the context and significance of the research. The second chapter is a literature review that provides a research foundation for the study. The third chapter explains the methods used to conduct this study, while the fourth chapter presents an analysis of the findings from the participants. The fifth and final chapter provides the conclusion, outlines the implications for future research, and offers some pertinent recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

The literature review allows readers to see previous research completed in similar studies. One of the opportunities this literature review affords readers is the study's importance in comparing findings with other studies (Creswell, 2007). We begin the review by looking at current studies on the transitional experiences of African students in universities outside of Canada, mainly in the United States and Europe. The review then looks at studies completed on African students within Canada. As indicated earlier, there is currently limited research on this population of students. Most of the current studies are from the United States and Europe. The main reason is that historically these countries have been the desired destination of many African students. The trend is changing as the Canadian education sector is seen as equally good, if not better, than these countries. Many studies on African students in these countries have also primarily focused on cultural and discrimination issues these students face while studying. This literature review starts from a broader perspective by looking at international student experiences outside Canada. Afterwards, we will then focus on narrowing it down to studies in Canada.

A few Canadian researchers have looked at African students studying in Canada (Dei, 1995; Hamilton & Shang, 1999; Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009; Busia, 1993). These authors have looked mainly at second-generation Black students studying in Canada. None of these authors have examined African students studying in West Coast Canada. In contrast to some researchers highlighted here, my study targets African students in BC. This specificity is really to explore how the experiences of African students studying in BC are different from other provinces. Geographical locations are unique, which plays a critical part in transitional

experiences. Knowledge from this area could help universities and provincial authorities cater to the African students studying in this part of Canada.

Studies on African Students' Transitional Experiences in Higher Education Outside

Canada

As indicated earlier, this section of the paper aims to provide more insight into work that has been done on the transition of African undergraduate students outside of Canada. The currently limited research on African undergraduate students in British Columbia is another reason for looking outside Canada.

Over the years, international education worldwide has soared because individuals seek academic opportunities to be better educated than their peers. According to Akanwa (2015), historically, students have sought advanced education to make them exceptional amongst their peers (p. 273). According to Hegarty (2014), international students have been leaving their country for foreign destinations because "the simple reason that they feel they can get a better education abroad which will differentiate them from their peers upon returning home" (p. 228).

As we can see from the above authors, international students leave their home countries to seek academic excellence in other countries to be successful. All international students are not the same. It would be interesting to see how research might reveal how different international students experience transition when they arrive in a new country.

According to Gallagher et al. (1992) and Raunic and Xenos (2008), brand-new students are the most susceptible to financial, social, physical and mental health-related issues. The susceptibility of these new students is incremental because of how significant the initial transition phase could be for them. Giovazolias et al. (2010) discovered that developmental

issues tend to arise during the transition. These issues include establishing networks, forming novel relationships, learning to survive independently without their families, etc. Some studies examining international students' transition have cited gender as a crucial factor. Flisher et al. (2002) found that female students were more likely to seek counselling than male students. Counselling services are an important aspect of post-secondary student life experience, especially for new students. Yeh & Inose (2003) also studied international students seeking counselling during their education. They found out that most students sought counselling because they were concerned about their future. The Yeh & Inose study shows that international students have serious concerns about moving to study abroad.

Nicholas et al. (2013) conducted a study to investigate the needs of international first-year students and their preferred interventions in addressing those needs. The study findings prove that first-year international students do encounter several issues. The study also corroborates Yeh & Inose (2003) study, demonstrating that female students are more likely to reach out for support when needed.

Studies outside Canada on international students have cited that the university's city plays a significant role during the transition. Gautam et al. (2016) researched international students studying in a small town in the United States. According to the Gautam et al. (2016) study, they noted that participants in the study had not-so-positive reflections about the city (p. 510). Another reason cited in Gautam et al. (2016) study was that small cities were too rural, and some students preferred a bigger city with more sophisticated amenities. It is important to note that international students come from a tight-knit community. The inability to find similar communities while studying abroad could create transition issues.

Bakashlova and Kosakov (2016) examined international student experiences in Russia. One of their findings reveals that these international students struggled socially, "International

students face challenges in the classroom and their social life. For example, they say that when they visit social events, they have to deal with different communication patterns" (p. 1827). The inability to communicate makes it difficult for international students in some countries. Dillon and Swan (1997) conducted a study on East Asian students studying abroad. They found out that their inability to communicate in English was of concern.

Khanal and Gaulee (2019) conducted extensive research on international students' pre-departure and post-study challenges. They looked at the unique challenges these international students faced worldwide. One of the pre-departure challenges noted by Khanal and Gaulee (2019) was language barriers among students whose first language was not English, "Chinese students experience difficulties before entering study abroad programs, including choosing the best university, deciding whether to use an agent and having confidence about language barriers" (p. 563). The study by Khanal and Gaulee (2019) also noted that one of the biggest challenges African students face before departure is the feeling of detachment from their local community, "African students are subject to a number of specific challenges as they prepare for study abroad, and it has been noted that they face the complex and frustrating process of visas as well as the tensions they feel in leaving their communities" (p. 565). The feeling of being detached from their communities has also been proven to inhibit their ability to adjust to their new environment, "These challenges and pressure points are extensive and impact their subsequent ability to adjust to life in their host institution" (Caldwell & Hyams Ssekasi, 2016).

Caldwell and Hyams-Ssekasi (2016) conducted a study on African students at a university in the United Kingdom. Their research looked at some of these students' challenges before studying overseas. Their study indicates that most studies focus on students' experiences once they arrive in the country they choose to research. Some of their challenges before leaving their country are equally as important. One of the findings in the study by Caldwell and Hyams-Ssekasi was the separation from their community and its impact on the

African students in their research (p. 601). Many Africans come from unique cultures that significantly affect their day-to-day lives, including their education. Certain African cultures strongly oppose western education because they are seen as causing a rebellious nature amongst the students. According to Triandis and Suh (2002), collectivist cultures, such as many African societies, correlate "negatively with education and exposure to diverse persons" (p.139). This collectivist culture puts these African students under pressure to succeed or be accepted back home.

Susan Boafo-Arthur (2014) looked at adjustment issues Black African international students face in the United States and suggestions for addressing their concerns. One of the key findings in Boafo-Arthur's article was financial stress. Financial stress is an attribute that most people expect to be foreign for international students. The expectation is that you should be financially stable if you can afford to go to school abroad. For African students, however, financial stability is not always the case. According to a study done on cultural adjustment experiences of African international college students in 2005 by Constantine et al., the study participants mentioned that financial problems were among their main issues and cited their inability to afford daily expenses. The west coast of Canada has some of the most expensive living costs among cities in Canada. This adds to the financial pressure that African students face when they choose to come study in Canada.

Several authors have noted that prejudice and discrimination are some of the most common forms of stress for African students in the United States (Manyika, 2001; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Puritt, 1978). The issue of race is essential when we are looking at matters African students face while studying abroad. According to Constantine et al. (2005), it is almost impossible to properly review the cultural experiences of African students without looking at their race. It is important to note that we are not focusing solely on the cultural experiences of African undergraduate students in BC. Still, it would be interesting to see how race could impact the

transitional experience of these students. The issue of race is not synonymous with many African students who choose to study abroad. One of the reasons why race is not synonymous with African students is that most of them have never experienced it in their home countries (Bagley & Young, 1988; Lee & Opio 2011; Phinney & Onwughalu, 1996). According to Bofo-Arthur (2014), they cannot cope with the situation since they have never experienced racism in their home countries. This situation is compounded for African students in the United States because of the history of racism in the country. Many Americans cannot distinguish between a black American and an African international student (Tradore, 2004).

Lee and Opio (2011) studied some of the challenges and difficulties African student-athletes face upon arriving in the United States. Many universities worldwide travel to African countries to recruit talented athletes to represent them. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (2006), recently, there has been a steady increase in athletes from countries other than the United States. Africa is amongst the top feeder regions. According to Lee and Opio (2011), many African student-athletes encounter stereotypical utterances from university staff and fellow students. Below is an example from one of the students in Lee and Opio's articles:

Man, I don't even want to tell people that I am Muslim anymore because even if I told them I wasn't, they already have made that [assumption] since I look Arabic, then I [must be] Muslim. What if [I was] Hindu? Sometimes my coach doesn't want me to fast during Ramadan. This is like telling me, 'Don't practice your religious beliefs' (p. 637)

Lee and Opio (2011) commented on the student's statement that the burden of being informed was placed on the student rather than the institution (p. 637). The above case is an example of where institutions could educate staff and students on cultural awareness. In

Canada, only one university is part of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, and that university is located in West Coast, Canada at Simon Fraser University.

In relation to the research by Lee and Opio (2011), Shizha et al. (2020) provide a review of the existing literature on the challenges that African immigrant students face in their preparation for PSE and career aspirations (p. 68). It was noted in the article by Shizha et al. that preconceived notions of Africans were a major reason many students from Africa tend to struggle academically and socially in Canada. According to their article, Shizha et al. (2020) noted that African students were regarded as being "unintelligent and problematic" (p. 69). The fact that is more alarming about the article written by Shizha et al. (2020) was the prejudice coming from school staff who are meant to be supporting these students. Many of these African students are from middle and upper-class families and are successful students. As noted by Shizha et al. (2020) in their article, "Prior to migration, they experience contexts and realities that define them as "first-class citizens" (unless they are refugees) and migrate to new socio-political contexts that redefine them as the Other" (Shizha et al. 2020, p. 69) The reality for these students is that they now have to navigate novel identities while also trying to succeed academically and socially.

Irungun (2013) studied African international students in the United States. Irungun looked at some of the opportunities and challenges these students face upon arriving in the United States and "how administrators and faculty might ease the transition for African students in the United States" (p. 164). One of the challenges noted in Irungun's article was academic integration (p. 170). Academic integration is a real challenge for many African students because teaching abroad differs from what they were used to studying in their home country (Bevis, 2006; Tatar 2005). Several researchers have documented the difficulty these students experience regarding academic integration. They include differences in classroom culture, language difficulties in oral and written communication, and sometimes the fear of acclimatizing

to their new learning styles (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Lacina, 2002). The fear of trying to acclimatize to their new environment could contribute to their transitional experience.

Aside from academic integration, many international students face academic adjustment issues that significantly impact their transition experience. International students consider their academics important because of the time and finances invested, and the ability to succeed is seen as non-negotiable (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1986). When international students struggle academically, it leads to an increased amount of anxiety because they see themselves as failures. Some of the reasons for this anxiety include student-teacher relationships, academic credits, grading scales, class attendance, class discussions, and types and frequency of quizzes, examinations, presentations, and assignments may well present problems (Özturgut & Murphy, 2009; Mori, 2000).

Other problems that international students encounter when studying abroad are academic expectations related to academic adjustment. The education system in many African countries is different from the North American system. African students are accustomed to just sitting in class and taking notes while the lecturer teaches with the expectation of memorizing their notes in preparation for exams a couple of times a year (Aubrey, 1991). The expectation to contribute to class discussion constitutes a new experience for these students and requires a period of adjustment.

Studies of African Students' Transitional Experiences in Higher Education within Canada

Studies on African students in the United States and Europe have specifically looked at issues of racism, but this study examines the transitional experiences of African students in British Columbia. This paper examines other issues African students experience while studying in BC outside of racism. Some Canadian researchers, such as Hamilton and Shang (1999) and Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009), have studied Black students in Canadian universities. Studies

from these authors confirmed that Black students encounter transitional issues that affect their ability to succeed.

Hamilton and Shang's (1999) research investigated the experience of Caribbean students studying in Canada. The Caribbean students noted in the research that their accent differentiated them from their Canadian counterparts, leaving them with feelings of discomfort. One of the critical terms that emerged from the study was "new Canadians" (Hamilton & Shang, 1999). The term new Canadians made these students feel like they were not part of their community. The feeling of being an outcast can hinder the ability to transition to a new environment effectively. I am sure the students in my study will relate to this experience of Caribbean students.

Moke Ngala (2005) studied young Africans enrolled in francophone schools in Alberta, Canada. According to Moke Ngala,

These young immigrants, and in particular those who arrive in Canada as adolescents, are therefore facing problems unique to themselves: having to deal not only with a new school system, but also with a new academic culture. They must also make new friends, learn English, get used to the variety in Canadian French, and even learn standard French. Many of them come from refugee camps or war zones, so their education has been seriously disrupted. Their experiences in their country of origin often do not seem to them to be relevant to their new situation. Their lives are often chaotic, particularly when some schools and school staff are not remotely prepared to receive them and provide them with the help they need. (p.16)

The study population in Moke Ngala's study is different, but we can see some pertinent issues relatable to our study population. Jacquet et al. (2008) investigated the integration of young francophones in francophone schools in British Columbia. This study was holistic

because administrators, teachers, parents, community partners, and students were interviewed. One of the findings highlighted in the Jacquet et al. research was that the education system experienced by these young African francophones was different from that of Canada. The disparity in education could hinder these students' transition ability because they do not understand how the Canadian education system works. As an international education advisor, I have seen this issue often in my current profession. Even the language universities use on their website looks foreign and confusing to some students. According to Masunda et al. (2014), "newcomer students, coping with new teaching methods seems to be one of the toughest challenges in the integration process" (p. 98).

Masinda et al. (2014) completed a similar study on integrating francophone students in British Columbia. One of the findings from their research was that students are typically torn between their new environment and home country (p. 98). Despite the allure of studying abroad for many international students, the reality of being alone eventually dawns on them. Masinda et al. (2014) went further to state that one of the ways students can overcome the feeling of being torn is through "academic adjustment" (p. 98). Academic adjustment happens when universities initiate programs to help students adjust to their new learning surroundings. This point shows that university programming is integral in assisting international students in transitioning. According to Gorgorio et al. (2002), students' transitions are crucial because they could have severe cognitive and behavioural ramifications.

Another finding from the Masinda et al. (2014) research on students' integration issues was peer connection. Peer connection was noted as one of the most substantial barriers to school integration (Masinda et al., 2014, p. 98). It is even more difficult for international students to connect with peers in university because many of their peers already have a clique of friends from high school. Again, the school or university atmosphere plays a significant role in allowing students to connect. Masinda et al. (2014) state, "The school was perceived as an unpleasant

place to the point that some students recommended to their friends and family members to leave the Francophone school system" (p. 98). The impact of school in creating an atmosphere of connectivity would be significant in helping students transition experiences.

Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) studied at a Canadian university to understand students' perceptions and adaptation to academic and social life. They found that adapting to North American culture was a struggle for some of the students they spoke to. This finding was consistent with previous studies cited above.

Studies On What Universities Are Currently Doing

The BC Ministry of Education (2009), in a document entitled Students from refugee backgrounds: A guide for teachers and schools, recognizes that the school environment is critical to newcomer students' learning of social, cultural, and emotional dimensions (p. 95). The above quote highlights one crucial reason universities matter to students, especially international students. Universities need to do something for international students because many do not have any social or cultural attachment to their new surroundings. This means that what happens within the school can shape their social and cultural well-being. International students tend to rely on the school more than their domestic peers due to their lack of a support network, and this goes to prove further that how their schools cater to them matters. As will be alluded to later in this paper, many African international students come from a tight-knit culture. An absence of that within their university could harm their ability to transition.

While schools are vital parts of the social systems they operate in, they are concurrently distinctive units embedded within cultural norms and practices that can either foster or hinder children and youth's school integration (Hudley & Daoud, 2008, p. 95). The previous paragraph looked at the need to evolve some of the services provided to international students. One of the

reasons for the need for this evolution is because of the cultural norms and practices. There is a constant change in the population of international students coming to Canada at every given time. For example, the international students from Africa who came to study in Canada ten years ago were very different from those currently coming in the present. The change results from lower-income families moving up to the middle-income family class, ultimately enabling them to afford to send their children abroad to study (Hall, 2013). Some universities are not as flexible when changing and trying out new initiatives. Universities must break norms and ineffective practices in helping international students transition to their new environment.

Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009) found that the university was where meaningful social and professional connections were made for the younger students. The university experience was perceived as less pleasant for some other students, especially in institutional terms p. 20). As we can see from the quote above, despite the progress many universities have made in helping students make connections, some students are not benefitting from it. The point noted here is arguably the most important function of the university for new international students. These students need to make connections because it affects how they transition to their new environment. If universities could create an atmosphere to allow international students to make these connections early on, the long-term benefits would be worth it. Many African cultures take pride in societal connectivity, and many students sometimes take that lifestyle for granted until they arrive in a foreign country. Many of these students struggle to adapt to an independent culture like the one we have in Canada, which leads to negative transitional experiences.

Summary

The literature review examined African students' transitional experiences studying in British Columbia. Due to the limited research on African undergraduate students living in British Columbia, I used similar studies such as francophone African students studying in BC and worldwide (mainly in the United States and the United Kingdom). Even though there are significant geographical differences between British Columbian cities and other cities worldwide, some similarities exist in some transitional issues experienced by African international undergraduate students. The encouraging factor about this research worldwide on African students is that it allows universities to learn (Hamilton & Shang, 1999) how African students learn, especially at Canadian universities. Further research needs to be done on minority students, such as African students. Some of the findings from these foreign researchers could help Canadian researchers investigate the transitional experiences of minority students in their institutions. The studies in this review highlighted several transitional experiences of African undergraduate students and emphasized some of the things universities could be doing to mitigate the problems. In summary, this literature review has revealed that further research is needed to understand the transitional experience of African undergraduate students in British Columbia, Canada.

Research investigating transitional experiences of international students migrating from Africa to Canada is limited. The paucity of research means that there is a current gap in knowledge when it comes to an understanding of their transition experiences. This has implications for international students from Africa who choose to study on West Coast, Canada. Universities in West Coast Canada can benefit from the knowledge of this research to help them adequately prepare for these students from Africa. The literature has provided a basis on which to base this study. I have derived the following research questions from these previous studies.

How are the transitional experiences of African undergraduate students different from other international students studying in West Coast Canada?

How can universities in BC learn from these transitional experiences to ensure student success for African students?

What are some practical programming plans universities in BC could put in place to ensure the success of African students?

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter explains the chosen methodology for my research. I present the qualitative research design and why I decided to use this method for my study. The data collection method for my research is described in detail and provides the methodology to use for interviews as the main data-gathering technique. In this chapter, I also review the analysis process and convey potential limitations associated with the chosen method for my study.

Methodology

After examining several methodologies, I chose the qualitative case study methodology as the most suitable. I discuss the transitional experience of seven African international students currently studying in British Columbia, Canada. Researchers within and outside of Canada who have conducted similar studies have also used the qualitative research methodology and interviews as their preferred method of data collection (Hamilton & Shang, 1999; Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009; Jacquet et al., 2008; Masinda et al., 2014). The use of a qualitative study was an ideal choice for my research because it allowed the participants in my study the opportunity to express themselves. The ability of participants to express themselves can be seen in the following quote by Creswell (2007):

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry to study this problem, collecting data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study. Data analysis is inductive and establishes

patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes participants' voices, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem. It extends the literature or signals a cause for action. (p. 38)

The voice of participants is significant in my study because it is an area that can be neglected if researchers are not deliberate about it. The qualitative methodology creates an atmosphere for participants in my research to express themselves using their own words. The qualitative methodology provides researchers with a holistic approach to understanding and analyzing findings from their participants (Patton, 2002). I want participants in my study to share as much as they are comfortable sharing and not limit the information conveyed to segments of their transitional experience. Collecting data from participants while retaining its meaning and interpretation is another attribute of the qualitative research method (Kvale, 1996). One of my reasons for using a qualitative research method is that I would like to keep the information collected as authentic and organic as possible. The transitional experiences of participants in my study include their day-to-day experiences. I hope to capture as many of the participants' everyday experiences in my research as possible. The depth and richness of information from participants is another essential attribute of the qualitative research method that would be vital for my study (Bloor, 2001).

According to Hamilton and Shang (1999), qualitative research on student issues is most appropriate because it helps articulate their experiences. Interpretation is another crucial component of the qualitative research method because it will help me as a researcher to connect with these students (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Silverman, 2004; Lee & Lings, 2008). I firmly believe connecting with the participants in my study would be crucial because some might be sharing sensitive information. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), the qualitative research method allows researchers to understand the reality of the participants in their study. The interpretive approach in the qualitative research

method helps researchers understand data collection, analysis, and evaluation during the study process (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). Using case studies for this research will give depth and add specificity to the research. According to Patton (2002), "case studies provide in-depth detail and individual meaning" (p.16). Case studies allow researchers to extract the essence of qualitative understanding, experiential knowledge" (Stake, 2018, p.134). The information the participants share in my study best suits qualitative research methods. As alluded to by researchers who have used the same research method, it is bound to yield dividends.

Participant Recruitment

The current research was not carried out in a specific institution, making recruiting challenging. The low population of Africans in British Columbia also added to the challenge of recruiting participants. To find potential participants, I had to visit the Black communities in the area where I reside, Vancouver. I found a religious organization in New Westminister (British Columbia) with many international African undergraduate students. I attended one of their services and approached a few church members to inform them about my research. I was able to recruit three male and three female students. All the participants are currently studying, except one student who recently completed her undergraduate program. Convenience sampling method was used in recruiting student as a result of specificity of study population.

Sampling Method

The method of sampling for my study was convenience sampling. I was able to get seven participants for my research. Getting my participants was challenging because of the limited number of African students pursuing an undergraduate degree in BC. One of the advantages of convenience sampling is that it saves the researcher time and effort (Patton, 2002). The main aim of my study was to look at the transitional experience of international students from Africa pursuing an undergraduate degree in British Columbia. Using convenience

sampling as an avenue of getting participants will ensure that the goal of my research is accomplished.

Data Collection

The interview method was used as the mode of data collection for my research. The data were collected over one week. I interviewed one participant at a time per day. Due to Covid restrictions, my participants preferred we have the interview virtually through zoom (an online communication platform). Meeting the participants on Zoom and using the interview format allowed them to voice their experiences without prejudice. There was no disadvantage to using zoom because all the participants in my study were comfortable with the option. The participants in my research also acknowledged that they understood the discussed questions.

It was essential to use a relevant source of information from participants in this study, and using interviews was the best method. According to Yin (2009), an interview is one of the best sources of case information (p. 106). Another advantage of using interviews as a source for case information is that it allows researchers to quote participants directly and adds to the depth and authenticity of the study (Patton, 2002). As shown by these researchers, interviews will enrich my research and help participants express themselves; knowing the information shared will make a difference. The small sample size of my study would also suit the use of interviews because it would allow the optimum usage of information from each participant (Morse, 2000).

Interviews

Qualitative researchers must allow participants to present their experiences in a form that represents who they are and what they have been through (Patton, 2002). The framework of expression was evident within each session with each participant. The freedom of expression allowed each participant to do justice to each interview question. The interview allowed

participants to connect with me deeper, allowing us to have deep conversations with intent (Hamilton et al, 1997). The discussion also probed participants because they had to do some reflections to answer some questions, allowing them to relive their transitional experiences (Lofland, 1971).

I started each interview by introducing myself and what the study was all about. I then proceeded to ask each participant if it was okay to record each session, to which they all said yes. Recording each session was important because I did not want to miss out on any important information shared. I also chose to take notes during the interview sessions as I wanted to be aware of critical themes that might be emerging.

Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Some were longer because participants wanted to share more, and I did not want to cut them short and miss out on important information. The same interview questions were asked of all the participants, and they all consisted of open-ended questions. The choice of open-ended questions was to get as much information as possible and eradicate assumptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The open-ended questions also allowed participants to share their transitional experiences as international students from Africa when they arrived in British Columbia. In conclusion, the open-ended questions permitted me as a researcher to better understand the participants' experiences in my study.

The interview questions were modelled after a similar study by Khanal and Ghaulee (2019) that looked at pre-departure, post-departure, and post-study international students worldwide. The questions in their study were obtained from The Committee on Friendly Relations (CFR) and the Institute of International Education, which have been circulating census questionnaires since 1921 (DuBois, 1956). The Institute of International Education has

maintained an annual survey of over three thousand post-secondary institutions worldwide (IIE, 2022), making them a credible source for our interview questions.

Interview Questions

All the interviews were carried out over Zoom because of the pandemic, and the ultimate goal was to ensure all participants felt safe. The interviews were between 45 minutes to about an hour each.

1. What factors contributed to or hindered the success of your transition from African education to Canadian education?
2. How did these factors contribute to or hinder your transition success?
3. What are the solutions to these problems?
4. How prepared were you for the transition? Culturally, financially, academically, and socially.
5. What recommendations would you make for new students coming here?
6. Did you feel like you knew enough about the culture in BC and your university before your arrival?
7. Did your school do enough in equipping you with the necessary information to ensure a smooth transitional experience after you arrived in BC?

All interview protocols were consistent for each participant. All the interviews were carried out via Zoom, and each participant was asked the same questions.

Data Analysis

After collating the data from the participants, the next phase was analysis. The data analysis stage is essential for research because it is at this stage that information is processed to be effectively communicated to readers (Hatch, 2002). Due to the case study nature of this research, there was no need for statistical analysis software. According to Patton (2002), the main objective of case study research is to search for patterns or themes (p. 302). As I will explain later in this study, some emerging themes came from the participants' information. To effectively transform the data obtained from participants into results, I constantly returned to the recordings and notes taken during the interviews. This was important because I wanted to ensure no misinformation during the analysis.

A massive amount of data is obtained from qualitative research (Patton, 2002, p. 432). The amount of data I got from participants looked daunting, but I overcame this challenge using "content analysis." According to Rosengren (1981), content analysis describes a family of analytic approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, and interpretive analyses to systematic, strict textual analyses. All the procedures outlined by Rosengren here were engaged when I analyzed the data I got from participants in my study. It was the use of content analysis that led to the generation of themes that will be discussed in chapter 4 of this research; these themes include: (i) the lack of preparedness before coming to British Columbia (ii) the expensive nature of British Columbia and the pressure on students (iii) the importance of social support in transition (iv) the mode of teaching and learning in Canada (v) the role of institutions in helping international students' transition. I used direct quotations when elaborating on the themes that emerged from the data analysis phase of my study. Direct quotes provided raw evidence on how the data gotten from participants supported the emerging themes. Patton (2002) describes direct quotations as "a basic source of raw data in qualitative inquiry, revealing

respondents' depth of emotions, the way they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions" (p. 21).

Emerging Themes

The themes from my research were consistent with those from existing literature (both within and outside Canada), and participants in my study corroborated them. While conducting a literature review, I found that there are limited studies that have been done on international students from Africa studying in Canada, more so in West Coast Canada. One form of identifying themes in this research was the use of particular words by the participants in the study. According to D'Andrade (1991), "perhaps the simplest and most direct indication of schematic organization in naturalistic discourse is the repetition of associative linkages" (p. 294). Particular words like finances, stress, and friends came up consistently amongst the participants.

Research Participants

Jasmine

Jasmine is from Lagos State, Nigeria and has been in Canada for over nine years. Jasmine came to Canada to pursue her undergraduate degree in Business Administration and is working towards her Master's in Business Administration (MBA). Jasmine is the only child in her family and hopes to remain in Canada after completing her education.

Mayowa

Mayowa is from Lagos, Nigeria and has been in Canada since 2015. Mayowa came to Canada to pursue her Health Science degree at Simon Fraser University. Mayowa's ultimate goal is to become a medical doctor in Canada. Mayowa is from a family of two but hopes to settle in

Canada. Mayowa initially wanted to school in the United Kingdom but switched to Canada because things did not work out for her. It is common to find most Nigerians desiring to study in the United Kingdom.

Victor

Victor is from Freetown, Sierra Leone. Victor has been in Canada for over seven years. Victor planned to come to study Economics in Canada, but has encountered severe challenges that have hampered his ability to graduate. Some of the challenges he highlighted during the interview were transitional issues he experienced upon arrival to Canada. Victor has been out of school for a few years now, but hopes to be back to complete his program soon.

Duncan

Duncan is from Nairobi, Kenya. Duncan came to Canada in 2016 and is pursuing his degree in Mechatronic Systems and Engineering. Nairobi is one of the biggest cities in Kenya and boasts almost five million inhabitants. Duncan is from a middle-income family, and his parents had to make sacrifices for them to be able to sponsor his education in Canada. Unlike some of the other participants in the study, Duncan's first choice of country to study was Canada.

Seyi

Seyi is from Idanre, a small town of about two hundred thousand people in Nigeria. Seyi came to Canada in 2015 to pursue an Associate of Arts degree at a college here in Vancouver. Seyi planned to complete his two-year program and seek permanent residence in Canada. After attaining permanent residency in Canada, Seyi intends to return to school to complete his Bachelor's program. Seyi's ultimate plan was to stay in Canada permanently. Seyi is presently back in school during our interview and plans on completing a program in Biochemistry. Like the

other participants in this study, Seyi's initial plan was to study in the United States, but that didn't work out, and he decided to come to Canada.

Ayomide

Ayomide is from Lagos, Nigeria. The majority of the participants from Nigeria are from Lagos State. Lagos is one of the most populous states in Africa. It currently has over 15 million inhabitants. Ayomide came to Canada for a Bachelor of Commerce program at the University of British Columbia. Ayomide is undecided if she would like to stay in Canada permanently. Ayomide is one of the youngest participants in my study as she recently came to Canada in 2019. Ayomide wanted to study in England, but unfortunately, things didn't work out for her, but she is very grateful to have chosen Canada.

Ethical Considerations

I was able to clarify and assure participants in the research that their participation in the study would be safe and that they should not experience any issues. The use of pseudonyms was used to protect the privacy of each participant in the research. Participants raised the issue of anonymity and confidentiality during the interviews, and I assured each of them not to worry about it. Videos and notes taken during the interview with participants are kept securely safe. Consent to record interviews was sought at the beginning of each recording, and all participants indicated they were comfortable with it.

Situating the Researcher

It was a great privilege as a researcher to conduct this study because of my prior experience being an international student from Africa. One of the bonuses for me was connecting with the participants in my research. Qualitative research also helped deepen the connection with the participants because they could fully express themselves. This is a point

noted by Shrigley (2009) that qualitative research forms a bond between researcher and participant (p. 30). Each participant in my study acknowledged their roots in an African country to study on the West Coast of Canada. Some of the information shared by participants in the study sounded familiar, given my prior experience as an international student from Africa studying in BC. I must add that the familiarity of the information shared by the participants afforded me a better insight and situated me in a position to interpret the information being passed across correctly.

As alluded to earlier, given my prior experience as an international student from Africa who studied in BC, I noticed that I placed myself in the position of participants at some point in their stories. This familiarity enriched my research because it helped participants in my study communicate their stories to me. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), familiarity in research allows the researcher to understand the information being shared than a researcher who has had no prior experiences like participants in their study. My previous experience as a researcher was invaluable in helping participants explain specific details about their transitional experience because some struggled with their communication skills.

As much as my prior experience helped during my research, it is also important to note some significant differences in transitional experiences that participants in my study shared with me that I had not gone through in my experience. This dichotomous lens will benefit my research because it will enrich my research and be a learning experience for me as a researcher.

Summary

This chapter looked at the qualitative methodology to acquire, explain, and examine the data I got from participants in the study. I also looked at interviews as an avenue to study the transitional experience of African international students in British Columbia. As previously

mentioned, there is currently minimal research on the experience of international students from Africa in BC, and my research was specifically designed to fill this missing research. To fill this missing gap, I aimed to acquire data to help learn more about my research topic and do justice to the information shared by the participants in my study. The use of interviews in getting information from participants was appropriate for the study's goal: to share the transitional experience of international students from Africa in BC.

Chapter 4

Presentation and Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the results of the interviews with the participants in my study. I use the current, relatable literature to aid the discussion of the findings in the current study. My research was about the transitional experience of African international students in British Columbia. The research participants were asked questions relating to their transitional experience, including their level of preparedness before coming to Canada. The research also looked at the roles played by institutions in helping these students have a smoother transition to life in British Columbia.

Prior research suggests that international students can experience many challenges as a result of language and cultural barriers, academic and financial difficulties, interpersonal problems, racial discrimination, loss of social support, alienation, and homesickness (Yeh & Inose, 2003).

During analysis of the study participants' data, specific themes emerge that show the effect the bad transitional experience has on student success. Some of these themes were synonymous amongst students; correlation can be seen in currently limited literature. The themes include (i) lack of preparedness before coming to British Columbia, (ii) the expensive nature of British Columbia and the pressure on students, (iii) importance of social support in transition, (iv) mode of teaching and learning in Canada (v) the role of institutions in helping international students' transition.

The Effect of Finances in Transitioning for International Students from Africa

Many factors inhibit the ability of international students to flourish when studying abroad, and the most common is finances. International students are sponsored mainly by their parents (Arthur, 1997), and in some cases, families must go through severe financial hardship to send their children abroad (Pedersen, 1991). Many researchers have cited that financial issues are experienced by most international students (Li & Kaye, 1998, Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Roberts et al., 1999). All the participants in my study cited financial issues as a primary factor that hindered their transition to Canada. Many of the participants in my study experienced financial issues in unique ways. One of them mentioned during the interview that had he known British Columbia was that expensive to live in; he might have chosen to go to a different province. He said the following during the interview:

"BC is such an expensive province. Nothing is cheap compared to other provinces. I mean, the weather is nice and all, but the cost of living is high."

According to Chen (1999) and Mori (2000), one of the leading contributing factors to financial stress experienced by international students includes working visa restrictions in the host countries and high tuition rates. The high tuition rates that international students pay in Canada may cause a strain on their ability to thrive and adapt to their new environment. Many of these international students underestimate the finances needed for them to live in British Columbia. Many realize that funds coming from home are not enough for them to live and see the need to work to make ends meet. The working visa restriction is another layer of stress that these international students must deal with. A few of the students in my research highlighted that they spent so much time working and schooling that they could not find time to establish a social support system. These students also do not feel comfortable calling home for funds because they do not want to add to their families' financial stress (Arthur, 1997). On top of all

this stress, international students also have to worry about maintaining their student visa, which states they must be in school in specific semesters of the school calendar year. Failure to meet the student visa requirement can lead to students being deported back home. Arthur (1997) went further to state that "Concerns regarding finances, immigration status, and other basic requirements for living in a foreign country can be troublesome worries that can detract international students from their academic focus and impact their emotional sense of stability (p. 263). Participants in my study highlighted resilience as an essential process of transition.

"I wish I could work more hours so I can ease the financial burden on my parents back home, especially because I have siblings. Unfortunately, I could not do this because of the hour restrictions placed on study permit holders."

The Expensive Nature of British Columbia and Its Effect on International African Students

Affordability and cost of living rank high among many international students who choose to study abroad, especially students from Africa, because some are not from wealthy homes. In an international student survey, Calder et al. (2016) stated that "affordability touches on the cost of living generally and the balance between income and expenditures" (p. 98). Many students travel abroad for education without understanding the cost of living where their university is situated, which could damage such students. British Columbia has one of the highest living costs of any province in Canada. According to Mercer's cost of living survey done in 2021, Vancouver was ranked the most expensive city in which to live in Canada. Similar to the effect of finance on transitioning, the cost of living is another factor that negatively impacts the transition experience of these students from Africa. One participant in my study cited that cost of living made him work long hours, yet he could not keep up.

"I had to take up part-time work to help my parents as much as I can. I did an associate's degree instead of a degree because of how expensive it was, most especially for international students."

An example of the cost of living issues that affect international students from Africa studying in British Columbia is the cost of housing. Calder et al. (2016) mentioned that international students are not exempted when it comes to issues related to housing because it represents a large percentage of student living expenses (p. 97). International students are confronted with housing issues from the day they arrive at school. Many of them pay vast amounts of money to stay on campus when they could have paid less if they lived off-campus. According to Giddens (1984), the reason why international students often miss out is an issue of lack of knowledge. Many students in my survey cited information sharing as a significant issue that affected their transition experience. Many wished they had more information about living expenses, which could have changed their lifestyle when they arrived in British Columbia. Things like which area to live, stores to get groceries, and stores to get clothing were among the examples cited by participants in my study.

"I would have preferred to live alone to focus on my studying, but this wasn't possible due to the high rental cost in Vancouver. I had to share an apartment with someone, and sometimes that was a distraction for me."

The housing challenges that participants in my study faced transcended other issues that affected their transitional experience. The time spent commuting, and the Canadian weather were factors cited in the Calder et al. survey by international students as having influenced their lives while studying in Canada (p. 98). Participants in my study also cited these factors. Some participants noted living far from school as their only option because they could not afford a place closer to school. Living far from school changes the amount of time they can

spend in school. Students would instead study at home than commute long hours to school. This means less time getting to know the school, making friends, and establishing a support network. These are rippling effects for students when they have to make such adjustments for them to be able to continue studying in Canada. African international students are at a severe disadvantage due to their financial standing.

"I had to look for a cheaper place on the outskirts of the city because that was where I could find affordable housing. I wish I could live in residence (on-campus) so that I can make friends in my first year and take advantage of programs that would have helped me transition. I was unable to do this because of how expensive on-campus residence and feeding were"

Importance of Social Support in Transitional Experience

Several authors agree that one of the international students' main problems is loneliness (Adelman, 1988; McClure, 2007; Sawir et al. 2008; Zhao et al. 2008; Ip et al. 2009). The impact of loneliness or lack of social support can have serious ramifications for an international student. Many international students from Africa come from tight-knit communities, and a lack thereof after arriving in a foreign country often impacts their transitional experience. One student in my study said, "I do not know how I would have survived if I did not have a church family to support me." Another student alluded to the same point by noting that "having a church family has been established in Vancouver, now I know that people have my back no matter the situation I might be passing through." According to Bochner et al., (1977), Furnham and Alibhai, (1985), and Sam (2001), one of the significant predictive factors of success for international students is the number of friends. This is one area where most of my research students claim that British Columbia universities could do much more for their international student population. The students in my research believe universities ought to have specific programs to help international students make friends and establish roots in their new environment.

"Yes, my school had activities to get involved in, but those activities either did not work with my schedule or were not interesting to me. It would be good if institutions asked what events or programs students like instead of basing these initiatives on assumptions."

Sherry et al. (2010) researched international student challenges at the University of Toledo in the United States. Their findings noted that many international students reported having friends in their field of study. Still, most of their friends were fellow international students like themselves (p. 40). The majority of the students in my research also highlighted this concern that most of their friends are from the same country as them. As an academic advisor, I have noticed that few international students have friends from Canada. The dilemma here for international students from Africa is apparent. International students need friends who are from the nationality of where they study. This is crucial because international students have a better chance of transitioning to the culture and norms of their new environment than students of the nationality where they study. When international students only make international friends, both sets of individuals might still find it hard to adjust to their new environment because they are liable to make the same mistakes. Making connections between international and domestic students is another opportunity for universities. According to students in my study, making friends of the same nationality is easier. Universities could explore avenues to make it easier for international students to connect with their domestic counterparts.

"I would have loved to have friends who are either Canadian or outside of my country of nationality, but it was so hard. I tried, but they just did not want to be friends with me. So, I had no choice but to seek friendship with students from my country."

Mode of Teaching and Learning and How It Affects Transitioning

International students add to Canada's education system's richness and depth. Many of these students bring their unique culture and experience to share with fellow students on campus. Instructors are beneficiaries of these unique attributes that international students bring to the classroom (Ladd & Ruby, 1999). In a day when the central focus of university professors' efforts seems to be research for annual review, promotion, and tenure, they may have little time to consider the learning needs of their students (Ladd & Ruby, 1999, p. 363). As we can see from the quote by Ladd and Ruby (1999), many other things are occupying the attention of university instructors, which comes at the expense of international student success. Some of the students in my study highlighted that their early struggles when they arrived in Canada affected their transition. An example of a student population in Canada that struggles with understanding teaching and learning methods are Asian students (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986). Like Asian students, many students from African countries struggle to understand teaching and learning. There are countries in Africa where English is not their first language, which is another reason why transitioning to Canada can sometimes be difficult for these students. One of the students in my research from Sierra Leone highlighted this issue during our interview.

"I was very timid in my class because I was not comfortable speaking. Many of the students in my class obviously could speak English well and this made me cautious whenever I needed to speak. My participation marks were suffering in the course but the fear of being judged was far greater than my marks".

As we can see from the above student, they did not feel comfortable speaking in their class, and we can see how this could also inhibit the student outside of the classroom.

On top of experiencing academic struggles upon arrival in Canada, some international students have already been disadvantaged by their educational experience in high school. The educational systems of some African countries are not up to standard, and the deficiencies can be seen in some of the students from these countries. Some of the students in my study noted that the education they received from high school affected their ability to transition academically. According to one of the students in my interview:

"In high school, we were never really taught how to properly write. Students were left to figure things out on their own. After I got to Canada, I quickly realized I needed help because I would fail. I was also told by my instructor that the English we used in my country were different from Canadian English. All this added to my stress level".

The impact of stress can be devastating when settling in a new environment, and many international students navigate this setting often. The amount of stress international students go through can go as far as dictating their transitional experience.

The Role of Institutions in Helping International Students Transition

The transition is often complicated for international students by moving to a host country and various practical and emotional challenges (Hellstén, 2007). Many challenges could affect the transitional experience of international students from Africa. Many of these students come from a community-oriented environment, and the shock of entering a new environment can be difficult. The emotional toll of this transitional experience cannot be underestimated. This is one area where the atmosphere of universities could help some of these students. A few of the students in my study attended smaller colleges before transferring to more prominent universities to complete their degrees. Some of the students highlighted how the atmosphere was significantly different between the smaller colleges and more prominent universities. According to the students in my study, the atmosphere in the smaller colleges helped them

transition better to their new environment. Many of them were glad not to have started their education in the more prominent universities because it is easier to get lost amongst the crowd.

"I miss my college days. The atmosphere was a lot calmer, and it felt like a community. Ever since I transitioned to the university, it has been very difficult to adapt. The classes are a lot bigger, and the pace of everything is too fast. I am happy that my first year was at a college where I was able to establish my roots."

For many international students, universities are seen as a haven. Universities are seen as a haven because that is all they know upon arrival in their country of study. All the students in my research highlighted the importance of the university helping them transition. Upon arrival at the university, some of the challenges these students face include unfamiliarity with the tertiary education environment, academic discourses, and expectations to be independent, self-directed learners (Kift et al, 2010; Maunder et al., 2013). The ability to manage expectations is an enormous challenge for many African international students. Many of these students are expected to come ready and hit the ground running in schools. Below is a quote from one of the students in my interview:

"I was very confused in some of my courses. The expectation was for all students to be able to speak in class. I was an international student and still adjusting. I was not comfortable speaking in the course and wished my instructor was more understanding".

Rather than educational deficit, international students' challenges generally relate to the unfamiliarity with the academic and socio-cultural environment in which they have landed (Kettle, 2017; Leask, 2015).

Indeed, research in many countries has shown that the school plays an essential role in helping immigrant children and youth to properly settle in schools, irrespective of individual factors, including self-determination, self-motivation, personality traits, parents' level of education, socio-cultural capital, and self-copying mechanisms (Gump, 1980; Heckmann, 2008; Leithwood; Portes & MacLeod, 1996). The main issue here is not that universities are not paying attention to international students because they are. I have been privileged to have worked in three universities here in British Columbia, and they all have an international department that caters to the international student population. The point of concern is whether the services provided to international students are adequate. To a certain extent, I believe some of these services do not work, but evolution will be significant. Universities need to audit services provided to their international student body because, as we shall see from the participants in this study, some of these services are not working.

Summary

This chapter analyzed the transitional experience of African students who choose to study in British Columbia. The main findings from the research include (i) lack of preparedness before coming to British Columbia, (ii) the expensive cost of living in British Columbia and the pressure on students, (iii) importance of social support in transition, (iv) the mode of teaching and learning in Canada (v) the role of institutions in helping international students transition. All the students in the study encountered transitional issues upon arrival in British Columbia. These issues show a need to look at the transitional experience of international students because it is common amongst them. The students agree that universities should do more to help international students' transition experience. One thing that was also common amongst the students in my research was their ability to persevere amid adversity. All the students in this research overcame the transitional issues they experienced upon arrival in British Columbia.

Conclusion and Implication for Further Research

Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of some of the key findings from the study. I also look at the conclusions drawn from the research; I discuss the study's limitations and implications for future research. The thesis looked at the transitional experience of international students from Africa studying in British Columbia. The study participants were six students from three African countries (West and East Africa). My previous experience as an international student and my current work as an academic advisor inspired me to conduct this research. I was inspired to undertake this study as there is minimal research on this population of students in Canada despite the increase in international students from the region coming to study in Canada. There is a pressing need to understand how former and current students from this region adjust to their new environment.

The need to give these students a voice in research was essential to the current study. Many of these students experience hardship upon arrival to Canada, as alluded to by students in my study. Students in my research also mentioned that some current university programming to help international students transition to Canada might not be achieving its purpose. This proves that universities might need further research to better support these students.

Qualitative design methodology was used because of the study and sample size. The acquisition of data through participants' lived experiences would have been difficult to attain if we had used other methodologies such as a quantitative design methodology. As stated by Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009), "qualitative research, such as the use of interviews and the inclusion of personal narratives, helps provide a more holistic picture of the experiences by

using the words of students themselves" (p. 106). Many participants in my study also felt comfortable using qualitative methodology to conduct the interview, which allowed me to get more in-depth and rich information. The interview questions were carefully created from previous research to ensure all the information needed from participants was obtained. It was a delight as a researcher to see the keenness of some of the participants to share their stories. The stories shared by the participants in my research reminded me of the days when I was new to British Columbia as an international student. It was a bitter-sweet experience because I was alarmed that some challenges I faced over ten years ago still affect these students. At the same time, it was a privilege to be able to also hear from these students. One of the reasons these challenges still exist is that proper research has not been done to support this population of students. I hope this current research can help guide university support practices in helping international students from Africa settle in British Columbia.

Conclusion from Research

All the students in my study agree that they encountered challenges when they arrived in British Columbia for their studies. The results of this study support previous studies within and outside of Canada (highlighted in chapter 2) that show that international students encounter transitional issues upon arrival to a foreign country to study. The information shared by participants in my research shows that universities need to understand international students from African countries coming to study in British Columbia. Fortunately, the participants in my study were all able to overcome the transitional challenges upon arrival in Canada. However, some are still dealing with the impact of those challenges.

What can West Coast (BC) Universities do to help International Students from Africa

Pre-Arrival Support

Another important point to note is the need for universities to do more for international students before arrival. One of the interview questions to the participants was how prepared they were before they arrived in Canada. All of the participants indicated that they were ill-prepared. The participants highlighted that they had no clue what to expect when they arrived in Canada. The participants in the study all agreed that they might have made different choices if they had prior knowledge before coming to Canada. The participants suggested that universities need to do more to prepare international students for studies in Canada. What "more" means might differ amongst institutions based on the location and demographics of students.

Mandatory Transition Course for International Students

For some universities, doing more might mean integrating transition programming into student courses so that students can participate in the activities. Creating a credit course for international student transition could be an option universities could explore. Embedded into the course could be the importance of service and programs such as visiting an advisor, talking to the financial aid office, visiting career services to plan for post-graduation work, visiting volunteer services, etc. These departments have been established to support students, especially during transition. Unfortunately, many students do not use these services, making infusing their importance into a mandatory course even more important.

The current one size fits all international student programming that universities pursue might not be as effective. The students in my research mentioned orientation was helpful, but they wished it was tailored. Orientation planning might need to look different from orthodox models for students to connect with their peers and the university. Orientation information needs

to be based on student needs, not what the university assumes students need. Orientation information should also have a good balance between academic and social adjustment.

Connecting Students to Community-Based Organizations

The students in my research indicated the importance of connecting with their communities off-campus. Connecting with local communities helped students settle and eased some transition issues. Universities could work with various communities on projects that reduce international students' transition issues when studying abroad. An example of such an initiative is Newcastle, Australia's "community connection" program. According to Gresham and Clayton (2011), the "Community Connections programme is a volunteer-resourced programme, which harnesses the skills and experiences of members of the local Newcastle community. It aims to facilitate the development of cross-cultural friendships between international students and "host community members" (p. 365). The community connection program would require consultation and hard work from the university. Still, it is an initiative that could have a lasting effect on the international study body. According to Gresham and Clayton (2011), the "program is promoted to international students during orientation sessions, in University publications, and through the work of academic and general staff who engage with students regularly" (p. 366).

Internationalizing Method of Teaching

According to Knight (2003), "internationalization is 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education'" (p. 2). It would be valuable for instructors to know how international students learn. It would be counterproductive to assume that international and domestic students learn the same way. There are many reasons students learn differently, one of them

being from diverse educational backgrounds. There is a need for faculty and staff in universities to understand the concept of internationalization. Internationalization will help staff and faculty relate to students in a non-judgmental fashion. It would also help universities develop competencies for program initiatives related to international student transition. The good news for West Coast Canada is that some institutions, such as the University of British Columbia, have started internationalization on their campuses. According to Guo and Chase (2011), internationalization started in the Chemistry department of UBC in the late 80s to the 90s, leading to an increase in their international graduate numbers (p. 312). Guo and Chase (2011) stated that the initiative had become a campus-wide program (p. 312).

Increase Financial Opportunities

The current literature on international students worldwide proves that financial issues remain prominent. Even though international students are expected to be able to sustain themselves while studying abroad financially, many of them seem to run into financial problems eventually. Sherry et al. (2010) studied international students at the University of Toledo, intending to understand their experiences. Sherry et al. (2010) noted that financial problems were issues international students encountered while studying. They highlighted potential solutions to the financial issues international students faced by stating that financial problems could be alleviated by "increased assistance with tuition costs and the provision of more scholarships for international students (particularly undergraduates, as graduate students have increased access to graduate assistantships and tuition waivers)" (p. 45). Universities could create more financial opportunities for these international students and make such opportunities known. Engaging international student alums to give monetary donations could be an option for these universities (Abbasov and Drezner, 2018).

Limitations of Research

The sample size is one of the limitations of this research. Despite the suitability of using qualitative research methodology for case study researchers such as the present one, it also means that my findings cannot be generalized. According to Yin (2003), one criticism of case study research is that they provide limited ability to generalize the results. The goal of this study was not to generalize the findings, but there is no doubt that a study such as this could have benefitted from a larger sample size. A bigger sample size would have yielded more variety of findings. Africa is diverse with many countries, and this study could also have benefitted from including more countries than just the represented three. The limited research on international students from Africa studying in British Columbia incentivizes future studies to have a larger sample size. It would be interesting to see if a university in British Columbia could take on the challenge of carrying out such a study.

Another potential limitation of this research was my history and current work with international students. As a former international student from an African country and my current work as an Academic Advisor, this may be considered a bias in carrying out this research. Hickling-Hudson (2006) stated that researchers potentially bring some bias into their study. I was not oblivious to potential bias during my research. Therefore, I stayed aware and did my best to prevent it by making sure my interview questions allowed participants to express themselves honestly. To enable participants to express themselves during the interview questions, I also reiterated their answers back to them to make sure I was not assuming their responses.

Lastly, the currently limited research for African students' studies in Canada led me to seek references from sources from the United States and the United Kingdom. There are characteristic differences among participants from outside Canada sources used in this study.

Still, I made sure the population being Black students was not compromised. The black participants from these other sources were vital for me because of the students' position in their place of study.

Implications for Future Research

One of the implications of my study is the opportunity to add the currently limited literature for African international students in British Columbia. This research presents exploratory opportunities for potential applicants to international education in Canada. International education in Canada is a growing field, and there is a need to understand the student body to ensure their needs are met, especially by their universities. The research thesis was based on exploring the transitional experience of international students from Africa. However, other aspects of these students could also be studied to have a holistic understanding of how best to support their transitional experience. Research such as this can significantly benefit by expansion to African students from other countries. A similar analysis in the future can also juxtapose the experience of African students in different provinces, especially in a province such as Ontario with a larger African community.

One of the main themes of the research was the impact universities could have on the transitional experience of international students from Africa. Based on my experience working with students in general, some practices and programming need to change because some have become archaic. International students sometimes require more attention than domestic students, especially concerning settlement. So, universities need to get it right when it comes to them. It would be necessary for future studies to look at current practices and programming that cater to international students and determine if they are effective or not. It would be beneficial for universities to carry out systematic, independent research by looking at the transitional

experience of international students and how they engage in resources and services dedicated to them. Until proper research is done to help these students, future students will go through similar issues. An example of the recurring problems that international students go through is establishing social support. When I came to Canada more than a decade ago, I struggled to make friends and establish roots in my new environment. The struggle continued until I started volunteering and working as a student. Future research could also look at how beneficial it would be for universities to connect international students to communities outside the campus. Many participants in my study cited how valuable it was for them when they finally connected to their church community and how that transformed their transitional experience.

Recommendation

More research will be needed for international students in Canada, and I am confident that this study has proven the need. CBIE estimates that Canada will have more international students in the coming years. The more international students who come to Canada to study, the more pressure on universities to ensure their success. This research has also proven that transitional issues can hinder students' success. This research has also shown that international students from Africa need support in transitioning, as do other international students from outside Africa. Universities could carry out longitudinal studies on their international student population to better understand the transitional issues when they get to Canada. The notion of universities researching to understand their international student transition is supported by Andrade (2016):

University personnel can take steps to make their institutions a welcome place for international students. They must become aware of the degree of success of their international students, not only as indicated by quantitative data such as GPAs and retention

rates, but also by qualitative data derived from surveys, interviews, and focus groups as numbers may mask the difficulties and sacrifices students face to be successful (p. 150)

The students in this study highlighted the need for preparation before students leave their home countries. The students in this study also highlighted that universities should bear some of the burdens of preparing students before arrival. As highlighted earlier, universities could prepare international students before arrival to build a course about their settlement. This course would contain information from former international students on how to transition to Canada while mitigating potential challenges. Information gathering would be essential to creating this course because it would help universities make a targeted approach to being proactive (Hamilton & Shang, 1999).

References

- Abbasov, A. , & Drezner, N.(2018). "Exploring Educational Philanthropy in Azerbaijan: Charitable Giving Behaviors among the University Alumni." *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education* 10: 2-12.
<https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jcihe/article/view/902>
- Abdi, A. A. (2009). Re-centering the philosophical foundations of knowledge: the case of Africa and the global role of teachers. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 55.3: 269-283.
- Adelman, M. B. (1988). Cross-cultural adjustment: A theoretical perspective on social support. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 12, 183–204
- Altbach, P. G. (1991). Impact and adjustment: Foreign students in comparative perspective. *Higher education*, 21(3), 305-323.
- Akanwa, E. E. (2015). International students in western developed countries: History, challenges, and prospects. *Journal of International Students*, 5(3), 271-284.
- Andrade, M. S. (2006). International students in English-speaking universities: Adjustment factors. *Journal of Research in International education*, 5(2), 131-154.
- Arthur, N. (1997). Counselling issues with international students. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 31(4), 259-74.
- Aubrey, R. (1991). International students on campus: A challenge for counselors, medical providers, and clinicians. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 62, 20-33.
- Bagley, C., & Young, L. (1988). Evaluation of color and ethnicity in young children in Jamaica, Ghana, England, and Canada. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 12, 45–60.

- Baklashova, T. A., & Kazakov, A. V. (2016). Challenges of International Students' Adjustment to a Higher Education Institution. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education, 11(8)*, 1821-1832.
- BC Ministry of Education (2009). Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework. Retrieved from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity_framework.pdf
- Bevis , T . (2006). "International Students." In Understanding College Students Sub-Populations: A Guide for Students Affairs Professional, edited by L. Gohn and G. Albin, 267–93. NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
- Bloor, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Focus groups in social research*. Sage.
- Boafo-Arthur, S. (2014). Acculturative experiences of Black-African international students. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 36(2)*, 115-124.
- Bochner, S., McLeod, B., & Lin, A. (1977). Friendship patterns of overseas students: A functional model. *International Journal of Psychology, 12*, 277–297
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (4th ed.). New York: Pearson Group
- Boyer, S. P., & Sedlacek, W. E. (1986). Attitudes and Perceptions of Incoming International Students.
- Busia, A. P. (1993). *Theorizing Black feminisms: The visionary pragmatism of Black women*. Psychology Press.
- Calder, M. J., Richter, S., Mao, Y., Kovacs Burns, K., Mogale, R. S., & Danko, M. (2016). International students attending Canadian universities: Their experiences with housing, finances, and other issues. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 46(2)*, 92-110.

- Caldwell, E. F., & Hyams-Ssekasi, D. (2016). Leaving Home: The Challenges of Black-African International Students Prior to Studying Overseas. *Journal of International Students*, 6(2), 588-613.
- Caroll, J. & Ryan J. (2005). Teaching international students: Improving learning for all. New York: Routledge.
- Canadian Bureau for International Education (2018): The national report on international students in Canada 2000/2001. Ottawa:CBIE
- Chen, C. P. (1999). Common stressors among international college students: Research and counseling implications. *Journal of College Counseling*, 2, 49–65
- Citizen and Immigration Canada (2002). Studying in Canada: Overview. DOI <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study//index.html>
- Citizen and Immigration Canada (2002). Visitor visa exemptions. DOI <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visa.html>
- Constantine, M. G., Anderson, G. M., Berkel, L. A., Caldwell, L. D., & Utsey, S. O. (2005). Examining the cultural adjustment experiences of African international college students: a qualitative analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(1), 57–66.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Denzin N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). The art of interpretation, evaluation and presentation. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Editors) (1994) Handbook of Qualitative Research. Sage Publications. USA

Dei, G.J. S., Holmes, L., Mazzuca, J., McIssaac, E. & Campbell, R. (1995). Drop out or push. Toronto: Institute for Studies in Department of Sociology.

Dillon, R. K., & Swann, J. S. (1997). Studying in America: Assessing how uncertainty reduction and communication satisfaction influence international students' adjustment to U.S. campus life. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 355 886)

Du Bois, C. A. (1956). Foreign students and higher education in the United States. American Council on Education.

D'ANDRADE, R. (1991). 12 The Identification of Schemas in Naturalistic Data. *Person schemas and maladaptive interpersonal patterns*, 279.

El-Assal K. (2020, February 13) 642,000 international students: Canada now ranks 3rd globally in foreign student attraction. CIC news <https://www.cicnews.com/2020/02/642000-international-students-canada-now-ranks-3rd-globally-in-foreign-student-attraction-0213763.html#gs.6duu46>

Flisher, A. J., Beer, J. P. D., & Bokhorst, F. (2002). Characteristics of students receiving counselling services at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 30(3), 299-310.

Furnham, A., & Alibhai, N. (1985). The friendship networks of foreign students: A replication and extension of the functional model. *International Journal of Psychology*, 20, 709–722.

Gallagher, R.P., Golin, A., & Kelleher, K. (1992). The personal, career and learning skills needs of college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 33, 301–309

Gautam, C., Lowery, C. L., Mays, C., & Durant, D. (2016). Challenges for global learners: A

- qualitative study of the concerns and difficulties of international students. *Journal of International Students*, 6(2), 501-526.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Giovazolias, T., Leontopoulou, S., & Triliva, S. (2010). Assessment of Greek University students' counselling needs and attitudes: An exploratory study. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 32, 101–116. doi:10.1007/s10447-010-9092-2
- Gorgorió, N., Planas, N., & Vilella, X. (2002). Immigrant children learning mathematics in mainstream schools. In Abreu, G, Bishop, A. J. & Presmeg, N. (Eds.). *Transitions between contexts of mathematical practices* (pp. 23-52). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/0-306-47674-6_3
- Gresham, R., & Clayton, V. (2011). Community connections: A programme to enhance domestic and international students' educational experience. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 33(4), 363-374.
- Gump, P. V. (1980). The school as a social situation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 31, 553-582. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.31.020180.003005>
- Guo, S., & Chase, M. (2011). Internationalisation of higher education: Integrating international students into Canadian academic environment. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(3), 305-318.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Suny Press.
- Hall, J. (2013). Africa's middle-class: a factor favouring political stability. *Africa Conflict Monthly Monitor*, 2013(04), 4-7.

- Hamilton, L. S., Nussbaum, E. M., & Snow, R. E. (1997). Interview procedures for validating science assessments. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 10(2), 181-200.
- Hamilton, J. & Shang, P. (1999). A qualitative study of the experiences of black students attending a Canadian university. *Journal of student affairs*, 8. Retrieved from: http://digitool.library.colostate.edu/R/?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=33781
- Heckmann, U. (2008). Education and Migration. Strategies for integrating migrant children in European schools and societies. A synthesis of research findings for policy-makers. NESSE: European Commission
- Hegarty, N. (2014). Where we are now—The presence and importance of international students to universities in the United States. *Journal of International Students*, 4, 223-235.
- Heikinhimo, P. S., & Shute, J. C. M. (1986). The adaptation of foreign students: Student views and institutional implications. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 27, 399-406.
- Hellstén, M. (2007). International student transition: Focusing on educational sustainability. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 8(3), 79–90
- Hernandez-Ramdar, C. (2009). Caribbean students in the Canadian academy: we've come a long way? In F. Henry & C. Tator (Eds.). *Racism in the Canadian university: Demanding social justice, inclusion and equity* pp. 106-127. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press.
- Heslop, J. (2018). International Students in BC's Education Systems: Summary of Research from the Student Transitions Project. Student Transitions Project.

- Hickling-Hudson, A. (2006). Cultural complexity, post-colonialism and challenges for comparative educators. *Review of Education*, 15, 201-218.
- Hudley, C., & Daoud, A. M. (2008). Cultures in contrast: Understanding the influence of school culture on student engagement. In C. Hudley & A. E. Gottfried (Eds.), *Academic motivation and the culture of school in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 187-215). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195326819.003.0009>
- Institute for International Education: Research, Evaluation and Learning (REL). Retrieved April 6, 2022, from <https://www.iie.org/en/Work-With-Us/Consulting-Research-Insights>
- Ip, D., Chui, E., & Johnson, H. (2009). Learning experiences and outcomes of culturally and linguistically diverse students at The University of Queensland: A preliminary study. Brisbane: School of Social Science, The University of Queensland
- Irungu, J. (2013). African students in the US higher-education system. In *International students and scholars in the United States* (pp. 163-180). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Jacquet, M., Moore, D., Sabatier, C., & Masinda, M. (2008). Integration of young francophone African immigrants in francophone schools in British Columbia. Metropolis British Columbia: Centre of Excellence for research on immigration and Diversity.
- Kettle, M. (2017). *International student engagement in higher education: Transforming practices, pedagogies and participation*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters
- Khanal, J., & Gaulee, U. (2019). Challenges of international students from pre-departure to post-study: A literature review. *Journal of International Students*, 9(2), 560-581.

- Kift, S., Nelson, K., & Clarke, J. (2010). Transition pedagogy: A third generation approach to FYE - a case study of policy and practice for the higher education sector. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 1(1), 1–20.
- Knight, J. (2003). Updating the definition of internationalization. *International Higher Education* 33: 23.
- Kvale, S. (1996). The 1,000-page question. *Qualitative inquiry*, 2(3), 275-284.
- Lacina, J. (2002). "Preparing International Students for a Successful Social Experience in Higher Education." In *Internationalizing Higher Education: Building Vital Programs on Campuses: New Direction for Higher Education*, edited by B. Speck, and B. Carmical, 117. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ladd, P. D., & Ruby Jr, R. (1999). Learning style and adjustment issues of international students. *Journal of Education for business*, 74(6), 363-367.
- Leask, B. (2015). *Internationalizing the curriculum*. London: Routledge.
- Lee, J., & Opio, T. (2011). Coming to America: challenges and difficulties faced by African student athletes. *Sport, Education and Society*, 16(5), 629–644
- Lee, N. & Lings, I. (2008). *Doing business research. A guide to theory and practice*. London: Sage.
- Leithwood, K., Fullan, M., & Watson, N. (2003). *The Schools We Need: Recent Education Policy in Ontario. Recommendations for Moving Forward*. Toronto: University of Toronto (OISE).
- Li, R. Y. & Kaye, M. (1998). Understanding overseas students' concerns and problems. *Journal*

of Higher Education Policy and Management, 20, 41–50

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lofland, J. (1971). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Manyika, S. (2001). *Negotiating identities: African students in British and American universities*. Dissertation Abstracts International, 62(1-A), 97

Masinda, M. T., Jacquet, M., & Moore, D. (2014). An integrated framework for immigrant children and youth's school integration: A focus on African Francophone students in British Columbia, Canada. *International Journal of Education, 6*(1), 90-107.

Maunder, R. E., Cunliffe, M., Galvin, J., Mjali, S., & Rogers, J. (2013). Listening to student voices: Student researchers exploring undergraduate experiences of university transition. *Higher Education, 66*(2), 139–152

McClure, J. W. (2007). International graduates' cross-cultural adjustment: Experiences, coping strategies, and suggested programmatic responses. *Teaching in Higher Education, 12*(2), 199–217.

McNeill, P. & Chapman, S. (2005). *Research methods* (3rd Ed.). London: Routledge

Mercer 2021 Cost Of Living Ranking (2021)

<https://www.mercer.com/content/dam/mercer/attachments/private/gl-2021-cost-of-living-city-ranking-mercer.pdf>

Mori, S. (2000). Addressing the mental health concerns of international students. *Journal of*

Counseling and Development, 78, 137–144.

Morse, J. M. (2000). Determining sample size. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(1), 3-5.

Nicholas, L., Damianova, M., & Ntantiso, M. (2013). A comparison of South African and international first-year students' counselling needs and preferred counselling sources.

National Collegiate Athletic Association. (2006).

information/cancer-101/cancer-research/?region=on

Ngala, V. M. (2005). *L'intégration des jeunes des familles immigrantes francophones d'origine africaine à la vie scolaire dans les écoles secondaires francophones dans un milieu urbain en Alberta: conditions et incidences* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta). *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*, 23(1), 106-114.

Özturgut, O., & Murphy, C. (2009). Literature vs. practice: Challenges for international students in the US. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 22(3), 374-385.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd Ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications Inc

Paul, F. (2012). *Exploring the Experiences of Black International Caribbean Students at a Canadian University*.

Pedersen, P. B. (1991). Counseling international students. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 19, 10-58.

- Phinney, J. S., & Onwughalu, M. (1996). Racial identity and perception of American ideals among African American and African students in the United States. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 20, 127–140.
- Plana. V. (2021, June 22) Global survey names Vancouver the most expensive city in Canada. Daily Hive <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/vancouver-most-expensive-canadian-city>
- Portes, A., & Dag MacLeod, D. (1996). Educational progress of children of immigrants: The roles of class, ethnicity and school context. *Sociology of Education*, 69(4), 255-275. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2112714>
- Poyrazli, S., & Lopez, M. D. (2007). An exploratory study of perceived discrimination and homesickness: A comparison of International Students and American Students. *The Journal of Psychology*, 141(3), 263–280.
- Poyrazli, S. , and K. Grahame . (2007). “Barriers to Adjustment: Needs of International Students within a Semi-Urban Campus Community.” *Journal of Instructional Psychology* 34(1): 28–45.
- Puritt, F. J. (1978). The adaptation of African students to American society. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 2, 90–118.
- Raunic, A., & Xenos, S. (2008). University Counselling Service Utilisation by local and international students and user characteristics: A Review. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 30, 262–267. doi:10.1007/s10447-008-9062-0
- Roberts, R., Golding, J., Towell, T. & Weinreib, I. (1999). The effects of economic circumstances on British students’ mental and physical health. *Journal of American*

College Health, 48, 103–109.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research*. Oxford: Blackwell Publications.

Rosengren, K. E. (1981). *Advances in Scandinavia content analysis: An introduction*. In

K. E. Rosengren (Ed.), *Advances in content analysis* (pp. 9-19). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Sam, D. L. (2001). *Satisfaction with life among international students: An exploratory study*.

Social Indicators Research, 53, 315–337

Sawir, E. (2005). *Language difficulties of international students in Australia: The effects of prior learning experience*. *International Education Journal*, 6(5), 567–580.

Sawir, E., Marginson, S., Deumert, A., Nyland, C., & Ramia, G. (2008). *Loneliness and international students: An Australian study*. *Journal of studies in international education*, 12(2), 148-180.

Sherry, M., Thomas, P., & Chui, W. H. (2010). *International students: A vulnerable student population*. *Higher education*, 60(1), 33-46.

Shizha, E., Abdi, A. A., Wilson-Forsberg, S., & Masakure, O. (2020). *African immigrant students and postsecondary education in Canada: High school teachers and school career counsellors as gatekeepers*. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 52(3), 67-86.

Shrigley, T.L. (2209). *Experiences of community advocates following ecological disaster*.

(Master's Thesis). Western University, Ontario, Canada.

Silverman, D. (2004). *Qualitative research: theory, method and practice* (2nd Ed). London: Sage

Smith, R. A., & Khawaja, N. G. (2011). *A review of the acculturation experiences of international students*. *International Journal of intercultural relations*, 35(6), 699-713.

- Stake, R.E. (2008). Qualitative case studies. In N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln. Strategies of qualitative inquiry 3rd edition. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications Inc.
- Statistic Canada (2011). Definition of international students. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-004-x/2010000>
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory, procedures and techniques. Newbury Park, CA:Sage
- Tatar, S. (2005). "Classroom Participation by International Students: The Case of Turkish Graduate Students." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 9(4): 337–55.
- Tradore, R. L. (2004). Colonisation continued: African students in an urban high school in America. *Journal of Black Studies*, 34, 348–369
- Triandis, H. C., & Suh, E. M. (2002). Cultural influences on personality. *Annual review of psychology*, 53(1), 133-160.
- Yeh, C. J., & Inose, M. (2003). International students' reported English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 16(1), 15–28
- Yin, R.K. (2003). Case study research: Design and methods 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Yin, R.K. (2009). Case study research: Design and methods 4th edition. California, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications Inc.
- Zhao, Y., Jindal-Snape, D., Topping, K., & Todman, J. (2008). Theoretical models of culture Shock and adaptation in international students in higher education. *Studies in Higher*

Education, 33(1), 63–75.

Appendix A

Exploring the Transitional Experiences of African Students Studying in British Columbia

Letter of Information

Introduction

My name is Toyosi Bamgboye. I am a Master's student at Memorial University in Newfoundland and Labrador. To complete my Master of Education Degree, I am currently conducting a Study that will explore the transition experiences of African students studying in British Columbia.

Intent

This study aims to learn about the transitional challenges that International students from Africa face upon arriving to study in British Columbia. The study will also help universities prepare for these students to complete their education.

Participants

You are invited to participate in this study because you are or were an international student in British Columbia. You are deemed eligible to be part of this study because you acknowledge that you are from an African country. A total of seven students and former students, including yourself, will participate in this study. Please read the Information Letter and if you agree to participate in the study please sign and return the Consent Form. You may choose to keep this letter for your information.

Participation

Agreement to participate in this study would include a personal interview over Zoom or in-person to get information pertaining to this study. If you opt for an in-person interview, I am flexible to meet at a location and time that is most suitable for you. The interview is scheduled to last between 45 minutes to 1 hour. Upon your agreement, the interview will begin with a brief overview of this study, and you will get the opportunity to ask questions. After the study overview, you will get the chance to introduce yourself, and I will then proceed to ask the interview questions. The interview questions are related to the purpose of the study, and I expect you would provide as much information as suited to each question. The interview will be recorded for transcription and analysis objectives. You will get the opportunity to share your transitional experiences upon your arrival in British Columbia. You are welcome to share challenges, expectations that were and were not met, suggestions on what you think could have been done differently, and advice for fellow new students who will choose to study in British Columbia. You will also get to share what you think the university you attend could have done differently to ensure your transition was as smooth as possible.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The information you share in this study will be used solely for research purposes. None of your personal information or your name would be used in the publication or findings of this study. All information collected in this study will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will replace all participant real names. All recordings and electronic data will be stored on my computer on a

password protected hard drive. Data collection materials, including consent forms and interview notes, will be kept in a secure storage facility.

Risks and Rewards

There will be no risks associated with your involvement in this study. Due to the nature of some of the interview questions, you might recall some emotional instances that might have occurred during your transition period in Canada. If this were to be the case and you feel uncomfortable continuing with the interview, please feel free to stop participation at any time. If you feel distressed, counselling resources will be available to you upon your request. Your input in this study will shed light on some of the transitional issues that students like yourself face upon coming to a new country to study. The information you share will help universities better prepare to help students from Africa settle, increasing their likelihood of completing their education.

Participation

Participation in this research is voluntary, and you may decline to participate. You may also choose not to answer questions you do not feel comfortable answering and may withdraw from the research at any point in time.

Additional Information

Should you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your right as a participant, you can contact the Office of Research Ethics. For all other questions that you may have about this research, you may contact me directly or my Research Supervisor. My research supervisor is Dr. Noel Hurley, Professor, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL, A1B 3X8. Phone: 709-864-3319; email: nhurley@mun.ca
Please retain this letter for your future reference.

Thank you

Sincerely,

.....

Appendix B

Exploring the Transitional Experiences of African Students Studying in British Columbia

CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the Letter of Information, I have had the study explained to me in detail, and I fully agree to participate in this study. All questions have been answered to the best of my knowledge.

Name of Participant (Please Print)

.....

Signature of Participant

.....

Date

.....

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

.....

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

.....

Date

.....

Appendix C
Research Questions

1. What factors contributed to or hindered the success of my transition from African education to Canadian education?
2. How did these factors contribute to or hinder my transition success?
3. What are the solutions to these problems?
4. How prepared was I for the transition? Culturally, financially, academically, and socially.
5. What recommendations would we make for new students coming here?
6. Did you feel like you knew enough about the culture in BC and your university before your arrival?
7. Did your school do enough in equipping you with the necessary information to ensure a smooth transitional experience after you arrived in BC?

Appendix D

Exploring the Transitional Experiences of African Students Studying in British Columbia

Resume

STUDENT SERVICES PROFESSIONAL

Advising | Intercultural Communication | Program Development and Coordination

Multitalented student services professional with extensive expertise in advising, collaborating and coordinating with multiple campuses, departments, and staff to connect students to resources and services. A skilled communicator, coach, educator, facilitator, and student advocate with experience in delivering student services to a diverse student population. Energetic and creative problem solver with outstanding program planning skills and extensive knowledge of student issues and concerns.

— Skills —

- Intercultural Communication
 - Supervision of Students
 - Assessment
 - Marketing & Promotion Skills
 - Facilitation
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Advising, Coaching, & Educating
 - Program Set-Up & Development
 - Special Event Planning
 - Managing Stakeholder Relationships
 - Bilingual
 - Program
 - Group
-

EDUCATION

MEd candidate – Memorial University Newfoundland (2022)

FIC Alumni (2010)

BA Health Sciences - Simon Fraser University (2015)

Major: Health Sciences

Minor: Political Science

AWARDS

- Deans Honour Roll Fall 2014 (SFU)
-

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Coop Designation Certificate (Coordinator, Administration & Management) – 2015
- Mental Health First Aid Training (Canadian Mental Health Association) – October 2015
- Food Safe Level One – 2015
- Standard First Aid – 2018
- RISIA - 2019

- Navigating Challenging Conversations (JIBC) – 2019
- Response to International Students Disclosure of Sexual Assault (RISD) – 2019
- San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training – 2020

HOBBIES

- Soccer BCCSL Champion (2012 & 2014)
 - Community Outreach
 - Event Planning
 - Research

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Simon Fraser University
 Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
 Burnaby, BC
 Academic Advisor

Sept 2019 – Present

- **Advised** potential and registered undergraduate students; administers undergraduate registration, programs of study, and graduation activities; and approves Second Degree, Post Baccalaureate Diploma, and Certificate programs.
- **Coordinated** student recruitment activities.
- **Coordinated** Faculty initiatives and pathways for international students (including, but not restricted to FIC transfers) and acts as a liaison and support for students, Faculties and SFU stakeholders in relation to events and initiatives targeting this student group within the Faculty
- **Researched, collected, analyzed** and documented data on international students.
- **Met with partners (i.e. FIC) and SFU stakeholders** discussing their needs in relation to international students and their academic success.
- **Initiated and organized information and recruitment events/workshops** for international students (i.e. FIC; local high schools, etc.) in close partnership with the Coordinator, Recruitment, Outreach and Community Engagement.
- **Formulated recommendations on** streamlining program requirements to clarify pathways and transition processes.
- **Provided information and statistical analyses**, reports, and presentations to support decision-making and business operations.
- **Represented the Faculty in discussions**, with departmental, FIC and international student initiatives.
- **Supported all Faculty Departments** in relation to FIC student activities and initiatives.

Council on International Education Exchange
 Academic Internship Council
 Vancouver, BC
 Vancouver Program Manager

May 2019 – March 2020

- **Welcome** students and present orientation upon student arrival to Canada.
- **Plan** cultural event and escort students to events.
- **Acts as liaison** between student and AIC site director.
- **Acts** as go person for students concerns.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University
 KPU International
 Surrey, BC
 International Academic Advisor

July 2016 – Sept 2019

- **Provided support** to international students, including solutions on cross-cultural issues.
- **Demonstrated proficiency** in Citizenship and Immigration Canada requirements for study and work permits.
- **Ability to exercise** a high level of initiatives and responsibility, work independently.
- **Build and maintain** positive, cooperative, and service-oriented relationships with internal and external clients (such as applicants, students, family members, agents, faculty, staff, etc.), where diversity of situations and people are routinely encountered.
- **Develop and maintain** positive, cooperative, and service-oriented relationships with internal and external clients (mainly applicants, students, extended family members, agents, faculty, staff, etc), where diversity of situations and people are routinely encountered.
- **Demonstrated experience** in planning and presenting training activities and workshops.
- **Demonstrated competency** in navigating Banner or other similar complex records application and software.
- **Curriculum Advising and Program planning:** supports the Curriculum Advising and Program Planning process, participates in special projects, and coordinate special events for students as needed.
- **Ability to exercise a high level of initiative and responsibility,** work independently and establish own priorities and meet deadlines.
- **Proven ability to be flexible in adapting speaking and presentation style** to people of various backgrounds and cultures, and convey appropriate and diplomatic responses to questions under pressure.
- **Proven ability to conduct oneself in a professional manner** in demanding, high stress, fast paced environment over a sustained period of time.
- **Knowledge of training, education and or job requirements** for a wide range of academic, trades and technical careers as well as pathway options to reach educational goals.
- **Current understanding of the B.C. and other Canadian secondary school systems:** graduation, partnerships, and articulated agreements.
- **General knowledge of financial services and processes including scholarships,** and Canada and B.C. student loan application process.
- **Knowledge of Kwantlen Polytechnic University** programs and courses and a demonstrated ability to keep up-to-date with credit and non-credit offerings, university and program admission policies, tuition fees, timetable changes, class cancellations etc.



Appendix E
TCPC 2 Certificate

TCPS 2: CORE 2022

*successfully completed the Course on Research Ethics based on
the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research
Involving Humans (TCPS 2: CORE 2022)*