

Title Page

**Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Canadian University,
within a Social, Political, Cultural and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial
University.**

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Dedication

God Almighty, the origin of all knowledge, is honored through this study.

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Abstract

This study explored the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Canadian University within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial University. The study employed a case study design and qualitative methods, utilizing semi-structured interviews with five participants who were international students from Nigeria. Data were analyzed to know the transitional experiences of Nigerian students in graduate study at a Canadian University. This research provided deep insight into the experiences of international students and an enhanced understanding of the broader internationalization of post-secondary education from student and institutional perspectives. Motivation, socializing, language barriers, favourable government policies, and culture shock were the distinct themes identified from the data analysis because of repetition in the data gathered during the interview. The findings from this study, while not generalizable because of the case study design, will provide guidance to inform the decision-making processes of international students, and to help future international students have smooth transitional experiences. It will create awareness within the rank of policymakers, charitable organizations, and planners charged with the responsibility of international student-related programs. The researcher hopes that the results and suggestions of this study will assist St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada in identifying challenges facing international students while transitioning from their home country, the ones they encounter during their stay in the area of study and to place them on the proper footing to eradicate these difficulties. This study should serve as a source of reference for future researchers.

Keywords: Cultural Transition, Social Cultural adaptation, Graduate preparation,

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

Transitioning from one country to another in search of more knowledge can be exciting and demanding. It requires extensive mental, financial, and emotional preparation, talking from experience as an international graduate student. Transitioning to Canada as an international graduate student from Africa to Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, the system differs significantly from back home. Some international graduate students experience difficulties from the beginning of their application to their chosen school. Some had previously been accepted to the colleges of their choice but repeatedly had their visa applications rejected before they were finally successful. Such an experience can be so emotionally and mentally draining. Educators rarely discuss or acknowledge international students' challenges before arriving in a host country (Caldwell & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2016).

The international graduate students are transient guests temporarily residing in Canada and attending lectures or participating in virtual online courses. It can be intriguing and overwhelming for international students to immigrate to a new country like Canada from a West African nation like Nigeria. In addition to coming from various nations and cultures, international students also have varying racial and socioeconomic origins (Manyika, 2001, as cited in Caldwell, 2016). An international student is someone who has left his or her home country or territory to study in another country or territory (UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Global Education Digest 2006 as cited in Pollock, 2022). From the initial stages of preparation, planning, packing, and arrival, through studying the customs of the new country, acclimating to the new society, and the recurring sense of loneliness all can be daunting

challenges for the transitioning student. In addition to this, the educational system is different from back home. Some international students that are not accustomed to advanced technology usually take some time to adjust to the new system, which may hurt their academic performance.

International students globally travel to the United States hoping to receive a better educational and professional experience than they would in their home countries. However, living in the United States may be difficult for them due to communication and cultural differences and academic stress. Culture shock, homesickness, a lack of support, limited social skills, stereotyping and prejudice, and other negative experiences can all occur. These difficulties may be stressful and result in adverse psychological outcomes, such as depressive symptoms, which interfere with their educational experience (Jung, Hecht, and Wadsworth., 2007).

Confirming what Jung et al. said from personal experiences as an international student, entering universities and colleges abroad can be life challenging and a cultural shock, especially when speaking and listening. Although English is a medium of communication at all educational levels and the researcher is from an English-speaking nation, the accent is distinct from Canadian English, mainly Newfoundland English. Because they had to repeat themselves several times before being understood, communication was challenging. As a result, paying closer attention is necessary to understand teachers, the community, and fellow students. International students face significant challenges when studying abroad, such as adjusting to a different culture and educational system, financial and academic stress, and communicating in a second language (Trice,2007). International students in English-speaking countries contribute significantly to education and the economy. Universities must increase their understanding of these students' adjustment issues and implement appropriate support services to ensure these benefits continue (Andrade, 2006).

Another primary concern for international students is the development of social relationships, particularly with students from the host culture. On the other hand, limited social contact with host nationals is associated with feelings of loneliness, depression, and stress (Chen, 1999; Hull, 1978; Schram and Lauver, 1988, as cited in Trice, 2007). Developing social relationships with the host culture has been a severe bone of contention among international students as they eventually find themselves among people who view life from different perspectives. The problem of the study is what are the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Canadian University in a Social, Cultural, Political, and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial University?

The review will begin with a look at current reflections on the transitional experiences of African students in Canadian universities. Most recent studies come from the United States and Europe. The main reason for this is that, historically, these countries have been sought after by many African students. Nonetheless, the trend is changing as the Canadian education sector is regarded as equal to, if not better, than these countries. Many studies on African students in these countries have focused on the cultural and discrimination issues they face while pursuing their education. Although there are significant differences between Canada and these other countries, this Study believes that African students studying in Newfoundland face cultural discrimination, which hampers their ability to adjust to their new environment. To close the gap, it is necessary to conduct additional research on the transitory experiences of African graduates studying and living in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The study is limited to the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Canadian University in a Social, Cultural, Political, and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial University. The participants are from just one University, Memorial

University, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Five African graduate students from the Faculty of Education in the Educational Leadership Program are the study participants. Participants will be required to use the English Language for their written responses. The researcher's personal experiences guide this study, and previous research on the transitional experiences that international students go through upon arrival to Canada serve as a guide to the study, with the use of structured interviews conducted with five international graduate students from an African country, Nigeria, attending Memorial University in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, to be precise, the investigation will obtain data.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This research aims to explore the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Canadian University within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial University. These experiences will be helpful for universities in Newfoundland and Labrador and other universities in Canada as a whole to develop more effective programs that will help these international students to transmit more smoothly to their new environment.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Know the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a social context.
2. Know the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a political context.
3. Know the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a cultural context.

4. Know the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a linguistic context.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions below will guide the Study:

1. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at Memorial University within a social context?
2. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at Memorial University within a political context?
3. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at Memorial University within a cultural context?
4. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at Memorial University within a linguistic context?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is a significant endeavour to achieve greater insight into the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Canadian University within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial University. Giving voice to international students' lived experiences acknowledges their uniqueness and diversity, honours their presence in the university, recognizes their benefaction to the institution, and enhances their agency as valued community members. In addition to celebrating the growing company of international students, the research is helpful to faculty members in understanding the needs of international students and to increase their comfort level while working with diverse groups of

learners. The beneficiaries of this investigation are the inhabitants, government, educational policy makers, educational planners, researchers, and non-governmental organizations.

The study findings may create awareness within the rank of policymakers, charitable organizations, and planners charged with the responsibility of international student-related programs. The researcher hopes that the results and suggestions of this study will assist St John's Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada, as a whole, in identifying challenges facing international students while transitioning from their home country, the ones they encounter during their stay in the area of study, and to help eradicate these difficulties. It will be helpful for future international students to help them have smooth transitional experiences.

1.5 Summary

Chapter One introduced the research problem and purpose and some emerging themes evident in the supporting research. Based on current literature, there is a crucial need for more research on the transitional experience of African graduates studying and living in Newfoundland and Labrador. This research will serve as a voice for these students and help them make impactful changes to help future African students learn in Newfoundland and Labrador. The little research on this topic has led to gaps that universities in Newfoundland and Labrador need to start paying more attention. This study anticipate that transitional experiences will vary amongst our student participants. Some of them might be positive, while some will be negative. This study is designed so that universities can learn from the transitional experiences of these students and start working toward making necessary changes to the current system.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Canadian University within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial University. This chapter reviewed the related literature on the variables contained in the topic for adequate coverage; the review covered theoretical/conceptual framework, empirical studies, and summary.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Vroom's (1970) expectancy theory is used to explain the motivation of graduate students to want to move abroad to study. *Motivation* is a universal term that applies to the entire class of drives, wishes, needs, desires, wishes, and similar forces. Human motives may be on needs, whether consciously or subconsciously felt. Some human needs are physiological requirements for water, air, food, sleep, and shelter, while others may be secondary such as self-esteem, status, affiliation, affection, accomplishment, and self-assertion. These needs vary extensively over time among different individuals. The motivation process demonstrates that everyone has needs they strive to meet. These needs motivate the individual to act in a certain way; to activate a driving force, the individual will experience arousal. This force represents both physical and psychological incentives. An aroused individual acts to satisfy his needs and eventually achieves satisfaction (Ozkalp & Krel, 2005, as cited in Turabik & Baskan, 2015). The government and university leaders are responsible for providing an environment conducive to international students at graduate school, even though the students may be responsible for self-motivation. The researcher found this theory vital to this study as the university leaders need to be motivated

to help assist international graduate students to successfully transition to their studies. Maslow (1943) classified esteem needs as having two components: self-esteem and respect from others (Taormina & Gao, 2013); it seems that international graduate students need healthy doses of both.

International students are encouraged to invite their friends outside the country to come to school, work, and probably settle permanently in the province due to the welcoming atmosphere they enjoy. Australia, over the years, has been benefitting from international students that decided to stay in their country to work in the field of information and communication technology and engineering (Colebatch, 2005, as cited in Andrade, 2006). International students make a significant contribution to national and provincial economic development. They also make a significant financial contribution, allowing universities to conduct research and teach. Despite the harsh climate, these incentives entice international students to stay in Saskatchewan or Canada after graduation (Ziguras & Law, 2006).

Vroom (1970) stated that people would be motivated to do things to achieve a goal if they have the conviction of the worth of the plan and can see that what they do will help them achieve it. We always act in a way that maximizes our enjoyment and minimizes our suffering. Vroom believes that people's (international graduate students) motivation towards doing anything (studying abroad) is affected by the importance attached to the results of the efforts. Positively or negatively, this motivation is multiplied by their confidence in their efforts to achieve the goal or objective of being international students.

In other words, this research identifies that motivation is a product of the anticipated worth, and thus: $\text{Force} = \text{Valence} \times \text{Expectancy}$; where force is the strength of motivation, Valence is the strength multiplied by the likelihood that a particular action will induce the

desired outcome. The relevance of this theory to this research is that it recognizes the importance of graduate international students' well-being in society and how they can be motivated by university leaders and other societal members. It is also essential as the theory is relevant to the recent clamour about the shortage of skilled labour in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This section deals with the conceptual aspect of this research work, which elaborates on the research problem of relevant literature. The unit also summarized the research work's primary dependent and independent variables.

2.3.1 Concept of Nigerian Graduate Student

Nigeria is in West Africa, sharing a border with Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. It has a boundary with the Atlantic Ocean's Gulf of Guinea to the south. Nigeria has a range of natural environments, from semi-deserts in the North to tropical rainforests in the south (Internet Geography, 2022)—Nigeria's population is just over 220,000,000. The country is Africa's most populous and economically developed (Internet Geography, 2022). Nigerian graduate students are the study subjects from Memorial University for the present study. One of the earlier definitions from UNESCO describes an internationally mobile student as someone who has travelled across an international boundary between two nations to engage in scholastic pursuits in a destination nation other than their country of residence (UNESCO, 2015, as cited in International Student, 2020). Participants in the present study meet that definition.

In 2020, 528,190 international students had valid study visas to study in Canada, according to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. The number of overseas students with valid study visas increased by almost 15% from 2021 to today. Nevertheless, this does not mean students with this kind of visa were present in Canada (Gent, 2022).

2.3.2 Concept of Transitional Experience

Transitional experience is what an individual passes through to migrate from one country to another, which varies from one person to another and depends on the country of their choice. To comprehend the transition process in the lives of adult learners, we must divide it into three major stages: entering the learning environment, progressing through it, and moving on or preparing to leave (Schlossberg, 1989). These three parts help consider the journey or trip international students embark upon as they move to a host country to begin their postsecondary education and live in a multicultural residential setting.

2.3.3 Concept of Canadian University

Universities in Canada are funded by the Canadian government and by the private sector. The site of the present study is Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, also known as MUN. It is a public university located in one of the Atlantic provinces located in Newfoundland and Labrador, established in St. John's, with satellite campuses in Corner Brook, elsewhere in Newfoundland and Labrador, Saint Pierre, and Harlow, England. Memorial University has a total enrolment of 19,429 students". As the only university in Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial has a special responsibility to the inhabitants of this province. Established as a monument to the Newfoundlanders who departed on active service throughout the First World War and subsequent conflicts, Memorial University draws inspiration from these past offerings as they attempt to contribute to the development of the province, the country, and internationally (Sorensen, 2020).

2.3.4 Transitional Experience in the Social Context at Canadian University a Case Study of Memorial University.

Being and becoming an international student is a complicated and dynamic process that involves how particular students, as immigrants, connect with and manage the new environment in the host country (Soltani et al., 2022). Socializing in a new environment may be overwhelming for international students, especially graduate students from Nigeria. Their skin colour and hair texture make them look unique from their fellow students from Canada. One challenge international students face is social isolation when engaging in group activities. On the contrary, talking from experience, students who feel at home, well-connected to fellow students and professors, and partake in extracurricular activities are more likely to perform excellently and be retained in school after successfully graduating. Support from family and society positively influences students' study success.

2.3.5 Transitional Experience in the Political Context at Canadian University

Politics are the activities related to the authority of a state or other area, especially the conflict or debate between individuals or parties having or expecting to achieve power (Institutions, 2022). The federal government holds legislative power through the two chambers of the legislature: the Senate and the House of Commons.

Canada functions within a structure of parliamentary democracy and a federal system of legislative government. The parliament is divided into three- The Monarch, the Senate, and the House of Common. In Canada, a monarch is the head of state, as the country operates a constitutional monarchy. The monarch is represented by a Governor General appointed by the Monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister. The House of Common are elected representatives. The political party with the highest member of parliament forms the government while the

minority functions as the official opposition. The head of the government is the Prime Minister. He performs the executive functions with the cabinet as derived from the Monarch. The Senate on the other hand are not elected. They are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. At the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the province head of state is called Lieutenant Governor, the head of government called the Premier, while the only legislative body is referred to as the House of Assembly. Over the years, some government policies in developed countries might favour international students, and sometimes these policies have become a thorn in their side. The difference between international and domestic students' tuition is an example of a policy that sometimes may not favour international students. On the other hand, scholarship funding policy is favourable to international students with outstanding performances.

2.3.6 Transitional Experience in the Cultural Context at a Canadian University

Culture is a complex whole that includes morals, knowledge, beliefs, arts, customs, and other capabilities acquired by man as a part of society. It is the total of a given society's way of life molded and shaped by prevailing circumstances and environment (Nakpodia, 2006). Culture is a social group's way of life, including values, actions, and beliefs that can be necessary modifications from one generation to another. As international students transition from their home country to a new environment to pursue their academic goals, they may experience cultural shock. *Cultural shock* involves losing one's sense of when and how to do the right thing. Culture shock is, in essence, a set of emotional responses to the loss of perpetual reinforcements from one's way of life to new cultural stimuli with little or no effect and to the misinterpretation of new or diverse experiences (Adler, 1975). Some international graduate students would find adjusting to even minor cultural differences difficult. In contrast, others might try to disguise

their discomfort and blend in, confusing matters. Culture shock will affect all overseas students to varied degrees and at different times (*Understanding Culture Shock in International Students*, n.d.).

2.3.7 Transitional Experience in the Linguistic Context at Canadian University

Linguistics is the scientific investigation of human language. International students may experience various challenges upon arriving in Canada, one of which is communication. International students experience reading and writing comprehension issues due to restricted language skills (Poyrazli, 2003). International students may also undergo more anxiety related to understanding academic and grammatical jargon and the overall adaptation process to the Canadian classroom climate. Working with international students and domestic pupils can be challenging and requires patience. Advisors may encounter various issues, including cultural shock, miscommunication, and student insecurity (*Advising from the Heart: Six Strategies for Working with International Students*, n.d.). One of the most critical problems for international students is the language barrier, which hurts their wellness. (*Tips for Overcoming Language Barriers for International Students*, 2019) Challenges of adjusting to a different educational system can arise when students receive lower grades than they have previously achieved, which may lead to low academic self-efficacy, which lowers their general adjustment. Entering universities and colleges abroad may be an enormous life altering experience, especially in speaking and listening. Even though students might be from an English-speaking country, and English is the medium of communication within the receiving educational institution, dialectical differences can pose problems in the overall transitional experience. The accent is slightly different from Canadian English, especially Newfoundland English; this makes communication difficult because international students had to repeat themselves before being understood.

Poyrazli et al. (2002) stated that increased attention was required to understand professors and classmates because of dialectical differences from the native country to the receiving country.

2.4 Empirical Studies

Several researchers have investigated the transitional experiences of international students. Appollos (2002) studied the adjustment problems of African students at Western Michigan University. The study aimed to identify the adjustment problems experienced by international students at a Midwestern University. Specifically, the study sought to identify the adjustment problems of African students enrolled during the 2000-2001 academic year at Western Michigan University as measured by the Michigan International Student Problem Inventory. This study aimed to determine international student adjustment problems. Two research questions guided the study, and five null hypotheses. The null hypothesis was at an alpha level of 0.05 level significance. This research relates to the present one in that both studies investigate the transitional experience of international students from Africa, where Nigeria belongs. The contrast between this study and the present study is that the Appollos study was in the US, but the present research is in Canada. The Appollos study had an experimental design and the present study uses a case study approach.

Aydinol (2013) studied Understanding the international student experience. This qualitative study attempts to present an overview of international students' experiences from their viewpoints. The respondents were six graduate students from abroad. The themes of this study that developed from participant experiences include issues from daily life, various learning cultures, the goal of achievement, social relationships, and personal development. This study and the current study are comparable in focusing on overseas students' experiences. One of the

contrasts between these two investigations is that the Aydinol trial was conducted in the United States of America, whereas the current study is in Canada.

Cossy (2014) studied the transition and thriving in University: A Grounded Theory of the Transition experiences and Conceptions of Thriving of a Selection of Undergraduate Students at Western University. The purpose of this qualitative research design was to investigate the transitional requirements and experiences of students attending Western University after high school, how students perceive thriving and construct a substantial theory of transition and thriving for Western University students. The respondents that took part in the survey from Western University included 42 students and 21 employees. Focus groups and one-on-one interviews were in use to get the data. The similarity between Cossy's and present studies is that they both investigate students' transitional experiences. The study's findings are as follows: The first model describes students' transitional experiences and how they envision prospering in college. According to the data, most students need to prepare for college transfer. Most students said that their transition to university was largely unpleasant. The second model uses the facts and theoretical frameworks that served as the study's direction to explain the transitional experiences that students and staff have experienced. The model demonstrates that when students move from high school to college, they undergo several transformations quickly. The difference between the Cossy and current studies is that the former involved undergraduate students at Western University and used different research questions than the latter.

Menzies et al. (2015) studied the transitional experiences of international postgraduate students utilizing a peer mentor program. The study aimed to investigate the transitional issues that international postgraduate students face in their transition to Australian universities. The study also investigated the mentoring program's role and how it assists students with their

transition. The sample size includes thirty-one international postgraduate students from Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and South America. Fifteen were male and sixteen were female, with an average age of twenty-four; most had been studying at the Australian University for more than twelve months. The study utilized a qualitative research method to examine the experiences of international postgraduate students transitioning from their home universities to an Australian university. The study conducted semi-structured interviews with students who gave responses to questions about their transition experiences and the assistance of the mentor program. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes from the research. The findings show that international postgraduate students reported mixed experiences with their transition—those with difficulties referred to loneliness, different studying practices, finding accommodation, and making friends. International postgraduate students reported that the peer mentor program mentors provided social support, friendship, information, and confidence to overcome those difficulties. Those students who did not have problems with their transition reported that they had friends or family who assisted them. As a result, these students did not need the support of mentors to the same degree as those students having problems. This study has a connection to the current study in that they both investigate the transitional experience of international students. The distinction between the Menzies et al. study and the present study is that this study is in Australia, and the present study is in Canada. Both have similar goals, both studies have different purposes with different research questions and the Menzies et al. study had more participants than the present study. Furthermore, the present study is in Canada.

Spencer's (2016) study was Exploring the Transition Experiences of Successful International Undergraduate Students at a Public Research University in the USA: The Impact on International Student Success and Retention. Interviews, a document review, and a survey were

all included in the qualitative study design. In the context of student achievement and persistence, the study sought to examine the transitional experiences of overseas undergraduate students attending a major public research university in the United States. According to the findings, first-year students often need help with teaching methods, course loads and assignments, language barriers, time management, and an understanding of the U.S. educational system. Some social and cultural difficulties were language hurdles, culture shock, homesickness, and cultural misunderstandings. Transportation, money, food, immigration/visa concerns, employment constraints, and housing were among the challenges of daily living. The study also showed that students used coping mechanisms, social networks, and inner resources to overcome difficulties and persevere. Students specifically named activities on campus, family and friend support, and university support services as essential to their success. The similarity between Spencer's work and this present study is that the two studies both researched the transitional experience of international students. The distinction between Spencer's work and the present work is numerous, one of which is that the present study is conducted in Canada while Spencer's study is in the U.S.

Fennell (2020) studied the transitional experiences of international students studying in the United States. The study sought to explore greater insight into the real-life experiences of two international students. A qualitative research design was employed. The study's findings were that international students experience various challenges upon their arrival in the United States. Social life is good, and international students need resources. In that, they both look into the transitional experience of international students. The distinction between the Fennell study and the present study is that the Fennell study was conducted in the United States, with different research questions from that of the present study.

2.5 Summary

This chapter provides an introduction to the present study. An attempt was made to provide a sound research basis for undertaking this investigation. Previous work of several scholars provides related literature on the transitional experiences of international students in social, political, cultural, and linguistic aspects (Appollos, 2002; Fennell, 2020; & Menzies et al. 2015). Appollos (2002) researched the adjustment problems of African students at Western Michigan University, Fennell (2020) also researched the transitional experiences of international students in the United States, and Menzies et al. (2015) studied the transitional experiences of international postgraduate students utilizing a peer mentor program.

Two of the cited studies were in the United States and the third was in Australia. The present research is completed at Memorial University, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The researcher observed that the papers reviewed did not cover all the variables under the present study; this motivated the present researcher to embark on the study to fill the missing gap in the transitional experiences of Nigerian students to graduate study at a Canadian university in a social political, cultural, and linguistic context. I have chosen a case study methodology.

Previous studies have examined international students' obstacles and challenges in higher education institutions in the United States and Canada. These challenges consist of but are not limited to, difficulties adjusting to academic culture, language difficulties, misunderstanding; complications in communication with faculty and peers; stress, anxiety, a sense of isolation; social experiences; culture shock, financial hardships, isolation, and loneliness; and any adaptation in their daily life. Based on the current literature, more research on the transitional experiences of African graduates studying and living in Newfoundland and Labrador will bridge

an identified gap. This present research should make a positive addition to knowledge in this area of study.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research explored the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Canadian University in a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial University. This chapter describes the plan of action that guided the research.

The following research questions informed the study:

1. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at Memorial University within a social context?
2. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at Memorial University within a political context?
3. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at Memorial University within a cultural context?
4. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at Memorial University within a linguistic context?

3.2 Overview of Methodology

The research work is a qualitative research study. Qualitative research is more into learning about people's perspectives on the world. While there are several approaches to qualitative research, they all have a particular thing in common: they are adaptable and emphasize the importance of retaining rich meaning when interpreting data (Bhandari, 2023). Qualitative research gathers and analyzes non-numeric data through open questions to understand concepts, experiences, or opinions. While carrying out the study, the researcher gave attention to particulars, as the features of the setting may not reveal; one needs to perceive and

interpret them. 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 (Apollos, 2002; Fennell, 2017 and Menzies et al.,2015), as referenced in the literature review of this study. A qualitative study was ideal for this research because it allowed the participants to express themselves. The ability of participants to express themselves is essential; qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible application of a theoretical lens, and the investigation of exploration problems that investigate the meaning that a group or individuals ascribe to a human or social issue. Individuals' experiences with the problem under investigation may be more important in qualitative research. It gathers, analyzes, and interprets data based on people's actions and actions. There are also descriptions, metaphors, symbols, definitions, and meanings (Habib, Pathik, Maryam, & Habib, 2014). Qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to investigate this issue, collecting data in a familiar setting sensitive to the places and people under study. Inductive data analysis identifies patterns or themes.

The final written presentation includes the voices of the participants, the researcher's reflexivity, interpretation, and a complex description of the problem. It extends the literature or signals a cause for action (Creswell, 2007). The voice of participants is significant in this study because it is an area that researchers can only pay attention to if they are deliberate. Because of the qualitative methodology, study participants are free to express themselves. The qualitative methodology provides researchers with a holistic approach to understanding and analyzing findings from their participants.

To better comprehend ideas, opinions, or experiences, qualitative research entails gathering and evaluating non-numerical data (such as text, video, or audio). It can be employed

to understand a subject or develop fresh research concepts comprehensively. Quantitative research entails gathering and evaluating numerical data for statistical analysis; qualitative research does not (Bhandari, 2023).

3.3 Research Design

This study employed the use of qualitative research approach. Qualitative research has its basis in the interpretive and constructivist paradigms. Intending to profoundly understand a research subject rather than predict outcomes, as with positivist research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative research, in particular, is concerned with the collection and interpretation of non-numerical data to understand human and social environments better. This study is interested in understanding the meanings the participants bring to their experiences as international students.

This research study followed a case study design. The researcher thoroughly examines a plan, event, activity, technique, or one or more people. Researchers employ a variety of data-gathering approaches to obtain thorough information despite the case(s) time frame (Priya, 2021). A case study is a qualitative method in which the researcher collects extensive data, investigates a case over time, and then presents a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007). A case study is a suitable method for this research since it examines a specific phenomenon inside a particular context, especially when it is difficult to distinguish the variables affecting the phenomenon from the environment (Merriam, 2009). When investigating empirical occurrences, a case study enables the researcher to preserve the overall characteristics of real-life events (Schell, 1992). In addition, a case study is an empirical inquiry that surveys a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Schell, 1992).

It can achieve some objectives, including producing a theory, testing, or giving a description (Lincoln & Guba, 2002). This case study's primary objective is to describe international students' experiences in a particular environment. This study aims to examine a specific phenomenon (internationalization) in a specific context or scenario to define it (College of Interest). Lincoln and Guba (1985) revealed that drawing boundaries inside a case enables the researcher to define the scope of the investigation, choose what data to include and exclude, and decide who belongs there and who should not. The example in this study focuses on internationalization as a phenomenon of inquiry, and the participants for the research were from one faculty at Memorial University.

Constructivism encourages purposive sampling, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). The idea is to choose a sample that is typical of the situation. Instead of concentrating on the commonalities that may be general, the goal is to describe the numerous species that give the context its distinctive flavour (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within the study, it was possible to limit the case study by choosing five graduate students who represented the diversity of that cohort. This study used this method to seek answers from participants' experiences within a particular setting.

3.4 Sampling Method

Sampling is selecting units (such as individuals or groups of people) from an interest population (Trochim, 2006). Whether the sample is random, exceptional, or structured will depend on the researcher's judgment of what is significant to the study (Shaheen et al., 2019). The study used purposeful sampling. It is necessary for purposeful sampling to have access to essential field informants who can help discover cases with lots of information (Suri, 2011). In identifying and contacting the informants, the study used purposeful sampling. The qualitative

researcher can use purposeful sampling to select individuals who can best provide data and insights to understand and answer the study's research problem. The participants were chosen based on gender. Two male and three female international graduate students from Nigeria, travelled their home country to study at Memorial University.

3.5 Snowball Sampling

This study utilized Snowball sampling. Study participants are requested to assist in identifying new potential subjects as part of the snowball sampling recruitment procedure (Snowball Sampling, 2017). The study makes use of this technique to identify and contact the informants. This technique involves several procedures. The researcher chooses the initial respondents using non-probability methods. Additional respondents are obtained based on the information provided by the initial respondents. Assume a researcher is looking into the extinction of a specific African tribe. The researcher must find some experts as initial respondents, and the researcher can then select other respondents based on their references (Habib et al., 2014). This sampling technique identifies cases of interest from people who know someone and cases that contain valuable information for the research (Creswell, 2007). A non-probability sampling technique called snowball sampling entails recruiting new units from existing units to make up the sample. Research about people with particular characteristics who might otherwise be challenging to identify can benefit from snowball sampling (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

3.6 Constructivism

Constructivism is suitable for this investigation. Constructivism is a theory of knowledge that explains how humans acquire information and create meaning from interacting with

experiences and concepts. It argues that thought and experience help people build their understanding. A constructivist researcher is curious about how people make sense of events and connect them to their behaviour (Eichelberger, 1989). The researcher, a constructivist, an international student enrolled at a Canadian university, is very passionate about this topic. Researchers are crucial to the study. They would have unique viewpoints and expertise compared to other researchers without the same experiences (Given, 2008).

3.7 Emic Approach

The emic approach aimed to understand better the values, traditions, and beliefs of the groups being researched. (Rubin., Wimsatt, Heverly-Fitt, and Barstead 2015). Emic, which has historically been more subjective and culturally specific, refers to the insider's narrative or perspective (Pike, 1954, as cited in Rubin et al., 2015). The study employed an emic approach to performing this investigation because the researcher has experience as an international student. The phrases first appeared in the 1950s and 1960s in linguistics, anthropology, and linguistics. Throughout the following decades, scholars in many sectors and disciplines, including education, have found the concepts helpful (Godina & McCoy, 2000). An insider's research is known as an emic method. The Emic construct in anthropology refers to the accounts, descriptions, analyses, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual categories and schemes that the native components of the culture whose behaviours and beliefs the researcher is studying consider meaningful and appropriate (Godina & McCoy, 2000).

For researching subjects with few hypotheses, the emic approach can be helpful. The researcher in this study is an example of an emic researcher and has similar experiences to the subjects who are international students. When a researcher has already built relationships with the research participants, Ortner (2006) explained the advantage that emic researchers enjoy,

saying that the nature of the investigation differs from when a researcher has no prior ties before entering the field. When undertaking fieldwork, it is simpler for emic researchers to access individuals and resources. It applies to this research since the researcher has certain tactical advantages. It will be simple for the researcher to recognize and choose participants in her study who are international students like herself. When speaking with an emic researcher, participants will feel more at ease. As a result, the researcher's expertise as an emic researcher positively contributes to this work.

3.8 Data Collection

There are several methods for gathering data in qualitative research. Interviews, visual analysis, and observations are a few of these. Interviews were the primary method used in this study to gather information and examine the experiences of international students in the college of interest. Interviews have a crucial advantage in flexibility (Gall et al., 2007). They allow skilled interviewers to establish rapport and trust with subjects while gathering rich data. Another interview goal was to inquire into the participants' thoughts or other feelings (Patton, 1990). Interviews are one of the most efficient methods for collecting data for the study because they simplify understanding the meanings respondents give to their experiences as international students.

The study employed semi-structured interviews to examine the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Graduate Students at a Canadian University in a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Setting, A Case Study of Memorial University. The semi-structured interview, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2008), is neither an unstructured chat nor a rigorous questionnaire. This research created a semi-structured guide emphasizing particular themes and some recommended questions. Leading questions are a vital component of semi-structured

interviews because they enable the interviewer or interviewee to go deeply into an idea or response while also helping to outline the areas the researcher will use for the test. Also, it provides participants with topic suggestions, which many find helpful. Also, it enables the researcher to examine each participant's unique experience thoroughly (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008).

As a result, the interview is the most appropriate method for gathering data when participants must primarily provide deep insights. The study used seven and a half hours of semi-structured interviews with five participants. Each interview lasted about an hour and a half for each participant. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings, the written text, and the interview, and this transcription serves as the foundation for further data analysis and interpretation. The research's methodology helps find the answers to the research questions (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). McNeill and Chapman contend good questions in qualitative research should require more information than a simple true or false response. There were more than just yes or no replies to the questions. To help participants establish rapport and confidence, it was crucial to begin with questions they could swiftly respond to; this procedure frequently produces rich data that develops the interview more.

Each participant was already aware of the background knowledge of the specifics of the study before their interview. The guarantee was available regarding ethical principles, such as anonymity and confidentiality, data collection for the study, and plans to complete the last report (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). It provided participants with information on what to anticipate from the interview. When they opted to participate in the study, each participant completed and signed a consent form. The researcher will respond to any additional inquiries after each participant has signed the consent form. Researchers in quiet venues should conduct

interviews at convenient times for subjects (Gill et al., 2008). The researcher will interview study participants in a quiet, distraction-free lecture hall. Before the interview, connecting with the participants is essential to help the discussion progress later (Gill et al. Before each interview, there will be a good relationship with the participants.

Researchers must also be able to acquire comprehensive and representative data throughout the interview to make it as high-yielding as possible (Gill et al., 2008). Listening intently to what the participant says is one of the most crucial abilities. The participants share their experiences quickly and without interruption, and the researcher listens intently. The participant was allowed to be aware of the recording and its uses throughout the interview. Reflecting on participant comments and asking participants for clarification if their response was unclear were other techniques the researcher used.

After concluding the discussion, the researcher thanked the participants for their participation and inquired if there was anything more they would want to say. Participants were allowed to discuss topics they may have considered essential or believed the interviewer should have covered, frequently resulting in discovering new, unexpected information. The researcher considers some crucial ethical concerns when conducting research with respondents. For instance, if a participant's motivation to attend Memorial University were her love and she felt uncomfortable with it being in the transcript, the researcher would not record it. The study is very interested in avoiding personal opinions and situations that can expose and discomfort the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

3.9 Data Analysis

The participants' data that were collected were analyzed. The transcripts were analyzed and coded in this study to identify themes in the data. After collecting and transcribing the data, the researcher summarized and synthesized the interview transcripts to facilitate interpretation. The researcher constructs evidence for the explanation using themes and codes from the study's various participants or other sources and confirms validity. After the interviews, data will be analyzed (Creswell, 2007). The data analysis process aids in the identification of common themes among the participants in the study. Rereading the research proposal and data collected topically enables data organization.

3.10 Triangulation

This study employed the use of a triangulation approach. Triangulation uses multiple datasets, methods, theories, and investigators to answer a research question. It is a research strategy that can help improve the findings' validity and credibility while reducing the presence of research biases in the study (Bhandari, 2023). It is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish the validity and reliability of data by combining several research methods. This method contributes to research by providing various data to explain or support a phenomenon of interest (Bhandari, 2023). The researcher conducted the study with semi-structured questions and one-on-one interviews with the participants. During the interviews, the researcher recorded data and took additional notes on any nonverbal behaviours and impressions observed. The study achieves triangulation by combining participants' interview data, the researcher's experiences as an international student, and insights from the literature review. Triangulation enhanced the research's credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness, surveying the experiences of international graduate students in a Canadian university.

3.11 Research Participants

Potential participants include graduate students who are currently international students at Memorial University located in Newfoundland and Labrador. The study gathers participants after the ethics approval the researcher gets the go-ahead from her supervisor. Participants had to be enrolled as full-time students at the institution of the research study, identified as international students, and aim to remain enrolled at the institution until they completed their degree. Participants were assigned the alphabet A, B, C, D, and E for data collected beyond their informed consent form. A pseudonym will be developed in the final stages using the participant number.

3.12 Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability are terms used in quantitative research. Qualitative studies must clarify these concepts because they are expressed differently. Because the qualitative study does not use instruments with established metrics for validity and reliability, it is essential to consider how qualitative researchers establish that the findings are credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable (Moran, 2021).

A study is trustworthy if the reader of the research report judges it to be so (Gunawan, 2015). Reliability or dependability threatens validity or credibility and questions many of the usual qualitative reliability tests. For instance, *member checking* (returning to the participants following data analysis) or *peer checking* (using a panel of experts or an experienced colleague to re-analyze some of the data) as ways of ensuring that the researcher has analyzed the data correctly (Sandelowski, 1993, as cited in Gunawan, 2015). Every effort to ensure trustworthiness in gathering and analyzing data in this study was in place. In the attempt to maintain trustworthiness in this study, the researcher ensures: that the study ensures the selection of more

than one site of observation, conducts more than one interview with the same participant, returns the interview or observation data to the participants for clarification, and engaging in more than one type of data analysis.

3.13 Ethical Consideration

To protect participants from physical and emotional harm, the researcher received ethical approval from the Memorial University Ethics Board before data collection. The researcher obtained consent from participants so that the participants would have proper orientation on the ethics and the purposes of the study. The participants reviewed each question in detail to ensure they understood their rights, the questions, and the possible answers the researcher might receive. The participants' pseudonyms served as proof of their confidentiality and anonymity. This procedure minimized potential risks to the participants or the study's outcome. Consequently, all participation was voluntary.

The researcher assured the participants that their study participation will be safe and will not experience any issues. Tape recordings and notes taken during the interview with participants were kept securely in a safe place. The researcher sought consent to record interviews at the beginning of each recording. The participant will have the chance to review the interview transcript after it is over and give written approval for using the material supplied.

3.14 Summary

This research study requires an approach to acquire an understanding allowing the researcher to answer the stated research questions. The researcher conducts the study using semi-structured questions and interviews with the participants one-on-one. During the interviews, the researcher records data, and concomitantly the researcher also takes additional notes regarding

any nonverbal behaviour and impressions observed. The researcher was able to transcribe data from the interviews and code to identify trends or patterns useful for analysis. The researcher informs the participants and guarantees that all data will remain secret throughout the study.

Chapter Four

Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introducing the Participants and Presenting the Data

This study aims to comprehend the experiences of international graduate students in a Canadian university. It used a case study technique and qualitative methodologies to gather data from five individuals. This chapter discusses the findings of five participant interviews and preliminary data coding. Each participant in the interviews at Memorial University was questioned for roughly an hour and a half in a calm lecture hall without interruptions. The participants knew that the researcher would record the interviews on tape and that they might stop the recording at any time.

The next step was transcribing the recorded interviews, and each participant received a copy of the transcript to edit, add to, or remove from it as they saw fit. After reviewing and confirming that the transcript accurately reflected what they said during the interview, the research participants signed transcript release forms. Each participant was assigned one of the following aliases to maintain confidentiality: Emma, Adam, Bola, Caleb, and Dolapo. When a researcher has already built ties with the research participants, the nature of the investigation is different from when the researcher has no prior connections before entering the field, according to Ortner's (2006) description of the benefits obtained by emic researchers. Being an emic researcher made it simpler for the researcher to undertake fieldwork, connect with individuals and resources, and relax the participants during the interview process. Semi-structured interviews created the case study, and each participant offered insightful information. The case study method is suited for this research since it can also investigate a specific phenomenon in a particular environment, especially when challenging.

Participants Name	Gender	Level of Study	Semester
Adam	Male	Masters	5 th
Bola	Female	Masters	2 nd
Caleb	Male	Masters	2 nd
Dolapo	Female	Masters	2 nd
Emma	Female	Masters	5 th

Table representing participants' assigned aliases to maintain confidentiality.

These statistics reveal the participants' racial, gender, and programming diversity.

4.2 Description of Transcribing Interviews and Coding Data

The researcher took time to transcribe the recorded interviews on the handheld tape recorder. Because the researcher had to repeatedly go back and rewind the tape after stops to grasp what was said, it was not easy to transcribe. The researcher gathered the information by transcribing the recorded interview with the five participants. Following the data collection and transcription, the data analysis started to look for patterns using inductive reasoning. Since it develops from precise observations about specific occurrences to more generalizations and theories, qualitative research frequently uses inductive thinking or induction reasoning (Soiferman, 2010). The data collection phase is organized into categories by coding and based on the categories, the inductive analysis process determines relationships, patterns, or themes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As previously mentioned, the study reached triangulation by merging participant interview data, the researcher's International Student experiences, and revelations from the literature review. The participants were allowed to verify the accuracy of the

transcript. They were also allowed to add to, delete from, or amend any inaccurate portions of the transcription, ensuring the transcripts' reliability. During the interview, the participants verified the interpretations and amended any interpretational elements that did not reflect their genuine opinions. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are all components of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Participant's voice

Emma's Voice

Emma, a graduate student from Nigeria in her fourth semester, believes that easily socializing is a personality thing. She affirmed that she could socialize easily and revealed that her environment is conducive to socialization. She also confirmed that the University gave her lots of assistance in socialization and gave examples of the mentorship program she signed up for back home before finally arriving in St John's, Newfoundland, and Labrador.

"Travelling to Canada is my first international travel experience."

She said travelling to St John's, Newfoundland, and Labrador for her masters was her very first international travel. She chose Memorial University because it is one of the cheapest schools in Canada, offers her course, and organizes her programs to afford students to work.

"Government policies are not affecting me negatively in any way."

Emma said that government policies are positively affecting her transition experiences. She gave the example of the lift of the embargo placed on the hours students can work before and allowing them to work full time and that of the tax return that does not exist back home. Emma also revealed that government policies are not affecting her studies negatively. She said different support services were available for international graduate students, such as the food bank and the writing center. Emma affirmed that he had experienced cultural shock and gave the example of

some people at the bus stop or inside the bus that they were meeting for the first time, and they told her the story of their lives within a few minutes of being together. She said that surprised her because such is not available back home. She concluded by saying she has met different people from India, Bangladesh, China, Iran, Jamaica, and Egypt. Emma's experiences as an international student working with faculty members are good. She said her relationships with the Canadians are on the surface as they meet in class and do the assignment together and nothing more.

"Yes, I have issues with residence accents. They speak too fast."

Emma confirmed her issues with the residents' accents, sighting the example of when she came, her thoughts were that she might not be able to hear and understand them as it seemed to her that they spoke very fast, but now she is adjusting and learning their accents fast. She said they find it difficult to understand her as they always complain that she speaks so fast. She finally confirmed that English is her home country's communication medium.

Adam's Voice

Adam is a graduate student at Memorial University in his fourth semester. He is from Nigeria, and during the interview with him, he said that he could easily socialize with other students with international and indigenous students. Adam further explained that the University has a foundation and structures that bring people together to socialize easily. He confirmed that the University assisted in socializing after his arrival to study on campus.

"Travelling to Newfoundland and Labrador for my masters was my first international travel experience."

Adam said his first international experience was at St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, this his master's program. However, he had read about international students' experiences in other countries. Adam said his friends that are through with their master's degrees from Memorial

University told him many things about things like the flexibility of the programs and other good things, so he was motivated to decide to come and join them for his master's program.

"Here is like a home away from home."

He revealed that government policies are not affecting his transition experiences. He also said that the government has made the place conducive for international students, which is like a home away from home; no political laws or regulation has affected him from integrating into society, and no government policies are affecting his studies. He confirmed that different support services are available for international graduate students at Memorial University. He mentioned the internationalization office's efforts to send students informative emails weekly.

"I never experience cultural shock so far."

Adam said he has never experienced a cultural shock. He also said that he has met with different faculty members from different cultures like the Indian, Chinese, Bangladesh, and many other cultures, as Memorial University has a multicultural environment. Adam confirmed that his experiences as an international student working with different faculty members are good and that most faculty members are willing to help. On the kind of relationships between Canadian and international students at the University, he confirmed that there is a good relationship and that he has not experienced discrimination or racism. They read and do assignments together.

"Yes, I have issues with residents' accents and vice versa."

Adam complained about having an issue with the residents' accents to some extent but is trying to adjust by learning the accent from them as they relate over time. He said that sometimes he finds hearing and understanding them clearly when speaking difficult and vice versa. He revealed that English is a medium of communication in his home country.

Bola's Voice

"I can easily socialize with my fellow Nigerians, not students from other countries."

Bola is an international student from Nigeria. She is in semester two of her master's program. She affirmed that she could easily socialize with her fellow Nigerians in the classroom, as they could understand her accent when conversing in English during lecture time. No, with other students from other continents because they found it challenging to understand her Nigerian accent when conversing in English during class lectures. She confirmed that she found the environment conducive to socialization and that the environment encourages community building. It provides a platform for self-discovery and self-confidence. The environment displays standards that cannot be lowered for any reason, irrespective of how cogent it is. It accommodates individuals from various continents. It respects the culture and opinions of students. She said the University helped her socialize after her arrival to study on campus. The University automatically registers international students for a semester-long course on immigration support from the internationalization office.

"Travelling to Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, was my first international travel."

She said that coming to St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador was her first international travel experience. She chose Memorial University because the school supports her main goal of nation-building. Many power-packed sectors at MUN provide services to equip her for nation-building. Sectors include the writing centers, supportive library, student and wellness counselling unit, ITS Service Desk, and many more. Bola was silent about the government policies affecting her transition experiences and studies—no response for the support services available for international graduate students.

"Yes, I am experiencing culture shock."

She confirmed that she had experienced cultural shock and gave language, weather, and climate examples. She made reference to weather and climate, that there is little difference in all seasons here as she feels cold even in summer and drinks hot/warm water frequently. She responded that she had met different cultures from India, the Philippines, Jamaica, Ghana, Afghanistan, Iran, and Bangladesh. She was silent about her experience as an international working with different faculty members. She was silent on the kind of relationships that exist between Canadian and international students at the University.

"Yes, I have issues with the resident's accents, and they also have with mine."

She confirmed that she had an issue initially with the residents' accents, but as time passed, there is much difference now from when she arrived. She said they did not hear clearly and understand her classmates, but as time went by, things became better. She said Canadians needed help understanding her accent at the outset; it seemed no one understood her in the classroom, both the professor, Canadians, and other international students from other continents except some African countries. English Language is a medium of communication in her home country but affirmed that English but with a Nigerian accent.

Caleb's Voice

"I was able to Socialize easily."

Caleb is a male graduate student at Memorial University. He is from Africa, Nigeria, to be precise; he could socialize easily with other students upon his arrival because most of them were friendly and approachable. Caleb found the environment conducive to socialization and that the University has ongoing assistance that aids his socialization on arrival for study on campus. He said travelling to St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador was his first international travel

experience. He further confirmed that his motivations for choosing Memorial University were a result of the past and track record of Memorial University.

"Government policies are affecting my studies positively,"

Caleb said no government policies are affecting his transition experiences in any negative way, and so also his studies in any negative way. He further revealed that support services are available for international graduate students, where the internationalization office sends information on Immigration and Skills acquisition. He also affirmed that he has yet to experience culture shock and has met many people from different cultures, such as India, Bangladesh, Ghana, and many more. Caleb's experiences working with different faculty members as an international student have been perfect so far. He also confirms a perfect relationship between Canadian and international students at the University. In linguistics, he confirmed that he is not having issues with the residents' accents, that he hears clearly and understands them when they speak, and vice versa. He concluded the interview by saying that English Language is a medium of communication in his home country.

Dolapo's Voice

Dolapo is an international student from Nigeria in graduate school at Memorial University; she is in her second semester. She said she could easily socialize with other students from other countries and everyone around her and found the environment conducive to socialization. She revealed that the University helped aid her socialization. While interviewing her, she confirmed that she had no international travel experience, and that Canada was her first international trip. Her motivation for choosing the Memorial University was that the University is one of the cheapest in Canada and that the University is offering her course.

Dolapo also said that no government policies negatively affected her transitional experience. She emphasized that government policies positively impact her studies. She further revealed that there are a series of support services for the international graduate student that aid her transitional process. She said she did not experience any cultural shock and has met many other cultures and people from various countries at Memorial University. She said she has good experiences working with different faculty members and confirmed that a cordial relationship exists between her as an international student and the Canadians.

Dolapo further revealed that she has severe issues with the 'residents' accents. When she newly came when they spoke, she hardly understood them because they spoke very fast, but now it is a different ball game; Dolapo can understand them very well, but on rare occasions when they speak fast, she finds it difficult to understand them. She also confirmed that they sometimes find it difficult to understand her accent as she repeats herself several times before they understand her. She also revealed that the English Language is a communication medium in her home country, Nigeria; though they have over 250 languages, the English language is their lingua franca.

4.3 Thematic Analysis

Data were gathered and analyzed using a case study methodology. A case study investigates one specific instance, such as a student, class, group, school, community, or institution (Basil, 2003). For a case study, data collection is necessary. Interviews with individuals or focus groups in which participants talk about the observations of those involved in the case that was under investigation; views of the setting(s) in which the case(s) occur, records of the case (s), either written or digital (Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

This case study investigated the experiences of international graduate students at a Canadian university to shed light on a particular group of international students at Memorial University and to gain a deeper understanding of the more extensive process of internationalization in post-secondary education. The coding strategy recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) for case studies is to develop a preliminary start list of codes before fieldwork using the researcher's list of research questions, hypotheses, problem areas, and critical variables. These codes, which highlight an aspect of the data that the analyst finds noteworthy, were created with the researcher's prior knowledge of the subject, information from participants, and insight from the literature research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The two primary study questions about the motivation and experiences of overseas students formed the basis of the initial list of codes. To identify the key themes in the data, the researcher reviewed the transcripts several more times and further coded the information about the experiences of international students.

4.4 Identification of Themes

Repetition is one of the simplest methods for recognizing themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Several of the participants in the interviews reiterated some of the same ideas and notions. For instance, most of the researcher's participants were motivated to study at Memorial University because it is one of the cheapest schools in Canada. In another instance, in the linguistic context, they all found it very hard to hear and understand the Canadians well when they first arrived in Newfoundland and Labrador. However, their understanding of the Newfoundlander accent increased as they became accustomed to hearing it. The assistance of institutional support and social networks of friends also helped participants adapt to the host institution and society. Memorial University is one of Canada's cheapest universities, and that

was identified as a motivation why most participants chose Canada. They found their tuition easy to pay compared to what is at stake in countries like the United Kingdom and the United States. The research questions' illustrative differences and similarities belong to the themes class (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The research questions are:

1. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a social context?
2. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a political context?
3. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a cultural context?
4. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a linguistic context?

The study data indicated diversities in the participants' transitional experience; distinct themes were identified due to repetition in the data gathered during the interview.

4.4.1 Motivation

Motivation is one of the themes that emerged during the interview. Motivation is an urge to take action to achieve a goal. The urge to act in support of a goal is what motivates people. It is essential to establishing and achieving our goals (Cherry, 2022). Emma said her motivation for choosing Memorial University was because it is one of the cheapest schools in Canada, the school offers her course, and the school organizes her programs so students can work. Adam said his friends that are through with their master's degrees from Memorial University told him many things about things like the flexibility of the programs and other good things, so he was motivated to decide to come and join them for his master's program.

Dolapo said she was motivated to choose Memorial University because the school supports her main goal of nation-building. Many power-packed sectors at MUN provide services to equip her for nation-building. Sectors include the writing centers, supportive library, student and wellness counselling unit, ITS Service Desk, and many more. Finally, Caleb said that his motivations for choosing Memorial University were a result of the track record of Memorial University. Students would be motivated to do things to achieve a goal if they have the conviction of the worth of the plan and can see that what they do will help them achieve it. We always act in a way that maximizes our enjoyment and minimizes our suffering.

4.4.2 Socializing

Another theme that emerged from the gathered data was socialization. Emma believes that easily socializing is a personality thing. She affirmed that she could socialize easily and that the environment is conducive to socialization. She also confirmed that the University gave her lots of assistance in socialization and gave examples of the mentorship program she signed up for back home before finally arriving in St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Adam is a graduate student at Memorial University in his fourth semester. He is from Nigeria, and during the interview with him, he said that he could easily socialize with other international students and also indigenous students. Adam further explained that the University has a foundation and structures that bring people together to socialize easily. He confirmed that the University assisted in socializing after his arrival to study on campus.

Bola affirmed that she could easily socialize with her fellow Nigerians in the classroom, as they could understand her accent when conversing in English during lectures. International graduate students only sometimes achieve the profound cross-cultural learning intended by genuine internationalization of post-secondary environments since they mingle more within their group. Other students from other continents found it challenging to understand Bola's Nigerian

accent when conversing in English during class lectures. She confirmed that she found the environment conducive to socialization and that the environment encourages community building. It provides a platform for self-discovery and self-confidence. The environment displays standards that cannot be lowered for any reason, irrespective of how cogent it is. It accommodates individuals from various continents. It respects the culture and opinions of students. She said the University helped her socialize after her arrival to study on campus. The University automatically registers international students for a semester-long course on immigration support from the internationalization office.

Caleb could socialize easily with other students upon his arrival because most of them were friendly and approachable. He further affirmed that he found the environment conducive to socialization and that the University has ongoing assistance that aids his socialization on arrival for study on campus. He said travelling to St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador is his first international travel experience.

Dolapo is an international student from Nigeria in graduate school at Memorial University; she is in her second semester. She said she could easily socialize with other students from other countries and everyone around her and found the environment conducive to socialization. She revealed that the University helped aid her socialization. While interviewing her, she confirmed that she had no international travel experience, and that Canada was her first international trip.

Caleb confirmed that he is not having an issue with the residents' accents. He hears clearly and understands them when they are speaking and vice versa. He concluded the interview by saying that the English Language is a medium of communication in his home country.

4.4.3 Language Barrier

In the linguistic context, during the interview, another emerging theme was the Language barrier. Emma confirmed that she has issues with the residents' accents, giving the example that came to her mind. Emma thought she would be unable to understand them as it seemed they spoke very fast, but now she is adjusting and quickly understanding their accents. Emma said they find it difficult to understand her as they always complain about her speaking so fast. She finally confirmed that English is her home country's communication medium.

Adam complained about having an issue with the residents' accents to some extent but is trying to adjust by learning the accent from them as they relate over time. He said that sometimes he cannot hear and understand them clearly when speaking and vice versa. He revealed that English is a medium of communication in his home country.

Bola confirmed that she had an issue initially with the residents' accents, but as time passed, there is much difference now from when she arrived. She said they did not hear clearly and understand her classmates, but as time went by, things became better. She said Canadians needed help understanding her accent at the onset; it seemed no one understood her in the classroom, both the professor, Canadians, and other international students from other continents except some African countries. English Language is the main medium of communication in her home country but affirmed that she had a Nigerian accent.

In linguistics, Caleb confirmed that he is not having issues with the residents' accents and that he hears clearly and understands them when they are speaking and vice versa. He concluded the interview by saying that English Language is a medium of communication in his home country. Dolapo further revealed her severe issues with the 'residents' accents when she newly arrived when they speak, she hardly understands them because they speak very fast, but now it is a different ball game; Emma can understand them very well, but on rare occasions when they

she speaks fast, she finds it difficult to understand them. She also confirmed that they sometimes find it difficult to understand her accent as she repeats herself several times before they understand her. She also revealed that the English Language is a communication medium in her home country, Nigeria; though they have over 250 languages, the English language is their lingua franca.

4.4.4 Government Policies

Emma said that government policies are positively affecting her transition experiences. She gave the example of the lift of the embargo placed on the hours students can work before and allowing them to work full time and that of the tax return that does not exist back home. Emma also revealed that government policies are not affecting her studies negatively. She said different support services were available for international graduate students, such as the food bank and the writing center.

Adam revealed that government policies are not affecting his transition experiences. He also said that the government has made the place conducive for international students, which is like a home away from home; no political laws or regulation has affected him from integrating into society, and no government policies are affecting his studies. Adam also confirmed that different support services are available for international graduate students at Memorial University. He mentioned the internationalization office's efforts to send students informative emails weekly. Bola was silent about the government policies affecting her transition experiences and studies. There is yet to be a response regarding the support services available for international graduate students.

Caleb said no government policies are affecting his transition experiences in any negative way, and so also his studies in any negative way. He further revealed that support services are

available for international graduate students, where the internationalization office regularly sends out information on Immigration and Skills Acquisition.

Dolapo also said that no government policies negatively affected her transitional experience.

She emphasized that government policies positively impact her studies. She further revealed that there are a series of support services for the international graduate student that aid her transitional process.

4.4.5 Culture Shock

Emma affirmed that she had experienced cultural shock and gave an example of how she met some people at the bus stop or inside the bus for the first time, and they told her the story of their lives within a few minutes of being together. She said that surprised her because such is not the case back home. She concluded by saying she has met different people from India, Bangladesh, China, Iran, Jamaica, and Egypt. Emma's experiences as an international student working with faculty members are good. She said her relationships with the Canadians are superficial as they meet in class and do the assignments together and nothing more.

Adam said he has never experienced a cultural shock. He also said that he has met with different people within the faculty from cultures like the Indian, Chinese, Bangladesh, and many other cultures, as Memorial University has a multicultural environment. Emma also confirmed that her experiences as an international student working with different faculty members are good and that most faculty members are willing to help. On the kind of relationships between Canadian and international students at the University, she confirmed that there is a good relationship and that she has not experienced discrimination or racism. They read and do assignments together.

Bola confirmed that she had experienced a cultural shock. She gave language, weather, and climate examples. She references weather and climate, saying there is little difference in all seasons here as she feels cold even in summer and drinks hot/warm water frequently. She responded that she had met different cultures from India, the Philippines, Jamaica, Ghana, Afghanistan, Iran, and Bangladesh. She was silent about her experience as an international working with different faculty members. She was silent on the kind of relationships that exist between Canadian and international students at the University.

Caleb also affirmed that he has yet to experience culture shock and has met many people from different cultures, such as India, Bangladesh, Ghana and many more. Caleb's experiences as an international student working with faculty members have been outstanding. He also confirms that excellent relationships exist between Canadian and international students at the University.

Dolapo said she did not experience any cultural shock and has met many other cultures and people from various countries at Memorial University. She said she has good experiences working with different faculty members and confirmed that there exists a cordial relationship between her as an international student and the Canadians.

4.5 Conclusion

The study explored the Transitional experiences of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Canadian University within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context. It used Memorial University as a case study. Five international students from different semesters participated as the respondents using the semi-structured interview. The study attained an in-depth knowledge of the topic under study. The transcribing of the data collected was the next step. Researchers need a range of abilities to guarantee that the interview yields the most

valuable data possible (Gill et al., 2008). During the interviews, the researcher allowed the respondents to express themselves without interruption but later asked for clarification where necessary. Through the process of coding, the information gathered from the interviews was arranged and sorted to reveal the themes. Because of their repetition and similarity, the themes of motivations, socializing readily, language barriers, government regulations, and culture shock emerged from the data analysis.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Implications for Further Research

5.1 Introduction.

The study explored the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Canadian University within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial University. It employed a case study design and qualitative methods, utilizing semi-structured interviews with five international students from Nigeria. It used a case study technique and qualitative methodologies to gather data from these five individuals. This chapter covers the key findings addressing the transitional experiences of Nigerian graduate students at a Canadian university, summarizes the key findings, and makes recommendations. The themes discovered through data analysis and coding are used to guide the discussion of the findings as discussed in Chapter Four, which includes motivation, socialization, language barriers, government regulations, and culture shock. This study obtained its results by matching these themes to the more extensive study literature on transitional experience synthesized in Chapter Two's literature review. Some insights are from the researcher's experiences as an international student and how it was to answer the study questions as an emic researcher.

5.2 Conclusion from the Research

The five respondents were Nigerians; the fact is that this country is a developing country. Some characteristics of some developing countries are the need for maximum security for their residents, lack of employment opportunities, lack of basic amenities, political instability, inadequate care, religious crises, and kidnapping (Tanko, 2021). As a result of the situation back home, some international graduate students will prefer to reside in Canada after their study.

Living in Canada was preferable to their home nations due to problems including political instability, worries about personal security, and economic instability (Hurley et al., 2015).

Chapter Two of this study discusses Vroom's (1970) expectancy theory. Vroom was the postulator of this theory; it revealed that people would be motivated to do things to end up at a goal if they have the conviction of the worth of the plan and can see that what they do will help them achieve it. We always act in a way that maximizes our enjoyment and minimizes our suffering. Vroom believes that people's (international graduate students) motivation towards doing anything (studying abroad) maybe by the value placed on the outcome of the efforts, positively or negatively, multiplied by their confidence in their efforts to achieve the goal or objective of being international students. Some of the outcomes are the standard of living they will have to access to after study, the benefit of having a permanent residence and becoming a citizen of Canada in the long run.

Adam said his friends that are through with their master's degrees from Memorial University told him many things about things like the flexibility of the programs and other good things, so he was motivated to decide to come and join them for his master's program. One of the ways developed countries having issues with underpopulation can use to increase their population with young and vibrant people still in service is by welcoming more international students and ensuring a smooth transition for them.

Emma said her motivation for choosing Memorial University was because it is one of the cheapest schools in Canada, the school offers her course, and the school organizes their programs so students can work. International students have increased over the past 20 years, and initiatives to make it easier for them to work while they study are now in place (Crossman et al., 2022).

Dolapo was motivated to choose Memorial University because the school supports her main goal of nation-building. Many power-packed sectors at MUN provide services to equip her for nation-building. Sectors include the writing centers, a supportive library, the student and wellness counselling unit, ITS Service Desk, and many more. Finally, Caleb said that his motivations for choosing Memorial University were a result of the past track record of Memorial University. Students would be motivated to do things to achieve a goal if they have the conviction of the worth of the plan and can see that what they do will help them achieve it.

The study shows that government policies are not affecting the transitional experiences of the respondents. They all affirmed that the government has made the place conducive for international students. All the respondents experienced culture shock except Adam, who confirmed that he is yet to experience such. As mentioned in the literature review, some international graduate students would find adjusting to even minor cultural differences difficult. In contrast, others might try to disguise their discomfort and blend in, confusing matters. Culture shock will affect all overseas students to varying degrees and at different times (*Understanding Culture Shock in International Students*, n.d.).

5.3 Conclusion from the research

A case study methodology based on in-depth interviews was employed in this study to explore the transitional experiences of five international graduate students enrolled in a Canadian University. Homelessness, lack of academic interest, the difficulty quickly integrating into society, racism, and prejudice were some difficulties the participants encountered that impacted their transition. Most students concurred that they had difficulties when they moved to Newfoundland and Labrador to pursue their studies. The findings of this study corroborate other studies discussed in Chapter 2 that demonstrate that international students experience adjustment

problems when they arrive in a new country to study. This study requires more research on the data that participants supplied. Universities must comprehend the experiences of the increasing number of African students coming to Newfoundland Labrador and Canada to study.

Fortunately, once they were in Canada, all study participants could get through the difficulties associated with the transfer. Nevertheless, some of them are still coping with the effects of those difficulties.

5.4 Recommendations

1. The University should give international students more support in organizing training that will allow international students to adjust to the unique Newfoundland dialect and accent.
2. Domestic and international students should support one another by drawing on their disparate backgrounds to view problems from many angles.
3. For all students to increase their cultural awareness and exposure, instructors should encourage them to work in multicultural teams and assign assessment tasks that call for various cultural backgrounds.
4. Besides providing academic advice, advisors should be increasingly concerned with their students' cultures, attitudes, and values. Understanding how to counsel international students better will help both the international and domestic students and the University and community (Guo, n.d.).
5. The support available for the students by the University should be made well known to the students.

5.5 Suggestions for further Studies

Considering the above findings and recommendations, the following are suggestions for further studies.

1. A study should be carried out to identify the difference in the participant's levels of understanding affected by their home residency.
2. Comparative studies should be undertaken to investigate if rural graduate students have more incredible difficulty than urban students.
3. The effect of regional differences of Nigerian graduate students on English fluency.
4. A comprehensive study on the effect of the first language of Nigerian graduate students on their English fluency, a case study of Memorial University.

5.6 Limitation

It took the researcher some time to get a positive response from some participants to accept scheduling an interview. Some kept shifting the scheduled time to another time that suited them due to their busy schedule. Few of them preferred writing interview responses rather than oral interviews. Only some pieces of literature are available on the topic under study. The case study methodology means that the study findings are not generalizable.

5.7 Contribution to Knowledge

The study gives insights into the transitional experiences of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Canadian University within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context. Therefore, the study provides an opportunity for further research to expand the knowledge on the variables thus identified as influencing the Transitional Experiences of

Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Canadian University within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context. The study provides a valuable compact of ideas, facts, and figures that the government can use, principals, head teachers, academics, management, practitioners, and consultants to understand the transitional experiences of Nigerian students in graduate study at a Canadian university. It may also serve as a source of reference for future researchers. It is a good source of information for upcoming international students.

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Invitation to Participants

Transitional experiences of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Canadian University.
Within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context, A Case Study of Memorial
University.

Adepoju Foluke

Department of Educational leadership

Faculty of Education

Memorial University

Email: foadepoju@mun.ca

March 28, 2023

Dear (Name of Participants)

Re: Intent to conduct a research study

My name is Adepoju Foluke. I am a student in the Master of Education Program at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and Labrador. I am researching the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students to Graduate Studies at a Canadian University in a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context. This is a case study of Memorial University graduate studies. As part of a research study to increase my understanding of the experiences of international students within and outside academic environments, I will conduct an interview. If you decide to participate, I will arrange an interview at a convenient time and place. The interview will last about one hour.

During this interview, I will ask questions about the Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context, choosing Memorial University. This research will also investigate what helped and what hindered your transition to living and studying at Memorial University. Your responses will be kept anonymous and any information that you share will be kept private. You will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your privacy.

For your information, the researcher will not, in any circumstances, pass your details to any company or organization, as the data that you provide is for this purpose only. Your participation in the research is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw from the research at any time or choose not to answer some questions you are not comfortable answering. For further questions about the research, please get in touch with me via email at foadepoju@mun.ca or on my mobile at 709-986-5237. You can also contact my research supervisor Dr. Noel Hurley at nhurley@mun.ca or by phone at 709-683-7472.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Adepoju Foluke

Appendix A

The research questions below will guide the study:

1. What is the Transitional experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a social context?
 - i. Were you able to easily socialize with other students?
 - ii. Did you find the environment conducive for socialization?
 - iii. Did the university provide any assistance in socializing after your arrival for study on campus?
2. Do you have previous international experience from another country different from your home country before coming to St John's, Newfoundland, and Labrador?
3. What are your motivations for choosing Memorial University?
4. What is the Transitional experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a political context?
 - i. Are government policies affecting your transition experiences in any way?
 - ii. Are government policies affecting your studies in any way?
5. What kind of support services are available for international graduate students?
6. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at Memorial University within a cultural context?

- i. Have you ever experienced cultural shock?
 - ii. What other cultures have you met while here at Memorial University?
7. What are the experiences of international students working with different faculty members?
8. What kind of relationships exists between Canadian and international students at the University?
9. What is the Transitional Experience of Nigerian Students in Graduate Study at a Memorial University within a linguistic context?
- i. Do you have an issue with the residents' accents?
 - ii. Do you hear them clearly and understand them when they are speaking?
 - iii. Do Canadians have trouble understanding your accent?
10. Was the English Language a medium of communication in your home country?

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,

I cordially invite you to participate in a study titled — Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at Memorial University: An Examination within a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context.

Please study this form attentively and feel free to ask any questions.

Researcher

I am Adepoju Foluke, a student in the Master of Education Program, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. My contact information is: Phone- 709-986-5237; email: foadepoju@mun.ca.

Purpose and Procedure

The title of my research is Transitional Experiences of Nigerian Students to Graduate Study at a Canadian University, in a Social, Political, Cultural, and Linguistic Context: A Case Study of Memorial University. The researcher will interview selected international students who came directly to undertake graduate studies at the university. Semi-structured interview questions will guide the interview process. Immediately after receiving your consent, the researcher will contact you and arrange a convenient interview time and location. With your permission, there will be a recording of the interview for further transcribing by the researcher.

Risks and Discomforts

For your information, this research is a risk-free one. you may decide not to answer questions you are not comfortable with.

Voluntary Participation

Your contribution to this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. There is no punishment if you decide not to participate or withdraw from this study. Any data you provide will be maintained in strict confidence. Individual data will be kept until analysis has been completed. Archived data will be kept in a secure storage place by my research supervisor for the period of time required by research protocols.

Ethics Approval

Ethics approval has been secured. The researcher obtained a certificate of completion of the Tri-council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research involving Humans Course on Research Ethics (TCPS2: CORE). This was done to enhance the researcher's ability to protect participants from emotional and physical harm.

Protection of Confidentiality

Your will not be identified in any publication resulting from this study. There will be a maximum effort to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Each Participant will have a Pseudonym. Participants are welcome to choose their pseudonyms. Identifying information about the participant, school, and ethnic group will be removed.

Questions

For further enquiries or concerns, feel free to get in touch with me:

Adepoju Foluke

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Or

Dr. Noel Hurley

Professor

Faculty of Education

Email: nhurley@mun.ca

Phone: 709-683-7472

I have read through this consent form. I hereby give my permission to be part of this study.

Participant's signature.....

Date.....