UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ON THE CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

By
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School of Management
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DECLARATION

I, Preesha Maharaj, declare that

(i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

(ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

(iii) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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Signature: _____

Preesha Maharaj

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ABSTRACT

Background: Between the years 2009 and 2010, an average of approximately 5 400 applications were received at the University of KwaZulu-Natal from international students (Division of Management Information, 2010). Knowledge of international students is essential to higher education institutions. It can be said that international students have become a vibrant part of the diversity in South Africa's education sector and provide immense benefits to our economy, educational institutions, local students and educators. However, there exists a paucity of research on the post-choice perceptions of international students.

Purpose and Methods: The purpose of the study was to assess the post-choice perceptions of international students (undergraduate and postgraduate) at UKZN, with special references to diversity challenges. A cross-sectional/survey design using questionnaires, with both descriptive and analytical components was employed. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher randomly chose 300 students from an updated listing of the registered international students chosen by the generation of random numbers to achieve the objectives of the study. The researcher surveyed the 300 students which were easiest to get a hold of who were contacted via email and invited to participate in the study. The responses of 280 international students were analysed. All data was processed and analysed using the SPSS version 15.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA). For all statistical comparisons, the 5% significance level was used; correspondingly, 95% confidence intervals were used to describe effect size.

Results and Conclusion: The identified diversity challenges experienced by international students at higher education institutions were found to be: language and communication; social interaction across race/ethnicity; discrimination; pedagogical approaches; finances; interracial conflict/tension; curriculum; assessment methods; lifestyle adjustment; campus services and facilities; classroom diversity; staff and, lastly, campus administration and policies. The results established that financial issues (insufficient financial aid and part-time/casual jobs); a lack of platforms for social and interracial mixing; campus residency (insufficient space and an inconducive learning

environment); and a lack of hosts on arrival are the predominant diversity challenges experienced by international students at UKZN. At the 95% level, where $p<0.05$, the results indicated significant differences in the perception of language and communication ($p= .009$) and assessment methods ($p= .006$) between undergraduate and postgraduate respondents. The undergraduate students have a higher score than the postgraduate students. This finding signifies that postgraduate respondents displayed a slightly stronger level of agreement for language and communication and assessment methods being a challenge compared to the undergraduate respondents. Therefore, the writer attempted to provide recommendations from the results and findings to ensure a truly diverse and united university.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the background of the study, the statement of the research problem, the purpose of the study, the research methods used, limitations to the study, as well as provides a chapter outline.

1.2 The background of the study

International students represent an increasingly significant group of students at all major higher education institutions around the world. Information on international students - their backgrounds and perceptions - is essential to higher education institutions. Their expectations are constantly changing as the environment and demands of society and the economy evolve. It is, therefore, essential for universities to keep abreast with international students to ensure that their expectations are being met and that all the universities' goals relating to internationalisation (redesigning the curricula, promoting internationalisation and forging strategic partnerships) are achieved.

International students are progressively choosing universities in South Africa as a study destination which is evident by the increasing numbers of international students. Due to the use of English as the main language of instruction, the close proximity to most sub-Saharan African countries, reasonable fees and a lower cost of living, South Africa has become an exciting study destination (http://www.yes-asia.com/south_africa/study_destination.shtm). It was also noted that South Africa boasts accessible and internationally recognised qualifications with a large higher education sector that is becoming a leader for high quality tertiary education relevant to the demands of a globalising world. According to the provisional Department of Education figures, as stated in the Higher Education South Africa booklet, since 1994, there has been a remarkable increase in international students from 12600 to over 64000 in 2008. This is

almost 8% of a total of 800 000 students at the country's 23 public universities. Therefore, it is not unexpected that 71% of international students come from SADC regions where English is commonly spoken – 45718 in 2008, with 15% from other African countries and 11% from other continents.

South Africa is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. Its population is comprised of Black (75.2%), White (13.6%), Coloured (8.6%) and Indian (2.6%) citizens (http://www.southafricastudy.com). It was further stated that, due to colonialism and immigration, White Europeans, Indians, Indo-Malays, Chinese and many more have added to the indigenous population of Black Africans. The country boasts 11 official languages - English, Xhosa, Afrikaans, Venda, Tswana, Ndebele, Sepedi, Southern Sotho, Zulu, Swazi, and Tsonga. This, in itself, presents a challenge for international students to get accustomed to South Africa. Therefore, there is greater importance for South African universities to go the extra mile and accommodate international students through diversity management.

Further to this, it can be noted that, on a global scale, people, technology and ideas are moving steadily across borders at increasing rates. One of the most important changes is that international students are becoming more interested in learning languages, participating in cross-cultural interactions and adapting their skills to various situations (http://www.southafricastudy.com). However, the challenge is for higher education institutions to meet the expectations encountered in a globalised education market (educational and non-educational services) and to coordinate these various attempts to improve the overall impact on all students, as well as the university.

The context of this study is the University of KwaZulu-Natal. As stated in the *University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan 2007-2016*, "The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is committed to the principles and values enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and articulated in the preamble to the Higher Education Act of 1997". Furthermore, the University strives to promote and foster respect and tolerance for multilingualism, diverse social values and culture, as well as promoting internationalisation.

In contrast to numerous national research studies conducted on diversity at UKZN, limited research has been directed at international students. Universities have much to gain from a more insightful understanding of international students and their perceptions of diversity management as they constitute an important segment of a university. Their presence is so significant that it is said by the Council of Higher Education (www.che.org.za) that, "HEIs should reserve at least 5% of student admissions for students from SADC nations other than their own (to a target maximum of 10% overall)". Therefore, UKZN aims at enrolling 5-10% SADC international students of the total population of students; students from other countries are also admitted. In relation to the perceptions of international students on the challenges of diversity management at UKZN, the present study may be looked at as a response to this need for research on international students.

Available literature pertaining to diversity management was examined. Griggs and Louw (1995:6) define diversity management as follows: "Managing diversity is a planned, systematic and comprehensive process for developing a unified organisational environment in which all people with similarities and differences can contribute and come together for a common purpose". In the case of this study, diversity management was examined in relation to higher education institutions. While this study inquires about various aspects of the international students' educational experience, it also evaluates perceptions of student engagement with other races, religions, personal values and beliefs. The literature review will further cover diversity models, dimensions, barriers, benefits and additional concepts.

In addition to the literature review on diversity management, it was necessary to analyse literature relating to international students. An underlying criterion for international students, when choosing a study destination, is institutional commitment to diversity. In this study, the researcher obtained information from a sample of international students to gain insight into their perceptions of diversity management at UKZN. For example, it was said that international students often perceive racial clustering on campus as a lack of commitment to diversity by the institution. Milem, Chang and Antonio (2005:26) said, "Moreover, this perception is shared both by students who maintain many interracial relationships and by those who maintain few. In other words, even when students actively take advantage of campus diversity via their friendships, they remain

somewhat discouraged by the lack of institutional support for a positive climate for diversity". They went on to say that students need to see visible and clear institutional commitment to diversity for them to view these interactions as contributing to the cultural norms of the institution.

It is clear that being part of a widely diverse environment can assist students' personal development and influence their campus involvements and activities. As stated by Milem, Chang and Antonio (2005:45) "a supportive campus climate and set of institutional practices might be linked to, or serve as a proxy for, high levels of cross-racial interaction among students—and make it possible for all students to improve their knowledge of and ability to accept others from different backgrounds and cultures". Studying international students can bring the required cultural, social and educational perspectives to the notice of university management and inform programmes that lack a global and broad approach to understanding the requirements and necessities of students.

Therefore, this study aims to assess the post-choice perceptions of international students at UKZN, with special reference to diversity challenges, and to offer recommendations for an improved learning institution. The information gathered will be useful to higher education institutions in offering a conceptual plan of best practices that contribute to accommodating and maximising benefits for international students with regards to diversity management.

1.3 The statement of the research problem

Even though extensive knowledge may exist involving why and how international students decide to study overseas and select particular universities as study destinations, studies relating to post-choice perceptions of students, mainly regarding their satisfaction levels with the choice of study institution, are limited. Existing studies also fail to provide research on the student perspective concerning diversity management and a study destination. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to this particular research field and fill a void in this area. Moreover, the study aims to decipher what challenges are experienced by international students when there appears to be a lack of diversity management. It also seeks to propose recommendations to enhance a truly

effective diversity management programme. Finally, this study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge held by the University management and the Department of Higher Education.

1.4 The purpose of the study

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007: 32) state that research objectives are generally more acceptable to the community of research as evidence of the research has a clear sense of direction and purpose. They also argue that objectives are likely to lead to greater specificity than research questions. The primary objectives of the study are:

- Identify the diversity challenges experienced by international students at higher education institutions;
- To assess the perceptions of international students regarding which of these challenges are the most predominant at UKZN;
- To examine the diversity challenges experienced by undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) international students; and
- To make recommendations accordingly to improve the perceptions, experiences and satisfaction of international students regarding diversity at UKZN.

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights to the University of KwaZulu-Natal as well as other higher education institutions.

1.5 Research questions of the study

The key research questions are listed below:

- What are the diversity challenges experienced by international students at higher education institutions?
- What are the perceptions of international students regarding which of these challenges are the most predominant at UKZN?
- What are the diversity challenges experienced by undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) international students?
- What recommendations can be made to improve the perceptions, experiences and satisfaction of international students regarding diversity at UKZN?

1.6 Research methodology

The basis of structuring the research methodology required for the purposes of this study was formed by reviewing the relevant literature material on research methods in the social sciences, comparative research and statistical research methods.

The relevant literature which related to the following central aspects were thoroughly examined:

- Research design;
- Selection of the appropriate survey method;
- Selection of the sample;
- Designing the questionnaire;
- Pretesting; and
- Coding, recoding and analysis of data.

1.6.1 Research design

Quantitative Approaches

Quantitative research techniques generally involve collecting primary data from a large number of individuals, often with the purpose of projecting the results to a broader population (Welman and Kruger, 2001:82). In using the quantitative approach, the researcher will attempt to quantify certain observations about student perceptions regarding diversity management and describe the relationship between variables. Cooper and Schindler (2008:165) said that, "Quantitative data often consists of participant responses that are coded, categorised, and reduced to numbers that may be manipulated for statistical analysis". He went on to say that one of its objectives is the tally of opinions or events, known as frequency of response. Quantitative research methods may be experiments, observation and surveys. In this study, the researcher utilised the survey method.

Qualitative Approaches

Qualitative research is aimed at gaining clarity on a vague research problem, not at generalising about a given population. Qualitative refers to the definition, analogy, meaning or metaphor characterising something and involves an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern human behavior (Cooper *et al.*, 2008:180). When one considers a qualitative research, various approaches may be considered such as participant observation; case studies; in-depth interviews; films, photographs and videotapes; or document analysis. In this study, the researcher has undertaken document analysis which is, "to evaluate historical or contemporary confidential or public records, reports, government documents, and opinions" (Welman *et al*, 2001:96).

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches (triangulation) were used in this study. Cooper *et al.* (2008:185) state that, "Triangulation is the term used to describe the combining of several qualitative methods or combining qualitative with quantitative methods". The researcher has utilised the methodological triangulation to obtain data for this study.

1.6.2 Data collection

Primary Research

The primary research included the gathering of original data. In this study, data relating to sex, age, race, country of origin, culture, qualification, native language and perceptions of diversity at UKZN were obtained. The researcher employed the questionnaire survey method to acquire the relevant data. The steps followed are outlined:

- Selecting a Representative Sample

According to Emory (1980:112) the critical idea in sampling is that the analysis of some elements in the population provides useful information on the entire population. Sampling helps to provide more accurate information. The area chosen for the study is

the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The University has been chosen for this research study due to easy access of the sample population. The population also contains attributes that the researcher requires.

The sample size consisted of 300 randomly chosen students from an updated listing of registered international students. It was envisaged that this sample would fairly represent the international students at UKZN and would adequately contribute in answering the objectives of this study. Saunders *et al.* (2007:210) point out that the larger the sample size, the lower the likely error in generalising to the population. This is an appropriate sample due to ease of access, and also due to limited resources such as finances and the time to utilise other populations.

Sekaran (2003:270) notes that, "when elements in the population have a known chance of being chosen as subjects in the sample, we resort to a probability design". In this study, simple random sampling was used. This method is the least biased and offers the most generalisability.

- Compiling the questionnaire

The questionnaire comprised three sections. The first section obtained information on the demographics of international students to understand their background such as age, sex, race, country of origin, culture, level of study and so on. The second section elicited information on their perceptions of diversity management at UKZN. Lastly, the third section allowed for additional comments which the questions in the survey may have omitted. The researcher chose to design a structured questionnaire along the themes identified in the research questions. The types of questions included were as follows:

- ✓ Closed-ended questions (Yes/No/ Not sure);
- ✓ Open-ended questions (why/what); and
- ✓ Likert scale responses (strongly disagree/disagree/undecided/agree/strongly agree)

- Pre-testing

Upon completion of compiling the questionnaire, the researcher pre-tested the questionnaire on 20 international students prior to commencing with the fieldwork. The purpose of this pre-test includes identifying errors or shortcomings of the questionnaire and making improvements before administering the final questionnaire.

- Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

Once the fieldwork was completed, all questionnaires were collected and verified for accuracy. Thereafter, they were edited, coded, captured onto a computer and analysed. The quantitative analysis for this study was conducted with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) as it contains a comprehensive set of procedures for organising, transforming and analysing quantitative data. Descriptive statistics such as tables and figures were utilised to display the results. Finally, the data was analysed and interpreted to provide quality results and recommendations.

Secondary Research

Secondary research provides second-hand information about events from an existing data-set which offers conclusions, interpretations or additional knowledge (Cooper and Schindler, 2008:124). Approaches to the study were determined by reviewing literature related to the main topics of this study. Much of the academic contributions on critical issues relating to the research topic were sourced from books, journals, periodicals and internet articles.

The researcher also sourced information from UKZN policy documents; the International Students' Office, official Government publications and the UKZN Division of Management Information. The secondary research is presented in chapters two and three.

1.7 The limitations of the study

Due to logistical and financial restrictions, this study faced a limitation to the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The five campuses making up UKZN i.e. Howard College; Westville; Pietermaritzburg; Edgewood and Medical School, was the context of which the study took place. It would have been ideal to execute a province-wide survey for the study.

The Division of Management Information (DMI) provided the researcher with the contact details of the currently enrolled international students at UKZN.

1.8 Chapter outline

This study is made up of six chapters, which are summarised below:

Chapter 1- Introduction

This chapter of the dissertation has presented the background of the study, stating the main concepts relating to the study. The problem statement, purpose of the study and research questions were outlined. The research methodology as well as the limitations of conducting the study were also introduced.

Chapter 2 – Diversity Management

This chapter is the theoretical part of the study and gives a review of various concepts relating to diversity. Some concepts explained are diversity management; diversity in higher education and UKZN; and strategic diversity initiatives, which will contribute in forming the basis of the study.

Chapter 3 – Higher Education Institutions and International Students

This chapter presents a comprehensive literature review concentrating on the research framework regarding international students. Some topics examined are the challenges faced by international students at higher education institutions; the factors affecting their choices of study destinations, and related topics.

Chapter 4 – Research Methodology

This chapter expands on the research methodology applied to the study. The study is based on quantitative research drawn from the collection of primary data and qualitative research drawn from the collection of secondary data. The chapter will describe the tools and procedures that will be utilised in the study as well as the sampling used and the research design.

Chapter 5 – Presentation and Discussion of Results

This chapter will integrate the presentation, analyses and discussion of the research results. What are the results of the questionnaire? What are the predominant diversity challenges faced by international students? How do undergraduates and postgraduates perceive diversity challenges at UZKN? These questions will be answered in this chapter. The researcher will also attempt to relate the findings to the literature review to achieve the objectives of this study.

Chapter 6 – Recommendations and Conclusions

The researcher attempts to conclude the research based on the findings by proposing recommendations in managing diversity for international students in higher education and the possible areas of future research.

1.9 Conclusion

In the present chapter, the researcher has introduced the topic, providing a background and motivation to this research study. The objectives of the diversity perceptions' survey were outlined. In the discussion of the research methodology used in this study, the primary and secondary research methods were briefly summarised. Finally, the limitations of the study were stated and a breakdown of the chapters that follow have been delineated.

In the proceeding chapter, the theoretical aspects of diversity management in higher education institutions pertinent to this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

2.1 Introduction

Everything that happens in an organisation or institution, good or bad, is enacted through a variety of people. Diversity encompasses similarities and differences along a given dimension. The extent of diversity in a university's population is enhanced by international students Cross (2004:320). Further to this, it can be said that diversity may offer value to the transition experience as a whole. Ultimately, one's mindset should be transposed by diversity so that a person can successfully engage in any interracial relationship or educational experience.

Thomas (1996:9) states that, "Where diversity increases, complexity increases; where complexity becomes pronounced, so does diversity". Therefore, this implies the link between complexity and diversity is important to the diversity management process which is critical in diversity at higher education institutions. This chapter will explore the relationship between diversity management and higher education institutions (HEI's). It comprises four sections, which will cover various facets of diversity. They are as follows:

- Diversity management;
- Strategic diversity initiatives;
- Diversity in higher education; and
- Diversity at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Various facets of diversity will be studied under each of these sections.

2.2 Diversity management

Diversity exudes different meanings in various contexts. Some diversity definitions are presented below:

Griggs and Louw (1995:6) define diversity management as, “Managing diversity is a planned, systematic and comprehensive process for developing a unified organisational environment in which all people, with similarities and differences can contribute and come together for a common purpose”.

Dessler (2004:45) states that managing diversity is, “A means of planning and implementing organisational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximised while potential disadvantages are minimised”.

While the above definitions are useful, the most useful and relevant definition in this study is provided by Cross (2004:392). He states that in higher education settings’ diversity means, “Opening up the university to different people, all interested in studying at this university. It means that all staff should be able to meet the needs of each individual. It means accommodating as many people as possible with their differences. It means wishing to know about the other. It means different things to different institutions”.

2.2.1 Important dimensions of diversity

Diversity constitutes various individuals with subjective identities based on primary and secondary attributes. The challenge facing higher education institutions is adapting the study environment to these various identities of students.

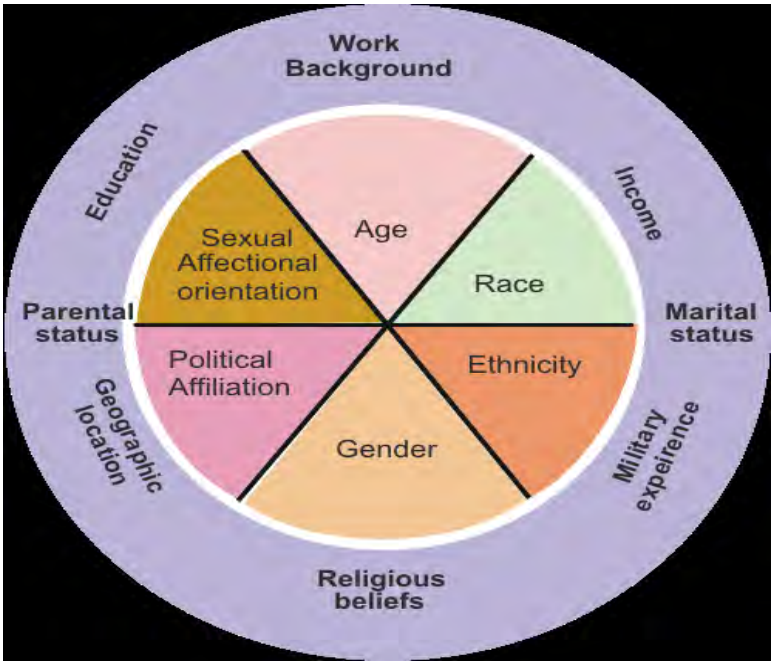

Figure 2.1: Important Dimensions of Diversity

Source: Human (2005:56)

According to Human (2005:57), the dimensions of diversity, as depicted in Figure 2.1, are as follows:

- Primary dimensions: age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical ability and gender orientation; and
- Secondary dimensions: education, religion, geographical location, income, work background and so on.

The inner circle, as explained by Thomas (1996:78), illustrates the primary diversity dimensions which contain inborn variations which can barely be changed and have a continuous effect on the life of a person. Due to these core elements being closely linked to culture, people often shape their view of the world through these elements.

The outer circle represents the secondary diversity dimensions which may be obtained or altered throughout the lifetime of a person. These elements tend to have a less significant effect on a person's life. However, they still have an impact on how a person perceives the world.

For these reasons, the researcher has questioned international students on these dimensions as they offer insight to the manner in which they perceive various issues and, in the case of this study, how they perceive diversity at UKZN.

2.2.2 Purposes of managing diversity in higher education

Managing diversity can be a multidimensional management approach achieved by understanding the perceptions of diversity. However, it is essential for the purpose of this study to understand why diversity is essential at university and what benefits it creates for the international student. Eight reasons are offered by Thompson and Cuseo (2009:4):

- "Diversity **expands worldliness**". It is said that campus may be the first time one has the opportunity to have proper interaction with a diverse group of people. In many cases, whether one tries or not, groups of people are often segregated from other groups, be it churches, schools or residential areas. However, campus offers people the opportunity to connect with various groups of people;

- "Diversity **enhances social development**". In the event that an individual is given the chance to interact with various groups of people, it offers the opportunity to broaden one's social horizons by increasing the group of individuals with whom one may relate to and create relationships. This also offers one stimulating and interesting conversations with people who are different to them;

- "Diversity **prepares students for future career success"**. According to Jayakumar (2008:623), major businesses in America have clarified that the required skills in the current ever-changing global market can only be produced from university during exposure to widely diverse people, ideas, cultures and viewpoints. Bikson and Law (1994:112) add to this by stating that the importance of managing diversity is crucial in higher education in such a way that it prepares students for the workplace.

- “Diversity **prepares students for work in a global society”**. It is a certainty that no matter what job one gets into, or what profession one enters, one will encounter working with clients, customers, co-workers, employees and employers from diverse backgrounds- worldwide. Jayakumar (2008:620) states that racial and ethnic diversity is associated with “active thinking skills, intellectual engagement and motivation, and variety of academic skills”. In addition, many students support the fact that managing cultural diversity has an optimistic result on social and intellectual skills, racial and ethnic diversity is also associated with development in leadership skills, cultural awareness and cross-racial understanding (Astin, 1993:89). Students believe that these benefits are gained when educated in a culturally diverse environment and promotes individual growth;

- “Interactions with people different from ourselves **increase our knowledge base”**. Experience and research have often indicated that people learn more from people who are different to them opposed to people who are similar. This can be thought of as- when persons encounter new knowledge or material, they ‘think harder’, therefore, they will do the same when they meet and interact with diverse people. Bikson and Law (1994:160) confirm this point by stating that a highly diverse social and intellectual environment is the ideal place to learn from people who have had different experiences, perspectives and beliefs from our own;

- “Diversity **promotes creative thinking”**. Having a multi-perspective mind has advantages. Diversity contributes to expanding one’s capacity for viewing problems or issues from multiple angles and vantage points. Thompson and Cuseo (2009:7) also argue that different vantage points can work to ones advantage when one encounters a new problem in various situations and contexts. They further state that rather than viewing the world through a single-focus lens, one is able to expand their views and consider multiple options when making decisions and weighing issues;

- "Diversity **enhances self-awareness"**. People with different experiences and backgrounds offer more to learn from and can sharpen one's self-insight and self-knowledge by comparing and contrasting their backgrounds and life experiences with the experiences of others. When people are more self-aware, they are more capable of making well thought out and informed decisions about their professional and academic future; and

- "Diversity **enriches the multiple perspectives** developed by a liberal arts education". It is known that people often become self-indulged and tend to move away from an afro-centric approach to life. However, the power of a general education is magnified by diversity by contributing to the liberation of people. When people move beyond themselves, they are able to gain a panoramic angle of the surrounding world and a more complete view of where and how they fit in.

Furthermore, Brown (2004:41) adds that managing diversity in higher education also provides benefits for the institution itself as well as the surrounding communities. These benefits include:

- It promotes a healthy society and personal growth- Diversity challenges stereotyped preconceptions; it encourages critical thinking; and it allows effective communication in the institution and community;
- It strengthens the workplace and communities- Learning in a diverse setting affords one the opportunity to build mutual respect and participate in teamwork, assists in building communities which concentrate on contributions and quality; and prepares individuals to cope and become a good citizen in an ever changing, complex society;
- Enhanced economic competitiveness- Making effective use of the talents and abilities of all our citizens, in work settings that bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures will assist in sustaining the country's prosperity; and
- A concern of the university- Managing a culturally diverse institution promotes a democracy, respect for differences among individuals and encourages cross-

cultural interaction which is the foundation for future socialisation inside and outside the university life. Birnbaum (2000:123) also states that, without variety, there are no alternative pathways open to either organism or institutions.

As mentioned, managing diversity promotes many benefits for the international student and the institution. However, there are many steps and processes to achieve these benefits, as barriers to managing diversity also exist.

2.2.3 Barriers to managing diversity

It has already been discussed why it is imperative to achieve diversity in higher education institutions. However, numerous barriers may pose as a hindrance to the process of achieving diversity. As stated by Kossek, Lobel and Brown (1996:67), some of the barriers are:

- Stereotyping and prejudice- this may occur on various levels (teacher-student relationships, social relationships, faculty procedures);
- Language differences- communication plays a vital role in achieving a common vision and fostering an environment of unity and inclusion of diverse students; however, this becomes difficult when these students communicate in a wide variety of languages;
- Ethnocentrism- this factor relates to one's perceptions of other cultures/races which may bring about power conflicts. Sadri and Tran (2002: 234) reaffirm that this may cause a barrier to managing diversity as people often believe that one's own cultural norms are superior to the norms of another's culture;
- Discrimination- this is another factor that may occur on various levels between students, staff and faculty i.e., gender, cultural, racial and sexual. Sadri *et al.* (2002:234) also state that this can cause high levels of alienation, dissatisfaction and exclusion; and
- Gender role stereotypes- in certain cases, women are still thought of as the weaker gender. This stereotype may be exposed among students in the

classroom, admission to female international students or recruiting of female staff members.

Due to the complexity of sensitive issues around diversity, which may present barriers as mentioned above, an institution requires an effective diversity management process which should be maintained by implementing key factors to manage the process. These are delineated in the following sections.

2.2.4 The diversity management process

Due to the complex nature of change, implementing any process of change occurs over a period of time and in sequence of certain steps. Thomas (1996:14) outlines the following step- by- step process for implementing diversity management:

Step 1: Get clear on the problem- this step involves analysing what is currently happening in the institution, i.e., what changes are occurring in the environment and among students? Hayles and Russel (1997:107) refer to this step as, "Creating awareness of diversity change" and state that if certain areas are lacking, clearly there is a need for diversity change;

Step 2: Analyse the Diversity Mixture- this step entails analysing the elements in the set of circumstances presented in the institution and defining the situation in terms of a diversity mixture;

Step 3: Check for diversity tension- this refers to stress, conflict or strain associated with the interactions of the elements in the mixture such as students, staff, faculty policies and procedures. Further to this, Hayles *et al*. (1997:107) argue that it is important to be analytical in this step in terms of learning to recognise tension and be clear on the roots of its problems, and on whether it is getting in the way of success; and

Step 4: Review action options- at this point, current methods being followed to address primary problems must be reviewed to assess how well that approach is working. If it is evident that the current methods are ineffective, an action option needs to be adopted to correct the problem.

2.2.5 Key factors to manage diversity successfully

In any process of change, there are key factors to be implemented and drive the success of the process. Human (2005:57) suggest the following key factors in managing diversity:

- Leadership- this suggests that lecturers, tutors, the steering committee, university management and so on can work together in crafting a vision that values diversity;
- Research- this indicates the measurement of current student attitudes and perceptions toward different issues on campus known as baseline data. Benchmarking is also included in research;
- Provide diversity training and education- these may involve a one-to-two day seminar, orientation programmes, awareness training;
- Change culture and management systems- appraise students on their success in minimising intergroup conflict; provide mentorship, support, guidance and counselors; and
- Evaluate diversity programmes- this includes evaluation (possibly by surveys) for continuous improvement.

Human (2005:57) summarises these steps as outlined above stating that it is essential that these activities are present in the heart of a Diversity Management Process. To illustrate diversity management in higher education institutions further, a multi-dimensional view of diversity will follow.

2.2.6 A multi-dimensional view of diversity

Campus diversity initiatives have evolved and provoked many to call for clarity on what is actually meant by the term, diversity. Doyle and George (2008:7) say that , "By looking at multiple dimensions, the meaning of diversity and its relationship to specific groups, by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation etc, attend to specific efforts such as curricular reform, can be articulated more clearly". They go on to say that examining each dimension can reveal both their distinctiveness and the connections among them.

Therefore, they present a framework which suggests that understanding each dimension separately is critical. However, understanding all the dimensions collectively is imperative.

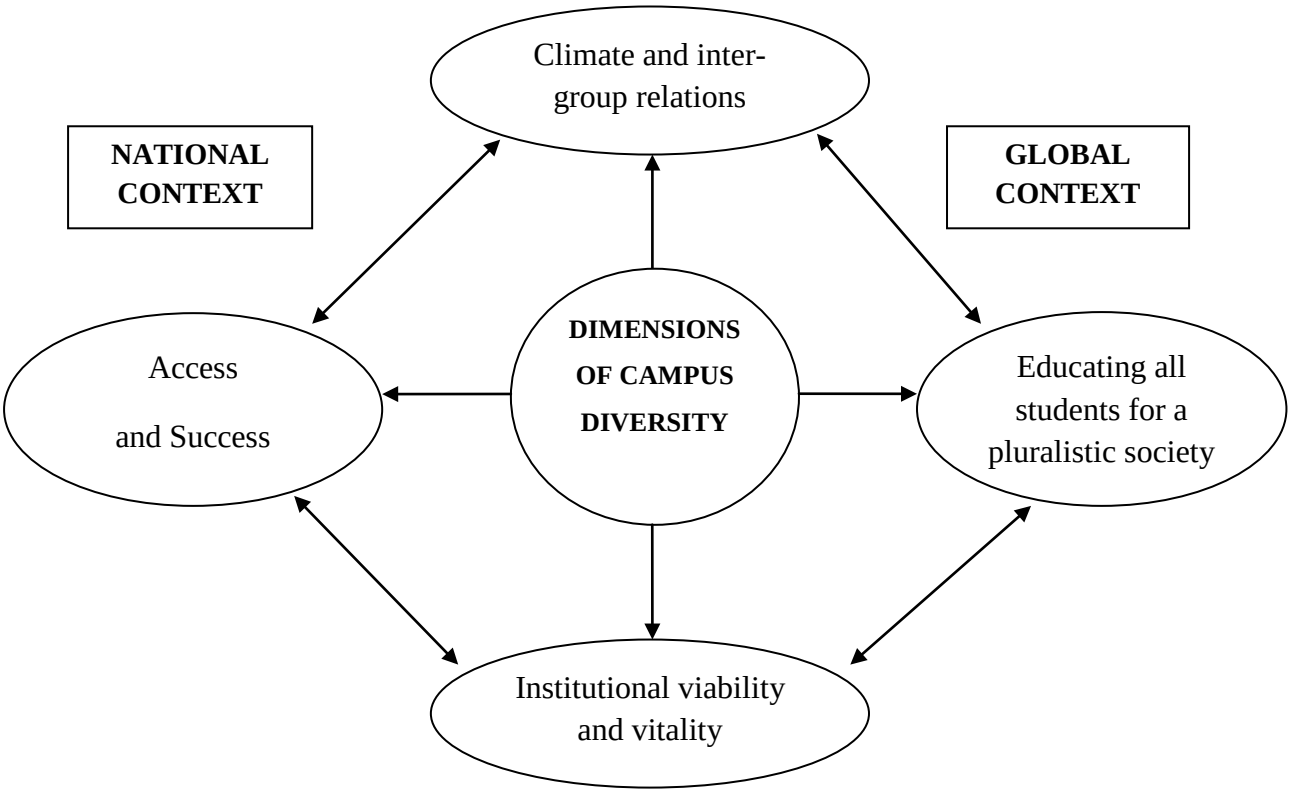

Figure 2.2: Dimensions of Campus Diversity
Source: Doyle and George (2008:13)

Four interrelated dimensions of campus diversity are depicted in Figure 2.2. These dimensions can be observed from the views of campus activities, specific groups involved or initiatives focused in this area; from the views of institutional efforts to enhance vitality and viability, and from the views of evaluation questions one might ask.

Dimension One: Access and success mainly concern social justice and the inclusion and success of historically underrepresented groups. This is where efforts of diversity began and have been focused on historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and on white women (Doyle and George, 2008:14). The success rate here has been measured and studied through representation on campus, numbers, and representation in relation to some larger population, and the completion/graduation rates for students.

Dimension Two: Campus climate and intergroup relations focuses on the campus environment for groups usually marginalised. “Here, the focus has expanded to include not only issues of racism and acts of intolerance concerning race and ethnicity, but issues related to sexual orientation, and the climate for women and more marginalised religious groups” (Doyle and George, 2008:16). Extreme attention is paid to intergroup relations and the manner or extent in which students, staff and individuals interact and work with one another due to the rising recognition of the significance of diversity for civic equality. Sidanius *et al*. (2008:179) confirm this as they emphasize the important role that a positive campus racial climate can play in protecting minority students’ psychological well-being and academic achievement. Efforts of evaluation frequently include the conditions under which diverse people interact, perceptions of the patterns, climate and levels of interaction, the outcomes of increased interactions, and the effectiveness of a wide variety of programmes to improve intergroup relations and the climate.

Dimension Three: This dimension displays the concern about diversity from an educational and scholarly role perspective of the institution. This is an issue of significance for all students and might be seen as parallel to recent efforts to transform campuses so that students can function in a technological society. The educational dimension, then, focuses on educating all students to live and function in a very pluralistic society and increasingly linked global community (Doyle and George, 2008:17). Evaluation efforts focus on questions of curricular content, scholarly activities, faculty diversity, teaching and learning, and faculty development such as how prepared students are to work in a diverse workforce.

Finally, the last dimension concerns the role of diversity in institutional viability and vitality. Significantly, this dimension focuses attention not just on students but on the staff and faculty; relationships to important groups (alumni and trustees; institutional mission and planning) and on relationships to communities outside the institution. In each of these areas, issues of diversity emerge. Evaluating diversity from this institutional perspective encompasses the prior dimensions but centres the questions in terms of institutional capacity and success (Doyle and George, 2008:18).

Although each dimension can be viewed separately, they are extremely connected. Issues of access and success, for example, have been directly related to such issues as campus climate, curriculum, and faculty hiring. Similarly, the focus on intergroup relations on campus has directly led to more intense study and scholarship in areas related to intergroup relations and the ways in which the curriculum and teaching and learning link students with one another on shared tasks. The dimensions of this framework provide viable knowledge for this study. Strategic diversity initiatives will follow.

2.3 Strategic diversity initiatives

There are various strategic diversity initiatives that can be implemented in a university which may be related to the elements discussed in the dimensions for campus diversity. Two examples of these initiatives will now be outlined to demonstrate how diversity can be implemented and maintained according to the needs of an institution.

2.3.1 A campus diversity initiative (CDI) in India

To this point, extensive research has been produced so as to corroborate one's understanding of diversity and offers a theoretical framework. This section presents literature on guidelines for engaging diversity—logical and calculated planning, developing, and implementing of a university's policies and procedures designed especially for international students to reap the benefits available from studying at a culturally and racially diverse institution.

As stated by Smith (2005), cited in Cross (2004:389) in the Tri-Nation Campus Diversity Seminar, a Campus Diversity Initiative (CDI) has been functioning in 23 designated colleges from around India in the recent few years. A few chosen anecdotes from these CDI-participating colleges have been described here to exemplify that diversity-positive initiatives have the preferred impacts on the community, students and teachers. When the objectives of the CDI were discussed, as perceived by students and teachers, it was evident that the focus was on bringing greater harmony between different groups based on dimensions such as gender, religion and caste. Various salient objectives articulated were to:

- Bring better quality relationships among students from different backgrounds;
- Understand the customs of other people for mutual understanding and cooperation;
- Develop social awareness about social situations;
- Improve interactions with surrounding society to provide opportunity for social service to one's neighbours; and
- Enhance the relationship of the college with the neighbouring community.

The first three points evidently apply to this study as they have notably been diversity challenges experienced by international students around the world.

2.3.2 University of California Los Angeles: strategic plan for diversity

The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) has promoted a force of inclusiveness for its immensely diverse community of staff, local and international students and faculty; and fostered a commitment to diversity. A strategic emphasis has been prepared for addressing diversity which can assist in the case of general diversity and global campus diversity. The diversity strategy is briefly examined below which may contribute to a potential strategy for UKZN (UC Report of the Staff Diversity Council, 2008):

Step 1: An action plan for faculty diversity

- Actions that enforce diversity to achieve goals are required for climate issues, recruitment and hiring;

Step 2: Enhancing diversity in graduate education by moving towards a strategic plan

- Strengthening the impact of institutional activities and initiatives which are intended to increase the involvement of underrepresented minorities in tertiary education is the vision for this step. New planning and programmatic initiatives that will create more orderly, consistent and synergistic collaborations can achieve this step;

Step 3: Strategic diversity plan for student affairs

- The UC Report of the Staff Diversity Council (2008) states that the plan is to reaffirm student affairs' core values of equality, pluralism and opportunity; and dedication to educating in an increasingly diverse globe. This plan is also aimed at revealing the campus's collective commitment and belief in the importance of a multicultural campus and world;

Step 4: Training leaders for global and diverse communities

- This step aims at providing leadership to achieve a high quality of teaching and learning; it also ensures that all students are afforded options to connect in a difficult range of educational opportunities by promoting academic success for the diverse undergraduate population. Four challenges to achieve several diversity goals related to undergraduate student success and undergraduate education; and

Step 5: Challenges and achievements: staff diversity

- This step looks at staffing trends which indicate that without a concerted action to address the recruitment, retention, and career development of staff, the university will not have the skilled, knowledgeable and diverse workforce needed to support its teaching and research mission (UC Report of the Staff Diversity Council, 2008).

This overarching strategy for achieving diversity goals is to engage all students, divisions, schools, faculty units, and staff in increasing diversity plans that embrace these goals and build on their already established foundations of diversity. The above-mentioned objectives are pertinent to this study and can provide valid direction, if incorporated effectively. Therefore, the researcher chose to discuss this particular CDI at this stage so as to demonstrate the relevance of a CDI in a higher education institution that can be used as a benchmark in this study. Diversity management has been discussed comprehensively in the first section of this chapter. It will now be put into context and related to higher education institutions of South Africa.

2.4 Diversity in higher education

Higher education should uphold a multifocal approach that incorporates the success of underrepresented students, a platform for change and climate, research and educational requirements that teaching all students from a diverse society involves, and, lastly, institutional viability and vitality. It was stated by Milem, Chang and Antonio (2005:25) that the concept of diversity and its educational outline has developed and changed over the past three decades to include a wide set of issues, purposes and initiative on universities.

Efforts of institutions to manage diversity impact international students in a multiplicity of ways and there is no uniformity across HEI's in engaging with diversity with certain institutions doing a much better job of maximising the educational benefits associated with diversity than others. Milem, Chang and Antonio (2005:19) state that higher education must more actively address both dynamics of education quality delivered for an ever increasing and diverse nation and the shaping of opportunities by the ongoing power of race. However, in the new century, the difficulty of managing diversity is only one of many challenges facing HEI's. These challenges as well as a background of national and regional developments of higher education will be discussed in this section.

2.4.1 Challenges facing higher education

It is apparent that new age students demand new age philosophies which higher learning institutions are still struggling with in terms of responding to the diversity among the youth and enforcing methods to educate in a fair and equal manner. However, the concern is how to effectively move universities from where they currently are to where they are required to be. In this section, challenges will be broken into two categories: challenges facing higher education and challenges of diversity in higher education.

i) Challenges facing higher education according to UKZN's alumni magazine *UKZNTOUCH* (Issue 1, 2010) are as follows:

- Academics are unable to teach to a diverse group of students

Dardagan (2010: 6) notes that a real challenge for higher education in South Africa is to respond to diversity by teaching in a way that opportunities to learn are equalised whilst, at the same time, providing avenues for those who have little problem making the transition from secondary to tertiary education. Dardagan (2010:6) asks: "Do our university curricula adequately address the biographical heritages that this diverse student body brings with them in to the university system?" He also notes that UKZN is currently investigating the possibility of introducing a Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course in which lecturers will receive training in how to impart their knowledge or how to teach, organise learning and activate assessment for learning within the diverse higher education system.

Furthermore, UKZN's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Professor Vithal (2010:7), states, "There is undoubtedly a need to skill lecturers to teach but they also need to be skilled in how to work with a diverse student body in which you have young people with different language proficiencies perhaps struggling in large classes". She added that higher education has the responsibility to respond to diversity among all students and teach in a fair and equal way. She noted that implementing the type of academic support and process/programme monitoring that meet the requirements of those individual difficulties and variations is a challenge. Higher education educators will need to bridge the gap if secondary education was inadequate.

- Transformation issues

According to the chairperson of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions, Professor Crain Soudien (cited by Maharaj, 2010:19) states that most South African universities have initiatives in place to address transformation, yet the pace of change is the concern. He states that, "Factors contributing to the slow pace of change at Higher Education Institutions include: the

inability of universities to attract and retain black and female academic staff; limited funds for the creation of new posts; resistance to transformation from middle management; poor accountability mechanisms to effectively implement policy; and the lack of gender sensitivity".

An additional area of concern is said to be the lack of scholarly research into the life of students at residence which can be important for new students who need to adjust to the university environment. Discrimination was evident at student residences across the country. Research needs to be conducted into the perceptions of students from diverse groupings and their take on discrimination at Higher Education Institutions. Professor Soudien also states that language policies adopted by certain universities discriminated against black students and staff. He added, "In the historically English-medium and black institutions, English is the default language of instruction". According to UKZN's Division of Management Information, only 640 out of 1 920 international students speak English as their home language.

- Financial aid

The Executive Dean of Students at UKZN (2005-2009), Mr. Trevor Wills (cited by Maharaj, 2010:21), said the challenge facing both the UKZN Student Funding Centres and students is simply the lack of adequate funds to distribute.

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) Executive Board Member, Professor Roy Du Pre as cited by Maharaj (2010:22), believes that a critical look at the caliber of students entering universities should be taken into account when addressing the financial aid problem. In addition to this, UKZN Central Students' Representative Council President (2009), Ms Bavelile Hlongwa as cited by Maharaj (2010:22), believes that Government should look at the possibility of freeing up funding from other State departments and diverting it to Higher Education Institutions.

According to the UKZN website, international students are not offered financial aid and are advised to enquire at the Scholarship Offices or Ministries of Education in their home countries.

ii) Challenges of diversity in higher education

Smith (1995) identified four distinct challenges of diversity in the context of higher education which are common to the variables used included in this study. Utilising this framework, Table 2.1 depicts the problems and opportunities associated with each of the various challenges. Representation focuses on the presence or absence of particular groups in the college campus and seeks ways to increase their number. This challenge is the outcome of the accumulated distortions of the past.

The second challenge, campus climate, identifies the fundamental connections between educational attainment and institutional environment, and aims to change those aspects of campus climate that prove inappropriate for a particular group of students. Here, the challenge is largely due to the common stereotypes and prejudices. A useful point to note is that Smith (1995) suggests merely making provisions to accommodate disadvantaged students will not suffice and that diversity-positive initiatives should be considered for creating a supportive climate, giving disadvantaged students a feeling of empowerment and meaning.

The third challenge, educational mission, conveys the disparity in the performances of students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are under- or unprepared specifically with deplorable schooling. Smith (1995), states that a realisation of all students benefiting from an education that promotes the understanding and capability for a multi-perspective, multi-racial and multi-gendered world is a challenge.

The fourth challenge, as stated by Smith (1995), is transformation and joins all other dimensions of diversity in a primary review of the university/ educational institutions organising conjectures- educational, intellectual, institutional and societal. The dilemma of discrimination and widespread inequality needs to be solved with involvement of the community and social sensitive community for improved integration.

Table 2.1: A Framework for Management of Diversity

PROBLEMS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Accumulated distortions of the past	Representation	Reservation Positive discrimination Quota
Prejudice and Stereotype	Campus climate	Diversity positive initiatives Warm and supportive Empowerment
Disparity in performance	Educational mission	Reform curriculum Remedial education Provide life skills
Inequality and discrimination	Transformation	Social sensitivity Involvement of community Integration

Diversity management presents the problem of transforming society by engaging the various differences, divisions and discrepancies through the educational process. Sidanius *et al.* (2008:65) reinforce that the goal of a university should be to educate students in an environment that is associated with people it involves. They further mention that diversity is known to be a comprehensive term that acknowledges all the disparities that exist around people. In the higher education context, community should be redefined to incorporate the unassimilated variety of groups that form the university, its position in community, and its space where all these differences converge. The diversity challenges outlined above have been included in the questionnaire to assist the researcher in interpreting the perceptions around these challenges of the international students who have increasingly come to UKZN since the internationalisation of higher education.

2.4.2 Internationalisation of higher education

The *Council for Higher Education Report* (www.che.org.za) notes that, "Internationalisation is a term increasingly used to describe the international dimension of higher education – although it is often used loosely, and may, therefore, mean different things to different people". Clark (1983:12) adds that the concept of higher

education internationalisation is broadly viewed as valuable, for a range of reasons that include:

- Increasing multicultural communication and respect between people;
- Facilitating international relations;
- Promoting learning and scholarship; and
- Enhancing leadership in a global community.

These values were embedded in the questions of the survey so as to decipher the perceptions of international students on how internationalised UKZN actually is. Higher education has immensely evolved in South Africa over the last decade and will be better understood after outlining the National Policy Developments and Regional Developments of higher education in South Africa.

2.4.3 National policy developments in higher education

In understanding the topic of this study, it is essential to understand the past of higher education in South Africa. The apartheid legacy and globalisation were identified as double challenges by the National policy after 1994 and were expected to be addressed by higher education. Both the *White Paper* and National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) examined the balancing act that HESA would need to perform, in concurrently aiding the development and reconstruction needs of the country and dealing with the challenges posed by globalisation. Furthermore, it was stated by the CHE that, "The *White Paper* recognised that 'this national agenda is being pursued within a distinctive set of pressures and demands characteristic of the late twentieth century often typified as globalisation. This term refers to multiple, interrelated changes in social, cultural and economic relations, linked to the widespread impact of the information and communications revolution, the growth of transnational scholarly and scientific networks, the accelerating integration of the world economy and intense competition among nations for markets".

Corresponding to these double imperatives, required key responses of higher education were identified by policy (Council for Higher Education, 2004:210):

- Widening access;
- Achieving equity and diversity in the student and staff bodies;
- Supporting lifelong learning; and
- Ensuring generic skills as outcomes of teaching and learning.

Still, both the White Paper and the NCHE did not outline a precise vision, goals, principles, or strategies for the internationalisation of higher education. In 2000, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) pointed out a key issue faced by the system, "South Africa is not focusing sufficiently on promoting its higher education system internationally. There is immense potential to attract students from the Southern African region, other parts of Africa and elsewhere without reducing efforts to expand access to South African students".

The CHE (2004:211) stated that internationalisation should be promoted and an appropriate infrastructure and framework drawing in a variety of pertinent government departments should be created for this purpose. They went on to state that international students must be specially catered for to ensure that they enjoy rewarding social and educational experiences. This is a pertinent point as it is an objective of this study to identify the areas/challenges experienced by international students at UKZN.

Consequently, the matter was taken up by the *National Plan*, which pictured a raise in the enrollment of students from within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. "From 2002, policy came into effect treating SADC students as South African students for subsidy purposes and advice was sought from the sectoral bodies to advise on the appropriate fee levy, if any, for SADC students" (www.che.org.za).

Furthermore, it was affirmed by the CHE that HEIs should recruit academics actively from the rest of Africa; and recruit and retain black South Africans as support to the success of staff equity and transformed institutional cultures (Council for Higher Education, 2004:215). This is an interesting point to note in this study as this would contribute to the broader development of intellectual and research networks across the continent, thus contributing to the social and economic development of universities and Africa as a whole.

2.4.4 Regional developments in higher education

National developments have been outlined, it is also relevant for one to note the related regional developments in higher education as well. South Africa is known to be a member of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training which was approved in 2000. As cited in the Council for Higher Education (2004:5), it is envisaged in the Protocol that there will be a determined attempt to execute coordinated, broad and integrated education and training programmes which will address the requirements of diverse states/regions. Relevant to this study, it was then stated that the following stipulations in relation to higher education include that member states will:

- Recommend that HEIs reserve at least 5% of student admissions for students from SADC nations other than their own (to a target maximum of 10% overall);
- Work towards harmonisation, equivalence, and eventual standardisation of entrance requirements;
- Devise mechanisms for credit transfer;
- Encourage the harmonisation of academic years in order to facilitate student and staff mobility;
- Collaborate diversity in the production of teaching and learning materials;
- Promote student and staff exchange programmes;
- Establish a SADC distance education centre to improve distance education systems in the region; and
- Establish centres of specialisation for teaching and learning, and centres of excellence for research.

The Council for Higher Education (2004:6) further asserts that as some indication of the challenges implicit in the implementation of such a protocol, a research study conducted in 1999 into academic linkages between local institutions and their counterparts in Africa and international student and staff mobility to South Africa was of the opinion that: while policy is implicitly oriented towards playing a constructive role in Africa, practice mainly focuses on partnership building with non-African countries. However, there exists confidence that a new study will reveal that higher

education institutions in South African have embarked more intently upon establishing links since 1999 with their African counterparts.

Undoubtedly, many places are provided for SADC students in South Africa which may be the cause of an imbalance in student movement in the region. However, the *HESA Strategic Framework* (2010-2020) emphasizes that higher education leadership in the SADC region has recently been working on establishments to support implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training and to more broadly foster regional and international dialogue in higher education. Further research on international students and staff in South Africa will follow.

2.4.5 International students and staff in South Africa higher education

In this section, the review of international students and staff in HESA attempts to provide a general picture of internationalisation, emphasizing the extent to which regional links have been attained. Snapshots in the period after 1994 of international students and staff in the local higher education system are provided below (Council for Higher Education, 2004:5):

- There has been a significant increase in the number of international students in South Africa since 1994 (a growth of about 25% between 1988 and 1996);
- Most international students (55% in 1996) were registered at UNISA, suggesting they might not live in South Africa. The second largest cluster was registered at historically advantaged institutions (HAIs), especially in the Western Cape and Gauteng. There were very few international students at historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs) – on average fewer than 30 per institution;
- Overall, international students comprised about 3% of students at universities and 2% at universities of technology. Most international students were registered for degree programmes, with most postgraduate students in master's programmes;
- International students from Africa comprised 70% of the total of foreign students. Most students from SADC countries were registered for

undergraduate courses, while students from other African countries were registered for postgraduate degrees. SADC students were drawn to higher education in South Africa on account of proximity, cultural and linguistic links, and quality of educational resources;

- Almost two-thirds of foreign staff employed at HEIs came from Europe and were male. In particular, foreign staff were more likely to be male, qualified with a doctorate, and employed at a senior level in historically white HEIs;
- Staff from SADC countries comprised 10% of foreign staff at HEIs in 1998 (and 90% of these were male). Staff from other African countries comprised less than 10% of the total foreign staff complement in the sector;
- While after 1994 structured agreements between South African HEIs and their counterparts increased in line with South Africa's international acceptance, most signed (and pending) agreements were with partners in Europe and North America. Few HEIs had agreements with counterparts in Africa, although these appeared to be increasing. Few South African students were studying in other parts of Africa as a result of such agreements.

2.4.6 Higher education policy changes

According to the *HESA Strategic Framework* (2010-2020), "The Council for Higher Education (CHE) was established in 1998 and thereafter, the CHE's Higher Education Quality Committee started developing its quality assurance structure for Higher Education". In 2001, the National Plan for Higher Education set out the following goals for higher education:

- Creation of graduates required for economic, international and social development in South Africa;
- Accomplishing diversity in the SA Higher Education system;
- Accomplishing equity in the SA Higher Education system;
- Supporting and encourage research; and
- Reformation of the institutional landscape of the higher education system.

In addition, the *National Plan for HE* developed a system of steering higher education towards the desired goals (above) through the levers of funding, planning and quality assurance. This study seeks to establish the extent to which the goals of the *National Plan for HE* have been achieved at UKZN as they contribute to diversity management for international students. Discussions on diversity at the University of KwaZulu-Natal will follow.

2.5 Diversity at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

South Africa has an extensive Higher Education sector which includes UKZN. It consists of: "21 Universities, l5 Universities of Technology, 50 Teacher Training Colleges and scores of Agricultural and Nursing Colleges" (http://www.southafricastudy.com). In addition, there is a growing private tertiary sector, whose institutions range from colleges to universities. The research output generated is known to be the largest in Africa and competes with many of the best in developed countries.

UKZN is ranked as one of the top ten universities in South Africa. An independent project known as the Google College Rankings ranks universities and colleges around the world using Google. According to the Google College Rankings (2010), the University of KwaZulu-Natal ranks seventh in the country.

This section aims to study diversity at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. According to the UKZN website, the university is committed to academic excellence and advances knowledge through scholarship, learning, research, innovation, globally competitive teaching and academic freedom. UKZN has nearly 400 000 students and is a truly South African university that reflects the diverse society in which it is situated. UKZN embraces internationalisation and diversity as a vital element of its goals and values.

2.5.1 University goals

As stated in the *University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan* (2007-2016:12), the University will strive for African-Led Globalisation by:

- Redesigning the curricula
  "Faculties and Schools will design their curricula to incorporate indigenous and local knowledge and knowledge systems as far as possible".
- Promoting internationalisation
  "The University will support carefully selected student exchange programmes that bring students from other countries to the University and further expand our students' international opportunities, particularly exposure to Africa, to enrich the learning experience for all".
- Forging strategic partnerships
  "Strategic partnerships at the continental and global levels are critical in placing UKZN's African scholarship in the wider international arena and in taking on some of the challenges of producing African scholarship".

The researcher included this section to indicate whether the goals relating to diversity and internationalisation of the university are being achieved according to the perceptions of international students studying at UKZN.

2.5.2 University indicator of success

The university cannot measure its success by a single event. Improvements and moving towards the goals will be measured gradually over time. In the case of this study, providing good quality services to international students and internationalisation of the university are key concepts.

A pertinent indicator of success relating to the internationalisation of UKZN is as follows:

> "UKZN aspires to be the top-ranked African university by 2016, as measured by recognised international Higher Education rankings. We would expect clear evidence of continued improvement towards this end over the plan period" (University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan, 2007-2016: 27).

2.5.3 University mission

The University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan (2007-2016:7) states that the university mission is, "A truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, and critically engaged with society". This mission is also articulated in the values held by the university.

2.5.4 University values

Milem, Chang and Antonio (2005:22) state that an institution's commitment to diversity should permeate policy in all areas of institutional life and should issue statements of support, purpose, and action. The UKZN aspires for an institution based on clear understanding of its goals for a widespread change which is supported by shared values. These values serve as a framework for all its endeavours and indicate their commitment to diversity. The University community pledges to (UKZN Strategic Plan 2007-2016:11):

- "Actively encourage and respect the right of all scholars, staff and students to engage in critical inquiry, independent research, intellectual discourse and public debate in a spirit of responsibility and accountability, in accordance with the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy;
- Promote access to learning that will expand educational and employment opportunities for all;
- Embrace our responsibility as a public institution to support and contribute to national and regional development, and the welfare and upliftment of the wider community, through the generation and dissemination of knowledge and the production of socially-responsible graduates;

- Conduct ourselves according to the highest ethical standards, and provide education that promotes an awareness of sound ethical practice in a diverse society;
- Manage and run our institution in conscious awareness of the environment, and foster a culture of responsible, ethical and sustainable use of natural resources;
- Ensure effective governance through broad and inclusive participation, democratic representation, accountability, and transparency that serves as an example that contributes to building the democratic ethos of our country;
- Acknowledge the value of the individual by promoting the intellectual, social and personal well-being of staff and students through tolerance and respect for multilingualism, diverse cultures, religions and social values, and by fostering the realisation of each person's full potential".

This was included in the research as the international students were questioned on whether they perceive that UKZN is run according to good values and philosophies which respect international students. This is an important factor as it links back to the historical legacy of the university and South Africa's equality and apartheid.

2.5.5 Ethnic and introductory courses

It is obvious that there are many adaptations and adjustments that need to take place for students studying in a foreign country. One needs to get familiar with the languages, cultures, surroundings and customs. The University offers the following courses to international students to help them get accustomed to South Africa and its diversity (www.ukzn.ac.za):

- Culture and Diversity in the Rainbow Nation

This course includes various sections that touch on the history of the region, multilingualism and language policy, cultural, social and media viewpoints as well as political perspectives of the region.

- Zulu Language and Culture

Communication and language are significant elements of this course. Straightforward everyday situations are presented to the students for where they are educated on grammar and vocabulary structures to assist with correct and fluent *isiZulu* communication whilst in South Africa. Culture is another feature of the course which focuses on cultural heritages and traditions which include Zulu beliefs, art, music and customs.

- Service Learning

This course is customised as much as possible to deal with specific requirements of foreign students. The students will have the opportunity to visit rural and urban developments and will be exposed to various cultural, social and historical sites. Furthermore, it offers enriching service learning experiences which are known to leave an indelible mark on the students.

This study has questioned international students on whether they perceive these ethnic studies/language courses to be sufficient in the curriculum for international students at UKZN.

2.6 Conclusion

It can be said that understanding and implementing diversity is clearly imperative in higher education institutions. In this chapter, diversity was broken down into various facets to indicate its importance and dynamics. The main aspects of diversity were outlined such as the dimensions; benefits; purposes of managing diversity in HEI; barriers to implementing diversity; key factors in managing diversity successfully and a campus diversity model.

Strategic diversity initiatives were then discussed to illustrate the relationship of diversity in higher education institutions.

Diversity was then explained in relation to Higher Education Policy Developments and Framework. Areas discussed were challenges facing higher education and diversity challenges facing higher education; internationalisation of higher education; National Policy Developments; Regional Developments; International students and staff in SAHE and lastly, Higher Education Policy changes.

Due to the University of KwaZulu-Natal being the context of the study, this chapter also discussed UKZN and highlighted the goals; indicator of success; UKZN mission; values and diversity courses for international students. Understanding these elements is critical to this study to achieve some background of the context.

In the next chapter, international students will be discussed in terms of diversity challenges, factors considered when choosing a study destination and related literature on higher education institutions.

CHAPTER THREE

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

3.1 Introduction

Due to the differing assumptions that are made about what an international student is, it may be difficult to define an international student. Wood (2004:21) suggests a possible definition of an international student is an individual who has relocated to another country mainly for study purposes. However, it must be noted that there are various kinds of international students which may include students undertaking distance learning programmes by an institution in a different country or students registered in branch courses facilitated by a faculty from a different country.

Bordeux, Boulic and Thalmann (1999) as cited by Mohammed (2009:6) state that, "Perception, among other issues, plays a major role in explaining the way that people behave and act; it is a part of individuals' cognition of objects and how they deal with them. Although perception is an essential part of human awareness and behaviour, it is more evident in some fields, such as the acceptance of others and the way of dealing with different cultures". Sekuler and Blake (2002) as cited by Mohammed (2009:8) also note a relevant point to this study, "studying perception enables one to design devices that ensure optimal perceptual performance. Studying and analysing how the people perceive diversity helps in exploring their viewpoints about the multiplicity of cultures and the profit of unity". In this chapter, the researcher provides extensive literature on international students, their own perceptions and how they are related to diversity management.

Furthermore, a useful concept provided by Athiyaman (1997) as cited by Russell (2005:4) states that a student's expectations regarding enrolment may be:

- negatively disconfirmed (should their performance be less than anticipated);
- confirmed (should their performance match their expectations); or
- positively disconfirmed (should their performance exceed their expectations).

Knowledge of international students is essential to higher education institutions. It can be said that international students have become a vibrant part of South Africa's education sector (as illustrated in the previous chapter). These students provide immense benefits which are not restricted to our economy but extend to our educational institutions, local students and educators. They provide exposure to local students and educators from their overseas thinking which can help raise education standards, and improve interpersonal relationships as these are important for young people who are increasingly involved in a global marketplace. Therefore, accommodating international students is an important goal in the higher education sector which should be reflected in the institutional commitment to quality and expertise. The advantages of integrating international students into the social and academic cultures should be understood by university leadership who should aim for students succeeding in a globalised world (Carter and Sedlacek, 1986:12).

Studying abroad for international students is an opportunity to have the world revealed to them by permitting socialisation with different people, from different cultures and walks of life, which can allow them to understand themselves and others better. According to a survey by the International Education of Students (IES), studying overseas is known to be a defining moment in the life of a young person and will continue to have an impact on the student's life for many years in their future. Sekuler and Blake (2002) as cited by Mohammed (2009:10) state that students perceive their study environment differently, according to the type of student they are. The manner in which students perceive the campus environment is known as typologies i.e. collegiate, academic, vocational, and nonconformist. Carter and Sedlacek (1986:13) affirm that university is viewed as career preparation for the vocational type; as a place to pursue knowledge and ideas for the academic type; a place for extra-curricular and social activities for the collegian types and for individual interests by the non-conformist type. This statement implies that the perception of an international student regarding the college environment is influenced by the reasons they attend university and what they expect to achieve there.

In a study of New Zealand students, it was said by the Ministry of Education National Survey of International students (2007:17) that,

> "To ensure that New Zealand retains its ability to attract international students from a wide variety of international locations, it is important that it continues to develop an integrated, sustainable and forward-thinking approach to international education. A critical aspect to achieving this is the continual monitoring of international student experiences and levels of satisfaction, alongside their overall characteristics".

This statement relates to the objectives of this study which is to realise international students' perceptions regarding all aspects of diversity at UKZN. In doing this, it may provide direction for higher education in South Africa to maintain its ability to attract international students and create a good standing in international education. The numbers of enrolled international students at UKZN will be presented in the next section.

3.2 Statistics on enrolled international students at UKZN

According to the UKZN Division of Management Information (2010) the number of international students has been consistent over the past five years until 2010 when it dropped to 5%.

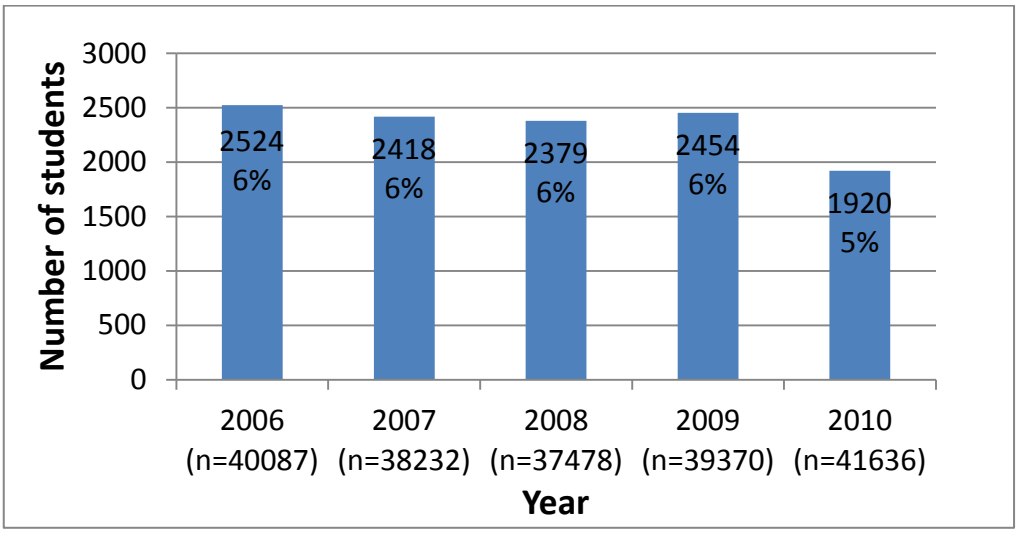

Figure 3.1: International Student Enrolments at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for 2006-2010

Source: Division of Management Information (2010)

According to the Division of Management Information (2010) international students attending UKZN represent over 100 countries worldwide and, currently, only 640 out of 1 920 have English as their home language.

As indicated, there is a substantial number of international students enrolled at UKZN, making this study significant to the university. The findings of this study may also contribute to understanding the challenges which might have led to the dissatisfaction of international students.

3.3 Campus diversity model for international students

Studies on higher education have identified numerous salient elements that relate diversity to educating international students, including issues linked to the development of individuals and the environment in which these students are taught (Hurtado and colleagues, 2003 as cited by Milem *et al.*, 2005:11). Three common themes arose from the many research studies that have investigated such topics:

- "Individuals who are educated in diverse settings are far more likely to work and live in a racially and ethnically diverse environments after they graduate;
- Individuals who study and discuss issues related to race and ethnicity in their academic courses and interact with a diverse set of peers in college are better prepared for life in an increasingly diverse and global society; and
- Increasing the compositional diversity of the student body is essential to create the kind of learning environment described here".

It was then emphasized by the authors how essential it is for university leaders to form settings that exploit democratic and learning results associated with being educated in a diverse environment.

In relation to Hurtado and colleagues' generic framework, climate includes not only perceptions and attitudes but also the structure and history of the institution including people's communication across differences. It is also assumed in this framework that international students are taught in racial contexts that are different between campuses,

and that the variations in climate that occur are shaped by various internal and external forces.

The Hurtado and colleagues Campus Diversity Model reviews the five diversity dimensions which shape the effect to what degree diversity efforts will lead to educational benefits for international students as well as the campus climate. These aspects are interrelated, but, in the same light, each dimension is distinctive and should be purposely addressed if the benefits linked with diversity are to be recognised. Figure 3.2 is a graphic display of a generic Campus Diversity Model while Table 3.1 outlines the dimensions of Hurtado and colleagues' Campus Diversity Model.

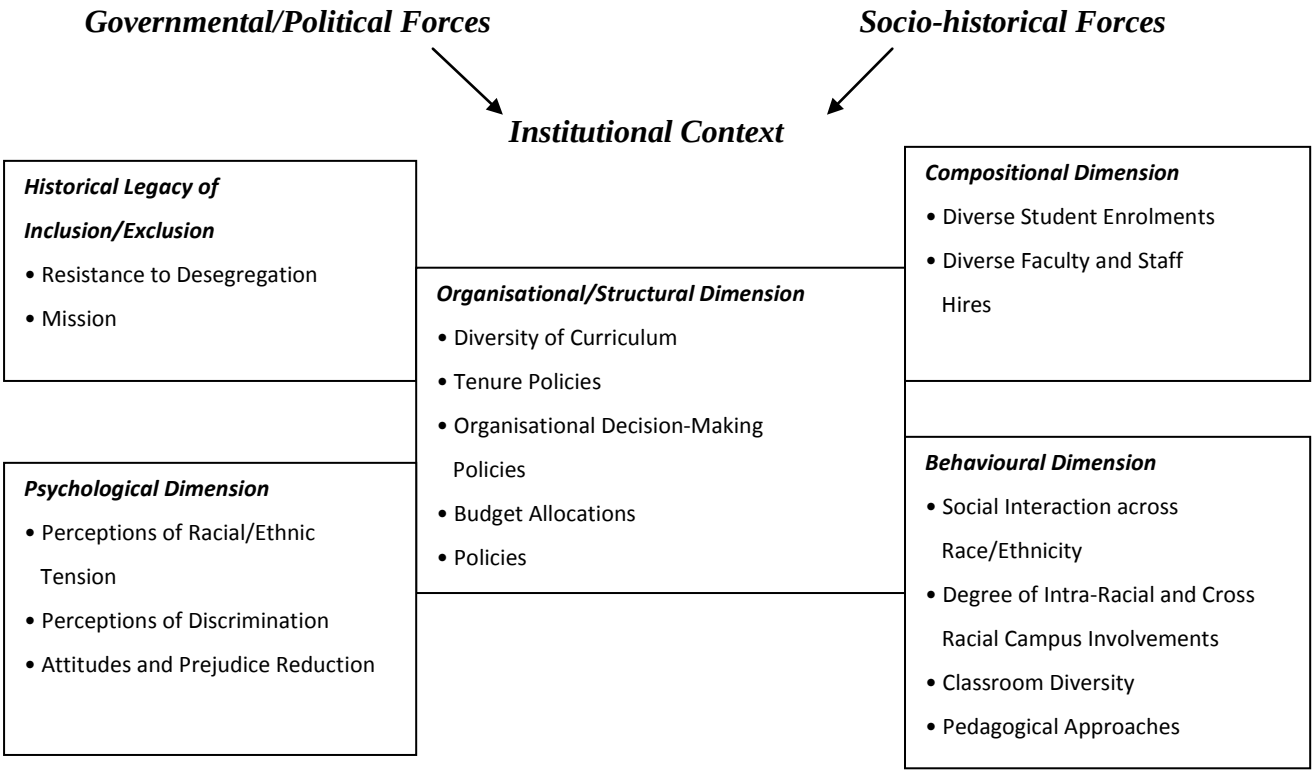

Figure 3.2: A Generic Campus Diversity Model- Graphic Display
Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999), as cited by Milem *et al.* (2005:29)

Table 3.1: Hurtado and colleagues' Campus Diversity Model

Compositional Dimension • Diverse Student Enrolments • Diverse Faculty and Staff Hires
Historical Legacy of Inclusion/Exclusion • Resistance to Desegregation • Mission
Psychological Dimension • Perceptions of Racial/Ethnic Tension • Perceptions of Discrimination • Attitudes and Prejudice Reduction
Behavioural Dimension • Social Interaction across Race/Ethnicity • Degree of Intra-Racial and Cross • Racial Campus Involvements • Classroom Diversity • Pedagogical Approaches
Organisational/Structural Dimension • Diversity of Curriculum • Tenure Policies • Organisational Decision-Making • Policies • Budget Allocations • Policies

Source: Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999) as cited by Milem *et al.* (2005:30)

3.4 Diversity dimensions

These five diversity dimensions are external forces and interrelate with internal forces to create the racial climate at an institution (Hurtado and colleagues, 1998, 1999, as cited by Milem *et al.*, 2005:15). Five aspects resulting from educational practices and programmes are mentioned to explain these internal forces:

- compositional diversity;
- historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion;
- psychological climate;
- behavioural climate; and
- organisational/structural climate.

3.4.1 Compositional diversity

Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999) state that compositional diversity links to the proportional and numerical representation of diverse ethnic and racial groups in a university. Communicating to both external and internal constituents that diversity is a critical priority of the university and its leaders is heavily influenced by policies and programmes of the institution.

The following table indicates the number and percentage of international student enrolment at South African universities and Universities of Technology over the period of 1995 to 2002.

Table 3.2: Headcount Enrolments by Country of Permanent Residence (1995-1998-2001-2002)

Institutional Type	**Country of Permanent Residence**	**1995**		**1998**		**2001**		**2002**	
		No	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**
UNIVERSITY	SADC	6 360	45%	9 222	54%	19 987	50%	25 545	53%
	Other African Countries	1 482	10%	2 454	14%	4 383	11%	5 735	12%
	Asia	660	5%	1 629	10%	1 456	4%	1 475	3%
	Europe	3 362	24%	2 465	14%	2 966	7%	3 061	7%

	North America	304	2%	367	2%	761	2%	1 012	2%
	South America	71	1%	91	1%	163	0%	205	0%
	Australia & Oceania	118	1%	99	1%	102	0%	116	0%
	No information					2 674	7%	1 343	3%
UNIVERSITY TOTAL		12 357	87%	16 327	95%	32 492	82%	38 492	82%
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY	SADC	1 137	8%	578	3%	5559	14%	6 179	13%
	Other African Countries	287	2%	139	1%	471	1%	582	1%
	Asia	134	1%	19	0%	50	0%	110	0%
	Europe	191	1%	50	0%	135	0%	161	0%
	North America		0%	2	0%	4	0%	7	0%
	South America	1	0%	4	0%	3	0%	1	0%
	Australia & Oceania	17	0%	10	0%	8	0%	8	0%
	No information					1 030	3%	1 147	2%
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY TOTAL		**1 767**	**13%**	**802**	**5%**	**7 260**	**18%**	**8 195**	**18%**
TOTAL		**14 124**	**100%**	**17 129**	**100%**	**39 752**	**100%**	**46 687**	**100%**

Source: Council for Higher Education (2004:217)

It can be seen that in 2002, both universities and universities of technology experienced a rapid increase in South African Developing Countries' (SADC) students as most of foreign students came in from the SADC countries. There was also an increase in student enrolments from other African countries. According to the Council for Higher Education (2004), "foreign students were enrolled predominantly at the historically advantaged universities (HAUs with 40% in 2002), followed by the University of South

Africa (UNISA with 31% – up sharply from 27% in 2001), the historically advantaged universities of technology (HATs, 13%) and historically disadvantaged universities (HDUs with 11%).

The researcher chose to illustrate this table in this section as this information is of great importance later in the study and acts as a stepping stone in understanding the needs of SADC students and students from other countries. Understanding their needs contributes to understanding what influences their perceptions and expectations of educational institutions. The composition of staff in the year 2000 will now follow:

Table 3.3: Headcount Totals of Full-time and Part-time Instruction/Research Staff at South African Public Universities and Universities of Technology (2000)

Citizenship	**Universities**	**Universities of Technology**	**Distance Education**	**Total**
SA	25 687	9 105	1 392	36 184
SADC	157	5	2	164
Europe	798	26	8	832
Asia	248	10	0	258
USA	151	1	1	153
All other	450	30	4	484
Unknown	369	0	0	369
TOTAL	**27 860**	**9177**	**1407**	**38444**

Source: Council for Higher Education (2004:219)

A lower magnitude of international staff may be the result of resource issues, i.e., lower academic salaries and benefits compared to those offered in other countries such as Australasia, Europe and North America.

Evidently, the increase of compositional diversity in a university is a critical first step in improving educational and non-educational outcomes. However, when planning and implementing campus diversity initiatives, this dimension cannot be the only aspect of climate that is addressed. Milem *et al.* (2005:28) indicate that although a multiracial university can provide essential opportunities for educating and learning, which

homogeneous universities do not provide, they also present various difficulties which must be addressed should the educational benefits be achieved. Therefore, they state that campus leaders should think and act more proactively and multi-dimensionally about the potential for campus learning.

3.4.2 Historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion

The historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion dimension includes the historical relics of separated learning institutions which continue to have an effect on the racial and ethnic diversity climate at universities (Hurtado and colleagues, 1998, 1999). Proof of this is still shown in the resistance to desegregation in some universities. A factor of this dimension is that on numerous universities, benefits which continue for specific groups go unrecognised and often disadvantage the groups that have been historically excluded by the institution. Watts (1972:128) believes that the institutions' traditions and to some extents its social norms is influenced by its age. Therefore, the control of change and adaptation is also likely to affect the institution which may also influence the control of change and adaptation of foreign students. Furthermore, universities that acknowledge the history of the institution in relation to exclusion demonstrate to internal and external constituents that the institution is ready to admit to and accept its previous wrongdoing and is certainly willing to make attempts to rectify its past of exclusion.

3.4.3 The psychological climate

Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999) explain the psychological dimension of campus climate as encompassing perceptions of individuals about intergroup relations, perceptions of discrimination or racial conflict; attitudes held toward individuals from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds as well as institutional responses to diversity. They further state that it is known from the many studies of campus climate that students and faculty from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds are expected to perceive the climate at university in considerably different ways.

A study done by Sidanius *et al.* (2008:65) addresses issues relating to the overall effects of college diversity on the socio-political attitudes of students. The purpose was to investigate whether the university experience liberalised the racial and political attitudes

of students, or whether displeasure was created among them by the newly found diversity. There appeared to be a reciprocal relationship between receiving more discrimination and having more in-group friends. Specifically, students, who perceived more discrimination on campus early in their college experience, appeared to seek out comfort through a greater proportion of in-group friends later in college. In addition to this point, Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999) assert that, "who people are and where people are positioned in an institution affect the ways in which they experience and view the institution, its mission, and its climate". Therefore, it can be said that it is critical for campus leaders to not dismiss nor underestimate the significance of these perceptual differences.

3.4.4 The behavioural climate

Hurtado *et al.* (1998, 1999) state that this dimension of campus climate comprises the nature of the interaction between students from diverse races and ethnicities; the status of social interaction on the university and the intergroup relations quality. They further state that a general observation is that campus race relations are poor and that there has been an increase in university segregation, which is typically due to students of colour isolating themselves from the rest of the campus.

Sidanius *et al.* (2008:72) examined the reciprocal relationships between interethnic contact and attitudes and the relationships between students' perceptions of ethnic discrimination on campus, their intergroup friendship choices, and their sense of belonging in college and general academic adjustment. The results indicated that decisions regarding future interethnic interactions were influenced by prior attitudes of ethnicity. A study done by Russell (2005:4) contradicts the above finding as he states that students who were less concerned about mixing and interacting with a multi-ethnic group of students and were less prejudiced of their intergroup at the outset were more likely to date students and make friends outside their ethnic groups in university. The quality of interaction is of main concern, intergroup and same-group contact do not need to be mutually limited.

3.4.5 Organisational/structural diversity

This dimension represents the organisational and structural features of universities and how benefits for certain groups are embedded into the structural and organisational processes. Hurtado and colleagues (1998,1999) say that curriculum; in campus decision- making to budgeting, admissions and hiring procedures; tenure decisions; and other significant processes and structures that guide the day-to-day "business" reflect the organisational/structural dimension of climate. A recent study done by Smith *et al*. (2004) as cited by Milem *et al.* (2005:18) states that racially homogeneous faculties are unlikely to take on candidates from a different racial group unless conscious efforts are made to require the faculties in really considering these candidates.

Findings of Sidanius *et al.* (2008:124) emphasize the important role that a positive campus racial climate can play in protecting minority students' psychological well-being and academic achievements. Existing research shows that attempts to increase the numerical representation of minority students on college campuses (structural diversity) can have positive effects in terms of educational outcomes and changes in socio-political attitudes and values for many students. Hellsten and Prescott (2004:103) confirm this point as they suggest that institutions of higher education should focus on achieving greater structural diversity by making concerted efforts to communicate with students of all ethnic groups that the institution is committed to maintaining a positive campus racial climate.

3.5 Vroenijenstjin's campus diversity model

Vroenijenstjin (2001) as cited by Bornman (2004:374) proposes the following model for the diffusion of diversity in a university.

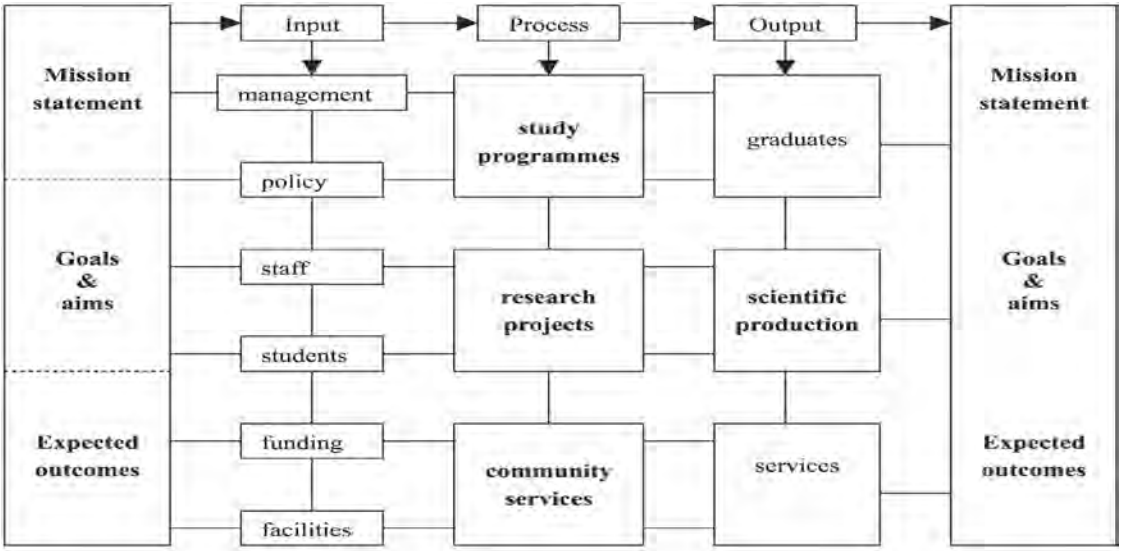

Figure 3.3: Vroenijenstjin's Model for Campus Diversity
Source: Vroenijenstjin (2001), as cited by Bornman (2004:375)

This model suggests diversity having a ripple effect at universities. Implementing diversity from the input stages (management, policies, staff, students, funding and facilities) will diffuse to the processes of the university (study programmes, research projects and community services) which will finally reveal itself in the output of the university (graduates, scientific production and services). While the Vroenijenstjin (2001) model is useful, it was not applied in this study as the Hurtado and colleagues' (1998, 1999) campus diversity model more broadly covers the diversity challenges addressed in this study.

With numbers as vast as illustrated earlier in the chapter, there are many challenges that may be experienced due to the sheer volume and variety of cultures, languages and norms of the students. These elements have also been included in the five dimensions outlined.

3.6 Challenges faced by international students

This section will examine the various diversity challenges faced by international students when studying abroad. These are salient factors in this study as they contribute to achieving the main objective of the study, which is to identify challenges experienced by international students in higher education institutions.

- **Language/ communication barriers**

A great challenge facing international students is said to be difficulties with language and deficiencies in 'academic skills' which is evident in multiracial classrooms. Trigwell & Shale (2004:22) say that it may be difficult for international students to participate during classroom discussions or completely understand what lecturers say or want at the beginning, due to language problems. When students do not speak out, educators may also be unable to realise the needs of international students (http://plaza.ufl.edu/ffgao/mmc5015/final/index.html).

Cross (2004:391) states that the workload burden of foreign students could be indirectly increased by language difficulties. For example, an hour may be all a South African English-speaking student needs to complete a book. However, foreign students may have to take three hours to finish the book if they do not speak English at home. Yet, English language proficiency for foreign students is not the only matter as emotional and intellectual boundaries may also be tested.

When a classroom contains such varied students, educators may struggle to effectively teach and explain subject matter, considering the burden of clear instructions lies with the educator. Lecturers play a vital role in planning curriculum, instruction and in delivering material accurately (Trigwell & Shale, 2004:26). They go on to say that it is expected for instructors to deliver content by using use suitable language as the medium. Instructors often assume that communication is taking place by the use of language: that content is being conveyed to students, and that students are cognitively interacting with the content by using the language of instruction. Speakers adjusting their conversational style to suit other diverse groups with regards to terms of register and genre is a common communicative feature, especially for undergraduate speakers.

The use of unfamiliar concepts, acronyms or anecdotes by lecturers, especially in study areas where specific types of background knowledge is assumed, may also be likely to result in difficulties with language (Errey, 1994 as cited by Ryan and Hellmundt, 2003:13). Rees and Porter (1998:211), confirm that it is essential for lecturers to use international (or offshore) English. This is required in teaching, drafting course work and teaching material and in assessment/exam questions. They further state that

avoiding the use of metaphors, colloquialisms and complex words and expressions, unless necessary, is very important for lecturers to note.

Indications of the variety of home languages of international students, registered at UKZN, are presented below.

Table 3.4: UKZN International Students' Home Language

Home Language	**2010**
Afrikaans	4
Afrikaans/English	1
Amharic	9
Arabic	31
Chickewa	6
Chinese	7
Dutch	4
English	640
French	85
German	17
Gujarati	1
Hebrew	1
Hindi	1
Indian language	9
IsiZulu	5
Italian	2
Japanese	1
Kinyanwanda	9
Kiswahili	12
Memon	1
Ndebele	77
Norwegian	7
Oshindongo	2
Oshiwambo	14
Other	53
Other Black Language	136
Other European Language	31
Portuguese	26
Russian	1
Shona	327
Sotho (North)	17
Sotho (South)	121
Spanish	4
Swahili	12
Swati	93
Swedish	6
Tamil	2
Telugu	3
Tsonga	2
Tswana	118
Tumbuka	3

Turkish	4
Unknown	13
Urdu	1
Xhosa	1

Source: Division of Management Information (2010)

Considering the large variety of languages spoken at UKZN, language difficulties may be a problem for many international students initially and this may lead to difficulties with social interaction across races/ethnicities.

- **Social interaction across race/ethnicity**

According to Davis (1993:2) a large body of literature exists on the academic barriers and adjustment problems of international students and the significance of sufficient support to minimise the 'cultural shock'. Culture shock refers to "the anxiety and feelings (of surprise, disorientation, uncertainty, confusion and so on) felt when people have to operate within a different and unknown cultural or social environment like a foreign country" (Krause, 2005:143).

International students may feel powerless in building social networks in a foreign environment with diverse races/ethnicities. They may also find it difficult to establish friendships in their new surrounding and some only befriend other students from their home countries (Krause, 2005:144). This is a relevant point which the researcher adds to by stating that shyness is another factor that may obstruct international students from being more actively involved in socialising.

Sulkowski and Deakin (2009:259) state that cultural distance may not only result in low academic performance, but can also result in foreign students feeling alienated from the system which can lead to disruptive behaviour and low confidence levels. They further state that it should be of prime concern for all educators involved in teaching multiracial and multicultural classes to address and minimise any difficulty or disadvantage experienced by international students. Such difficulties are central to this study and will be established by the objectives.

However, Crossley and Watson (2004:32) as cited by Andrew, Bamford and Pheiffer (2005:23) observed that many international students may be involved in activities at an institution and have no or little background knowledge of the diversity related to it or the theoretical disputes of the past years. Cross (2004:390) argues that many lecturers are likely to repeat unexamined ideas about appropriate teaching practices in a multicultural classroom due to a possible ignorance or lack of understanding of the influence of culture on learning. Misconceptions about foreign students' motivation and intellectual abilities may be the result of failing to understand the implications of culture on their approaches to learning and behaviour towards lecturers and peers. "For example, lecturers might interpret the reluctance of some international students to contribute to classroom discussions as a lack of confidence, competence or interest while, in actual fact, students are simply replicating the behaviours they have acquired as appropriate norms of conduct in a different educational and cultural system" (Sulkowski *et al.*, 2009:161).

A study done in the UK by Rees and Porter (1998) also links to the findings of Sulkowski *et al*. (2009:160). The former found general problems to include culture shock, separation from family and social support systems, accommodation, financial, language, climatic and logistical issues. Tension and rivalry may also exist with other international students. The possible existence of social difficulties across race/ethnicities may lead to inter-racial conflict in the classroom or socially. These difficulties will now be outlined.

- **Inter-racial conflict/tension**

It is said that tension, isolation and negativity can be created in a racially and ethnically diverse institution, if not properly managed, due to the diverse institution being unable to produce the positive outcomes of which it is capable (Milem *et al*., 2005:22). A study was conducted in USA by Hurtado (1992). She states that the research literature suggests that situations of open racial tension can no longer be seen as abnormalities or isolated occurrences, but rather are indicators of a more common difficulty of unresolved racial problems in university environments and in society at large. Hurtado (1992:564) went on to say that, "This study has shown that perhaps no single element of the environment may work to produce racial tension on college campuses. It is a

configuration of external influences (historical and contemporary), structural characteristics of institutions and group relations, and institutionalised ideologies".

Sandhu (1994) as cited in Morris (2006:19) notes that, in a diverse classroom, cultural conflict/stigma is likely to occur, and the consequences might be counterproductive to student learning. Different learning styles are favoured by different cultures. For this reason, conflict between students may erupt due to cultural conflicts, as certain offences may be made across cultural boundaries that might be acceptable to some, but unacceptable to others.

Some of the cultural and racial conflict issues were discussed but there are many other forms of conflict that international students may experience in the form of discrimination.

- **Discrimination**

Kossek *et al*. (1996:67) state that a common barrier to international students in a foreign institution is discrimination- this is another factor that may occur on various levels between students, staff and faculty (gender, cultural, racial and sexual). Sadri *et al.* (2002:234) also state that discrimination can cause high levels of alienation, dissatisfaction and exclusion. The dilemma of discrimination and widespread inequality needs to be solved with involvement of the community and social sensitive community for improved integration.

Hanassab (2006:159) argues that international students distinctly differ with regards to race, ethnicity, cultural customs and norms, nationality, linguistic background and physical appearance. Despite the notable heterogeneity of the international student population, some researchers have stated that foreign students are stereotyped and discriminated against by university administrators and faculty members, peers and the general community. This factor will also be addressed in this study as discrimination and stereotyping is an unacceptable act at any institution.

Sutton (2002:46) conducted a study at North Carolina State University and states that participants admitted to experiencing or knowing of international students that had experienced discrimination in overt and covert forms where they felt treated in a different way from American students. She went on to say that,

> "Some participants discussed how they or other international students they knew had been treated differently in class or by campus police because of their ethnicity. Other participants verbalised problems with University Housing not taking into account that international students cannot simply go home for a break, or pay for a hotel room, or stay with someone off campus when the residence halls are 'closed'".

These examples clearly indicate the presence of discrimination in universities. Soppelsa (2002) as cited in Hanassab (2006:160) states that educators learning more about different parts of the world, customs and religions different to them is essential as it can encourage learning of those areas by their students.

Although discrimination is experienced in many forms, academically being one of them, research has shown that the more common source of continuous problems for learners are 'mismatches' in academic expectations and experiences as well as certain aspects of teaching and learning styles.

- **Pedagogy approaches and learning styles**

General teaching standards is a critical area for review. Unfortunately, terms of training in teaching methods in the higher education sector is known to be patchy (Wood, 2004:35). The propagation of learning styles/preferences is an important characteristic of the racially and ethnically diverse classroom (Morris, 2006:30). This array of teaching methods/ learning styles presents a challenge to teaching and learning that might hinder its effects.

Learning styles are also influenced by students' cultures. Morris (2006:42) states that, "ignorance about these differences may result to naivety on the part of professors. Students learn differently and may learn better when they are working within their specific learning styles or when faculty is cognisant of those learning styles/preferences and are compensating for them in their instructional roles". On the contrary, some

learners, especially the ones of minority status, might fall back in their studies if they are taught in a style that is inconsistent with their preferred style of learning. Milem, Chang and Antonio (2005:24) confirm this point by stating that, "for faculty members to be effective in their teaching in the racially and ethnically diverse classroom, they may need to adopt different pedagogical approaches in their teaching. One of those pedagogical approaches is called active learning methods".

According to the work of Errey (1994) as cited in Ryan *et al.* (2003:26), "sources of difficulties posed for international students may be through the traditional Western question-answer conventions between teachers and students; the mismatch between the lecturer's teaching style and the student's learning style or the appropriateness of the curriculum to international students". Davis (1993:34) states that according to theories of learning styles/preferences, each individual perceives the world in a different way and that the manner in which each person learns is influenced by their individual-unique perceptive capability.

Milem *et al.* (2005:42) mention that, lately, due to calls to progress undergraduate education and other factors, different teaching methods are more commonly used and faculty members are more likely to test teaching styles than the conventional lecture. These active teaching methods may also have the potential to meet the needs for teaching and learning introduced by learning styles in the multiracial and diverse classroom.

According to Milem *et al.* (2005:4), "these new pedagogies or active forms of learning enhance student learning and development when they are used in the classroom". Such learning methods include "cooperative learning, student presentations, group projects, experiential learning, student evaluations of others' work, independent learning projects, student-selected course topics, class discussions, student-designed learning activities, and the absence of extensive lecturing as pedagogical techniques in classrooms". As they emerge to fit the basis that "students learn better when they are taught in their specific learning styles," active learning methods do meet the needs of diverse students (Sandhu, 1994:11, as cited in Morris, 2006:25). The following table outlines the comparisons made between traditional and diverse students' learning preferences.

Table 3.5: Differences in Learning Preferences between Diverse and Traditional Students

Diverse Students	**Traditional Students**
1. "Prefer cooperative learning environment	Prefer competitive learning environment
2. Prefer group study	Prefer individual study
3. Minimise distance when communicating	Increase distance when communicating
4. Communicating style is informal and conversational	Communicating style is more formal and rigid
5. Express emotions freely	Express emotions selectively
6. See time as flexible and subjective	Adhere to rigid time schedules
7. Task orientation relative to personal demands	Task completion takes primacy
8. Utilise relational and affective learning styles	Known when analytical style is more appropriate
9. Seek personal relevance when processing information	Process relevant or irrelevant information efficiently"

Source: Sandhu (1994), as cited in Morris (2006:16)

According to Morris (2006:18), Sandhu (1994) illustrates three major premises in addressing differences in learning styles of various cultures and how they relate to learning:

- "All students *can* learn;
- Students learn *differently*; and
- Students learn better when they are taught in their *specific* learning styles".

This is also true when diversity is incorporated into the curriculum.

- **Curriculum**

Ryan *et al.* (2003:38) argue that a source of difficulty can be the appropriateness of the curriculum to international students. They further state that educators need to understand the different approaches and international systems of learning and knowledge in different cultures and their effects on the learning outcomes and experiences of students studying overseas if they would like to better their approach in

meeting the learning requirements of their foreign students. This will, in turn, help lecturers in identifying the assumptions underpinning their curriculum and assessment practices, in order to understand how they might change these to benefit both foreign and local students through an appreciation of cultural diversity and the progress of richer and more diverse learning environments. They go on to say that, "In times of global uncertainty, it is imperative that universities promote global understanding in order for graduates to be able to have the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to operate successfully in an increasingly globalised world".

Milem *et al.* (2005:25) state that, "Juxtaposed against a diverse student body, a lack of diverse perspectives in the curriculum may not only cause moments of psychic disequilibrium, but also contribute to a campus climate of exclusion. As with pedagogical reform, achieving curricular change- successfully incorporating diverse information, ideas, and perspectives into the curriculum- requires aligning faculty development and rewards to these goals". Astin (1993:101) postulates that researching international contexts may lead to the development of expertise and assessment methods relevant to other countries. Allowing international contexts to be pursued in the curriculum can benefit the students as well as the university as it creates further understanding, mutual knowledge and preparedness for the diverse workplace.

As the importance can be seen for diversity in learning styles and curriculum, it is also imperative to include various assessment methods that are suitable for a diverse group of students as this can have a huge impact on their academic results.

- **Unsuitable assessment methods**

Diversity of international students in expectations, backgrounds pre-requisite knowledge, and level of interest in the subject matter can be profound. Brown (2001:15) mentions that fairly assessing a diverse mix of students is integral in higher education. Feedback and assessment are both central components of learning. Methods in both can pose challenges for international students unfamiliar to the university system.

Generally speaking, larger classes mean a more diverse and complex student mix. Spack (1997:10) states that, "It is useful where possible to develop student skills and understanding related to the assessment requirements prior to their undertaking assessment tasks in order to lessen the marking workload associated with poor quality submissions".

According to Brown (2001:16), some challenges faced by international students relating to assessment methods are:

- clear marking criteria are not provided to students;
- past exam papers and model answers are not readily available;
- meaningful, timely feedback may not be provided;
- there is not always fair, reliable and valid marking;
- the assessment tasks to the learning outcomes are not matched;
- the criteria to the task and learning outcomes are not matched;
- exemplar of various levels of work to illustrate the differences for students are not always provided; and
- students lack direction to resources and support for academic/study skills (including printed and on-line resources, workshops and individual tuition).

The challenges of the potential mismatch of communication between educators and foreign students, which can provide a major source of different understandings and expectations of academic work, such as the hidden 'codes' and 'prompts' in exam questions, were highlighted in Errey's work (1994), as cited by Ryan *et al.* (2003:29).
It may be suitable and simple to allow international students to take on projects and coursework that are related to their home situation if students will be returning to their home country (Brown, 2001:22). He further states that assessments such as tutorials, research, examination questions and so on may be easily adapted to allow learners to answer with relevance to their home situation. This may be constructive for staff who may expand their knowledge of students' needs and make the educational process more relevant to their students' needs. This can also lead to the growth of expertise and assessment methods relevant to other countries. It is also relevant for a learning institution to incorporate diversity into the classroom dynamics.

- **Classroom diversity**

It is common for international students to experience problems in the classroom in the initial period of their arrival. Brown and Dobbins (2004), as cited in Morris (2004:31), write, "Stigma (concerns about being stereotyped) can impact both the experience of oneself and one's performance in the stereotyped domain". Professional and personal impediments in academics may be presented by differences in culture. Moreover, it can be said that culture of education differs from country to country. For example,

> "universities in the U.S. are more focused on class participation than any other countries. The way international students used to study may not be appropriate for studying in the U.S. And the educational approach in the U.S. may look unfamiliar to international students who are accustomed to expect more guidance and help from teachers. Foreign students may lack knowledge of how to find and use information to accomplish their purposes" (http://plaza.ufl.edu/ffgao/mmc5015/ final/index.html).

A diverse classroom of international students provides opportunities for learning about other cultures, values and viewpoints, and leads to a better democratic education. However, Brown and Dobbins (2004:158), as cited in Morris (2006:11), find that "contexts in which stereotypes are salient may detrimentally affect the performance of students of colour as well as their expectations for their experience in the classroom". According to Milem *et al.* (2005:45), these challenges involve intrapersonal and interpersonal issues, stigma being one of them. This point is applicable to this study as difficulty of stigma makes the diverse classroom more of a necessity.

Another issue in the classroom, which may affect international students, is class size. A study done in the UK by Bandiera, Larcinese and Rasul (2010:19) suggests that class size matters for student performance and particularly for the most able students. They go on to say that, "there appears to be at least two ways that larger classes reduce students' performance. First, changes in student behaviour such as their attentiveness or participation. Second, reduced resource availability, such as library books or faculty time during office hours". The most able students seem to be the most affected which may imply that big classes encourage a decreased level of one-on-one tutoring opposed to a large decline in the conditions of the classroom. They further say that it is sensible

to expect that the best students are able to balance the deterioration of the classroom at least as well as other students.

Intergroup dialogue is said to be an active approach to ensuring communication between international students and their fellow classmates and lecturers. Hurtado (2005), as cited in Dessel, Rogge and Garlington (2006:304), argues that, "participating students improve their analytical skills, cultural awareness, and ability to think pluralistically and take the perspective of others". This point has been addressed in the questionnaire as it is a crucial factor in academic and personal student development.

The academic pressure faced by an international student may impact their life-style, if not managed effectively. This is a big contributor to the happiness and well-being of an international student.

- **Life-style**

Previous research has emphasized that assimilation of a country's culture is a significant factor influencing the adjustment of international students. Gordon (1964), as cited in Doble and Supriya (2011:242), contends that,

> "an immigrant is assimilated as soon as he has shown that he can get on in the country; that is, the immigrant has adapted to the lifestyle and cultural conditions of the host country. This includes the development of a basic proficiency in the language of the host country as well as a basic level of knowledge of native customs and values. Assimilation of culture would facilitate the competency of an international student in meeting academic demands and personal life needs".

According to Anderson and Pulich (2001), as cited in Doble and Supriya (2011:245), a balanced student lifestyle can be achieved with time management, healthy eating, being active, setting goals and priorities. They go on to say that, "The goals have to be realistic and achievable. They have to be ranked according to priorities based on social, family and work commitments. It is important to realise that not all the stress that students may experience is negative. Stress can have a positive effect in enabling individuals to respond effectively in an emergency".

Inclusion in extra-curricular activities may facilitate inclusion in peer groups, positive school-related experiences, and a sense of belonging, all of which may contribute to greater school connectivity, retention and happier lifestyle. Such involvement is particularly critical, given that the students most at risk for academic failure may be the ones who benefit the most from the enhanced connectivity (Khalid and Goe, 1998:231).

The quality of lifestyle for an international student is also dependent on their finances, as many support themselves or rely on financial aid and support services.

- **Financial pressure**

Another major challenge facing international students is financial pressure, especially the students who do not receive financial aid and have costs such as living expenses, textbooks and tuitions (Veloutsou, Lewis and Paton, 2004:8). These authors state that the exchange rate between currencies could be high for certain international students coming from developing countries.

Finding a casual/ part-time job on campus may be difficult for some international students. According to http://plaza.ufl.edu/ffgao/mmc5015/final/index.html, in the US, foreign students' visas allow them no more than 20 hours of work per week on campus. Amidst the available jobs offered on campus, some are available only to the students of federal work-programme which leaves a limited amount of jobs available to international students. It can be noted that these restrictions make it difficult for international students to earn money while studying and leave them with few feasible opportunities and should be addressed.

Looker and Lowe (2001:3) state that the limited financial aid many foreign students receive undoubtedly imposes hardships, which may be a factor in non-completion of studies. According to Paulsen (1998), as cited in Looker and Lowe (2001:5), "some suggest that rising tuition costs in the absence of offsetting increases in financial aid for capable students with limited means reduce the likelihood that these students will apply for, never mind attend, a post-secondary institution".

A learning institution should accommodate international students with their special needs as they lack a formal support structure that local students have. These services and facilities should be easily accessible and supportive to these students.

- **Campus services and facilities**

The expectations of international students change as the economy and globalised requirements change. They often have high expectations of facilities and campus services.

A study done by Ward and Masgoret (2004:7) found that international students expect to have basic services and facilities available to them, i.e., computing services, counseling, accommodation services, library services, international student office, student-orientation services, sports and recreational facilities, health services, clubs and societies, financial advice services and student associations, to name a few. They went on to say that their study established, "On the whole, mean evaluations of specific services and facilities were good. In terms of frequency analyses, 69-72% of the students evaluated language laboratories, counseling, and learning support as good or excellent, although there were not large differences in the assessment of the various facilities. When asked to evaluate the overall quality of services and facilities at their institutions, however, roughly half (51%) of students considered these services to be good or excellent, and half (49%) evaluated the services as poor or average".

Ward *et al.* (2004:8) also state that, "Students' knowledge of facilities, however, appears somewhat limited. Forty per cent do not know if their institution has mentoring programmes, 38% are unaware if there are financial advice services and almost one in three have no knowledge about the availability of learning support or language labs". The findings suggest that educational institutions may wish to consider the development of more effective strategies for disseminating information about available services.

International students may seek support in many avenues at a university such as counseling, vocational support services and so on but they also heavily rely on staff interaction for academic as well as personal support.

- **Staff**

Arambewela and Hall (2009:13) has pointed out the significance of educators and teaching quality in achieving international student satisfaction. Lecturers should remain as the main point of contact to the students for both educational and non-educational issues. They further state that, even though the continuous assessment of academic programmes, in terms of their content and quality and the international research profile of the universities, are key necessities, it is apparent that tertiary institutions need to recognise the contribution made by the academic staff regarding the retention of students and satisfaction with the university of choice.

According to Hellsten *et al.* (2004:13), the concept of communication between university staff and international students is a central topic of interest. They go on to say that it is essential to increase cultural understanding revealed in manners in which practice and pedagogy are mediated between international students and academics. However, Gundara (2000:7) argues that lecturers are responsible for not only mentoring and teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds, but also have the responsibility to educate these students on how to live in a society of diverse cultures. In addition, he states that various outlooks may enhance the set of ideas that lecturers and students are exposed to, which can elevate their intellectual levels.

Given that communication with lecturers is known to be a vital part of the learning process, and international students accept lecturers as the primary point of contact, Arambewela *et al.* (2009:16) state that providing students with feedback is essential. Therefore, students anticipate and expect easy access to lecturers, not only to discuss their academic issues but to also seek direction on personal issues, even prior to consulting a student counselor, which implies the need for optimal positive interaction between lecturers and students. These authors say that past studies have indicated that international students turn to lecturers instead of course advisers or when seeking redress and advice. Therefore, in such context, creating an appropriate environment where students are able to interact with their lecturers and friends will be important. Seeking volunteers from senior students to be hosts of the new students who enter the university may be useful.

Practicing effective interactions may also transform the teacher-student relationship as well as their individual roles. According to August *et al*. (2002), as cited by Morris (2006:55),

> "The use of the teacher becomes that of a facilitator, which is fundamentally different from the role of the teacher as an instructor. Equally transformed is the instructor's relationship with the learner which becomes more like a partnership whose mutual goal is student growth and learning. . . . In the role of facilitator, faculty become coaches and guides to learning; they make meaning and learn along with their students by moving away from memorisation of facts to using and applying knowledge".

Many of the above barriers and challenges impact the overall perception an international student has on a university. It is important for campus administration and policies to state their dedication to diversity and follow through with them.

- **Campus administration and policies**

In the case of campus policies, Milem *et al.* (2005:41) believe that an institution's commitment to diversity should filter through policy in every area of institutional life. They go on to say that issuing statements of support, purpose and action by top-campus leadership is an initial step in signalling an institution-wide commitment to diversity. These statements establish principles for diversity and education, and, in certain situations, set goals for creating a safe and welcoming environment for interaction across groups and for diversifying the student body, faculty and curriculum. Such statements may also offer an organising framework for specific diversity initiatives that communicate to students in a substantial, unmistakable way that institutional commitment to diversity is proactive, steady and strong.

Campus administration should encompass well-organised processes and diversity enriched systems to assist the enrollment of international students as well as the transfer of course credits. With regards to the enrollment process at a university, Cubillo, Sanchez and Cervino (2006:104) observe that this process is the first impression that students acquire of the institution which often influences their expectations and attitude towards the institution upon arrival.

Another vital administration issue for international students is transferring course credits. Ryan *et al.* (2003) note that, due to some students entering an institution with course credits, there is always a concern as to whether the institution will recognise the credits as will seem to be 'wasted' if they go unrecognised. Some universities require students to sign a transcript release form upon arrival, or during orientation to ensure from the beginning that a copy of the transcript will get sent to the relevant administrators. Birnbaum (2000:102) states that students often lose interest in an institution should they experience challenges when transferring their course credits or if credits are unrecognised. An institution should ensure that this process is handled effectively.

Due to the many challenges and complexities an international student may experience in a new country and study destination, there are various factors that need to be taken into account when choosing a country and educational institution. It is essential to have a background of these factors in this study as it will assist the reader in understanding what an international student considers to be important. The next section will highlight these factors.

3.7 Factors in the university choice process

This section is a crucial element of the literature as it gives the reader an insight to what international students expect of a university in another country. The choice of a study destination is normally considered as a two-stage process, where the country is chosen first and then the academic institution, though the choice of a country and an academic institution can also be separate and independent of each other. Diverse socio-economic and environmental factors/variables such as safety, life-style, cost of living, transportation, racial discrimination, immigration and visa potential, friends and family, climate and culture have been associated with the choice of a country as a study destination, while individual factors/variables such as study programmes and courses, fees, support and facilities services, intellectual climate, teaching quality, teaching staff and methods, recognition of courses, image and prestige of the university have been related to the choice of an academic institution (Arambewela *et al*., 2009). Cubillo *et al.*

(2006:105) point out the factors that international students consider when choosing an educational institution.

The following table illustrates these factors.

Table 3.6: Main factors and variables identified in the choice process

Factor	Items	
Personal reasons	Personal improvement	Enhance career prospects Future job prospects Future earnings prospects Higher status Live in a different culture Make international contacts Improve language skills
	Advice	Family recommendation Friend's recommendation Professor's recommendation
Country image effect	Country image	Cultural distance Social reputation Academic reputation Development level Cost of living Immigration procedures Opportunity of working during the course Time to get the degree
	City image	City dimension Cost of living Linguistic proximity or distance Safety and security Social facilities International environment University environment
Institution image	Corporate image	Institution prestige Ranking position Brand reputation Academic reputation Researcher reputation Quality reputation
	Faculty	Expertise of teaching staff Professional experience of teaching staff
	Facilities	Campus atmosphere Social life at university Safety and security Library facilities Availability of computers Availability of quiet areas Availability of areas for self-study

		Sport facilities
Programme evaluation		International recognition Programme suitability Programme specialisation Quality of programmes Recognition by future employers Total cost and finance

Source: Cubillo *et al.* (2006:108)

A study by Arambewela *et al.* (2009:15) reinforces these variables. They identified seven constructs: education, social, technology, economic, accommodation, safety, prestige and image. They state that recognising the importance of factors other than direct educational issues that impact international students' satisfaction is vital for universities. These factors are important predictors of the satisfaction of international students and of the current diversity management programmes at UKZN.

The e*ducation* construct highlights the fact that feedback from lecturers, good access to lecturers as well as the quality of teaching are perceived as the main variables which influence the satisfaction of students. Arambewela *et al.* (2009:17) found that, in order for universities to provide foreign students with a suitable learning environment, they need to understand student expectations in these areas. Students often compare programmes among various universities to establish their suitability. Cubillo *et al.* (2006:109) say that, "The elements that influence the programme evaluation are a wide selection of courses, their quality, international recognition of the degree, availability of courses, entry requirements, costs and availability of financial support". Sandhu (1994), as cited in Morris (2006:32), also mentions that learning styles differ in a multiracial diverse classroom and explains that preference for learning environments goes back to the cultural background of the student. Sandhu then went on to say that given the diversity of students, universities will require adjustments of teaching methods to contain non-traditional teaching methods which cater for the precise pedagogical demands of international students.

Within the *social construct,* social activities, counseling services, close working relationships with other students and international orientation programmes are considered the most important variables which influence the satisfaction of students. Due to adjustment difficulty and stress being normally experienced by foreign students

through their initial stages at a university, a key role operating in their social welfare is known to be counseling services. Experiencing culture shock is another finding that students are likely to experience due to the new environment of the university of choice. Arambewela *et al*. (2009:25) have provided evidence on adjustment problems which relate to both language and living support among international students. Another key component in the support service needs by international students are student orientation programmes, which are considered greatly valuable to the majority of these students.

Within the *economic considerations'* construct, variables such as migration opportunities, casual jobs, cost of living and fees are considered. Seow (2005:28) mentions that Australia allows international students to work up to 20 hours per week which the majority of international students take advantage of. However, securing a part-time/casual job is difficult for a lot of international students, particularly when they first arrive. Arambewela *et al.* (2009:22) found that a concern of international students is the shortage of opportunities for casual/ part-time employment on campus. They further mention that, in their home countries, most of the postgraduate students have been in the workforce and, therefore, expect to find a part-time/casual job in the area of interest. The negative experience resulting from the failure to secure such positions impacts on the overall satisfaction of students. Cubillo *et al.* (2006:110) also states that an integral consideration is finance and fees to the institution in comparison to home countries and institutions in other countries. They further state that students are willing to pay a reasonable amount if an institution efficiently provides what they are looking for. However, this factor is still an issue to many potential international students.

Arambewela *et al.* (2009:31) go on to discuss the *accommodation construct*, "In regard to *accommodation*, international students expect student accommodation to be made available by universities or by private agencies to comply with minimum standards of comfort and at reasonable cost". It is also an expectation that such student accommodation is available when required. Price *et al.* (2003:35), as cited by Cubillo *et al.* (2006:107), have found that, "when provided with a high standard, facilities are considered as a relevant factor in influencing the students' selection of the institution where they will pursue their studies". However, few studies make direct reference to accommodation as a factor.

The continuous use of computers is often required by the majority of courses. The attractiveness of a university is enhanced by the existence of sufficient and modern computer facilities. Practically modern computer equipment and sufficient quantities of it being readily available for their use when required is what international students expect at a university. Arambewela *et al*. (2009:20) consider this variable to be important in the formation of student satisfaction as high expectations are formed by students, due to universities assuring the accessibility of necessary resources such as computer equipment.

Another key expectation is the access to *computer laboratories.* This is related to the previous factor and can play a key role in the satisfaction formation of students. A vital recommendation of the UK Dearing Committee and Australian West Committee (1997), as stated by Seow (2005:12), is that teaching should embrace technology. The term given to this is known as, "resource based learning", making the "access" to these resources a requirement. To assist higher education institutions cope with the latest challenges, this recommendation to alter and improve pedagogical strategies, university structure and other educational activities has been offered. Therefore, international students enrolled at a university in a foreign country expect easy access to computer laboratories.

Safety is said to be another major concern to international students and their families. Cubillo *et al.* (2006:112) state that parents are concerned about safety due to having little control over their children with the distance between them. Therefore, due to potential students and their parents being more critical in the choice of study destination, universities are expected to apply necessary security and safety precautions.

When international students factor in what is important for developing better career opportunities for themselves, they are often attracted to universities with a high international *image and prestige*. Arambewela *et al*. (2009:22) note that significant factors affecting the satisfaction of international students are expectations and perceived quality. Ford *et al.* (1999) as cited by Seow (2005:17) state that to convey a stronger image quality, various higher education institutions have changed their quality management. They further mention that achieving international image and prestige at a university is a lengthy and difficult process requiring a commitment to excellence in the

quality of research and delivery of education. Paramewaran and Glowacka, (1995), as cited by Cubillo *et al.* (2006:113), state that, "Due to the growing competence in international education, institutions need to maintain and develop a distinctive image in order to reach a competitive advantage".

According to Anderson and Sullivan (1993), as cited by Cubillo *et al.* (2006:113), some of the factors which contribute to a university's image and prestige are the strength of the alumni, course diversity and the reputation of its educators. They further state that, "the satisfaction of the customer is affected by expectations and perceived quality. For higher education, quality perception is a core and strategic element. Thus, some higher education institutions have changed their quality management systems to convey a stronger quality image".

Since international students leave their comfort zone, norms and country to study in a foreign environment, they consider and require the above-mentioned factors as there are numerous needs that every individual seeks. Therefore, the researcher presents the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in this section.

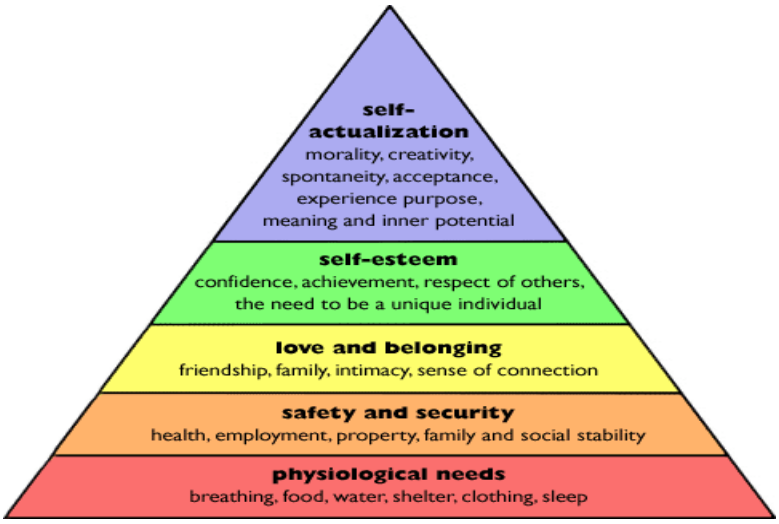

Figure 3.4: Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs
Chapman (2001: 4)

According to Maslow (Chapman, 2001:4), as indicated in Figure 3.4, there are certain elements and needs required by people. Maslow has narrowed them down to a 5-stage hierarchy of needs. As seen in figure 3.4, the first priority in this hierarchy is

physiological needs as these are the basic and primary needs required by every individual. These include water, food, shelter, air, clothing and sex.

The second priority presents itself as safety needs. People require the need to be secure, stable and protected. Thirdly, there are belongingness and love needs. Individuals need to feel affection, love and belongingness, be it family, friends or work group. Fourth is esteem needs to build up one's self. People need to create a reputation or status for themselves, and feel a sense of achievement and responsibility. Lastly, an individual requires self-actualisation. This is the highest priority, according to Maslow, which constitutes personal growth and fulfillment. This model clearly stipulates the needs of international students, why they make certain decisions and what they look for when choosing a study destination.

The researcher believes that the following study is pertinent to understanding international students and their socio-political attitude at university. Therefore, the relevant literature is presented.

3.8 Structural factors likely to influence international students' experience and behaviour

Structural diversity of a higher education institution should be appropriately made use of for learning to occur in such institutions. Hurtado (1992:45) states that structural diversity should contribute in making universities reliable public places, allowing all people from diverse settings to exchange experiences and part-take in conversations which assist them in increasing their understanding of other peoples' perspectives. According to Watts (1972:56), it is possible to group an institution's main structural differences which seem likely to influence international students 'experience and behaviour into six groups:

3.8.1 Goals

People seek a variety of goals from higher education:

- Academic goals: connected to the expansion of knowledge and truth;
- Liberal education goals: connected to the inculcation of values and the diffusion of culture;
- Social goals: connected to the need of fitting in and belonging to society; and
- Technical/ vocational goals: connected to training and preparing for a certain career/ occupation.

It is likely that different universities will attach a different magnitude of meaning to each of these goals and, depending on the specific goal of an international student, this would influence the manner in which they perceive an educational student.

3.8.2 Physical characteristics

- Institution location: this covers not only the part of the country it is in but also the kind of community it is situated in i.e., in a large urban community; in a small town; or on an independent campus in the country. Watts (1972:76) goes on to suggest that the institution may be influenced by the community in which it is set which can influence the adaptation and adjustment of international students in their new surrounding and environment;
- Age: it is said that the institutions' traditions and, to some extent, its social norms are influenced by its age. The power of change and adaptation is also likely to affect the institution which may also influence the power of change and adaptation of international students; and
- Size: This factor is related to the variety of cultures, courses and activities as well as the impersonality of the institution. These factors are likely to influence international students' perceptions and behavior as they expect a reasonable variety and level of courses, activities and cultures, as explained in the previous section.

3.8.3 Structuring

The next group, identified by Watts (1972:84), is structuring, which comprises:

- Sexual balance: women and men are in competition for places at most institutions;
- Range and balance of disciplines: some institutions concentrate very much on a limited range of studies due to the wide range of institutional and student characteristics that are correlated with subject- goal-orientation;
- Social organisation: disciplines may be organised into this departments, faculties or 'schools'. It is said that, in many universities, the department is likely to be a social unit; and
- Calendar: institutions mainly design the year as a two-term structure.

3.8.4 Instructional patterns

- Content of courses and structure: changing of certain courses are made easier by some institutions than others;
- Pedagogy: teaching methods used are entirely different from country to country. Therefore, to teach to a diverse group of students may require uniformity and inclusion of many teaching methods. This can directly influence international students' experiences at a university; and
- Examinations: there are considerable variations in examination methods such as the unseen examination paper administered at the end of a degree course, dissertations may be compulsory, extended- time examinations, oral examinations, tutorial essays and creative work. Watts (1972:92) goes on to say that international students may be unfamiliar with certain methods which may affect their performance.

3.8.5 Staff

- Teaching staff qualifications: different levels of qualification are present in academic staff as some have honours degrees, some masters and some doctorates; and
- Relationship between staff and students: some universities make no provision for this, while some adopt a much more paternalistic approach to their students than others and some may have a formal system of moral tutors who are responsible for the moral welfare of their students. Watts (1972:105) states that this can significantly influence the international students' experience since they greatly rely on staff for academic and non-academic direction.

3.8.6 Provision for student services and extra-curricular activities

- Residence: travelling distance to and from their university and combining 'base' facilitates with residential accommodation;
- Social facilitates: these include unions and catering facilities, religious and sports clubs, and societies of special interest. A study done in the University of Melbourne by Krause (2005:144) found that fewer students expressed an interest in being involved in extra-curricular activities on the university campus in 2004 compared to 1994 and a considerably smaller proportion (20%) reported active involvement in such activities, including sport and club membership. She went on to say that these opportunities for social engagement are equally as important as academic quests; and
- Health and advisory services: health services, psychiatric/counseling services, and the like are provided by some institutions and not by others. Watts (1972:125) then states that these services are vital to the international students' experience and behavior as many of them require support and direction due to the initial shock, alienation and exclusion they may encounter in a new country.

3.9 Conclusion

Given the high expectations of some cohorts of international students, it is essential for universities to carefully manage their high expectations before they enroll in the universities. In this chapter, salient factors relating to diversity that influence international students' perceptions have been discussed.

In the first section, statistics on enrolled international students were presented to indicate their proportional representation at UKZN. Thereafter, diversity challenges faced by international students at HEI's were outlined. Factors considered by international students when choosing a study destination were also discussed. Understanding these factors was essential to this study as they indicate what is important and expected by international students, providing a background to the understanding of their perceptions of diversity challenges at UKZN.

An attempt was also made, in this chapter, to outline the structural factors likely to influence international students' experience and behaviour. The subsequent chapter will outline the research methodology used in this study in terms of the research design and instruments used.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the various research methods are explored and the research methodology, which has provided the basis for collecting and analysing the data required for satisfying the objectives of the study, is discussed. In the first section, the research questions are highlighted. The survey research method was employed to collect the data from a sample of international students to achieve the objectives of the study.

Sekaran and Bougie (2010:8) state that conducting research to generate more knowledge and understanding of the phenomena of interest and to build theories based on the research results is known as basic or fundamental research. For the purpose of this study, which investigates the perceptions of international students on the challenges of diversity management at UKZN, basic/fundamental research was found to be most appropriate.

The following sections will be discussed in this chapter:

- Rationale for the study;
- Research design;
- Sampling design;
- Data collection methods;
- Data analysis techniques;
- Statistical methodology; and
- Ethical considerations.

4.2 The research questions

The following research questions guide the substance of the research study and influence the research methodology used:

- What are the diversity challenges experienced by international students at higher education institutions?
- What are the perceptions of international students regarding which of these challenges are the most predominant at UKZN?
- What are the diversity challenges experienced by undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) international students?
- What recommendations can be made to improve the perceptions, experiences and satisfaction of international students regarding diversity at UKZN?

4.3 Rationale for the study

International students have become a vibrant part of diversity in South Africa's education sector and provide immense benefits which are not restricted to our economy but extend to our educational institutions, local students and educators. The expectations and perceptions of international students are constantly changing as the environment and demands of society and the economy evolve. Therefore, it is important for universities to keep abreast with international students to ensure that all expectations of international students are being met. The significance of this study is to help UKZN understand the perceptions, attitudes and ever-changing expectations of international students as they make up a considerable percentage of enrolled students at UKZN.

This study aims to establish what the main concerns and challenges are for international students at UKZN and examine the challenges experienced by UG and PG international students. The university may have diversity programmes, support services and facilities in place, but may lack knowledge on the gaps or post-choice perceptions of international students on their study destination of choice. Therefore, studying international students can bring the required cultural, social and educational perspectives to university management and programmes that lack a global and broad

approach to understanding the needs and necessities of students. The information gathered and recommendations may serve to inform all higher education institutions in offering a diversified university that contributes to accommodating and maximising benefits for international students.

4.4 Research design

This section focuses on significant issues handled by the researcher in selecting an adequate research design for this study. The research design informs the reader about the nature of the study. De-Vos *et al.* (2010:134) state that the research design may serve as a master plan of the procedures and techniques which are utilised to collect and analyse the data required by the researcher. It is the glue that holds the research together.

Ghauri, Gronhaug and Kristianslund (1995:26) state, "The research design is the overall plan for relating the conceptual research problem to relevant- and doable- empirical research". Cooper and Schindler (2003:146) define research design as, "the plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions. They go on to state that the essentials of research design are:

- The design is an activity and time-based plan;
- The design is always based on the research questions;
- The design guides the selection of sources and types of information;
- The design is a framework for specifying the relationship among the study's variables; and
- The design outlines procedures for every research activity.

The various classes of research design will now be explained as well as the chosen class used in this study.

4.4.1 Classes of research design

Research design processes comprise three main classes, namely: exploratory, casual and descriptive research designs. The researcher undertook the descriptive research design as this proved to be the most suitable considering all variables and in answering the research questions of this research study. Descriptive research is structured and well understood (Strydom *et al.*, 2002:28). The main purpose of descriptive research is to describe the characteristics of the population or phenomenon. They aim at answering who, what, when and where questions. In this design, the management is already aware of the underplaying relationships of the problem at hand.

Descriptive research was executed under the following approaches:

4.4.2 Quantitative and qualitative research

4.4.2.1 Quantitative research

The quantitative research technique generally involves the collection of primary data from a large number of individual units, frequently with the intention of projecting the results to a wider population. Managing numbers is the most important part of understanding and solving problems. Numbers provide a universal language that can be easily understood and that provide a description of some aspects of most problems. Quantitative methods are more scientific, reliable and can easily be understood by anyone who reads it (Creswell, 1994:107).

Primary data may be sought for its proximity to the truth and degree of control over inaccuracy and errors (Ghauri *et al.*, 1995:57). There are three types of research methods: observations; interviews; and surveys and questionnaires. A critical decision that a researcher is faced with is choosing a method that is the most suitable for collecting data and will give most accurate results to answer the research questions.

In this study, the observation method and the use of personal interviews seemed impractical as it would be difficult as well as time-consuming tracking down the international students on each of the five campuses. Telephone calls were not utilized as

they are a costly method and the phone numbers of the international students were treated as confidential by the international students office. After a careful evaluation of the data collection methods, it was decided that the questionnaire survey method is the most logistically and financially suitable for this study. As the large sample is dispersed across various UKZN campuses, distributing questionnaires through the international students office was the most practical and affordable approach to access these students and get a decent turn-around time on questionnaires.

Surveys and questionnaires

This type of collection method is known to be the most popular in business studies with the major types of questionnaires being descriptive and/or analytical. Surveys are studies that are usually quantitative in nature and intend to provide a general synopsis of a representative sample of a large population (Creswell, 1994:117). Creswell further mentions that a survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of some fraction of the population-the sample-through the data collection process of asking questions of people. As stated by Ghauri *et al.* (1995:59), "Once a research problem is formulated and the purpose of the study is clearly defined, this will determine the type of survey we should undertake, whether analytical or descriptive".

Analytical surveys can test a theory by taking the logic into the field. However, descriptive surveys include identifying the phenomena whose variance one seeks to describe. This study aims at describing any variances experienced by the subjects, therefore, a descriptive questionnaire was used to identify the predominant challenges experienced by international students at UKZN and to determine what challenges are experienced by undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Survey questionnaires may be used to obtain the following types of information from students which was the case in this study (Welman *et al.*, 2001:146):

- Biographical particulars (age, educational qualifications, sex and so on);
- Typical behaviour;
- Opinions, beliefs and convictions (about any issue or topic) and, lastly;
- Attitudes.

The questionnaire for this study is included as Appendix A. It contains a fixed set of questions requiring the perceptions of international students regarding diversity challenges at UKZN.

4.4.2.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a generic term for investigated methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field or participant observer research. Qualitative research includes an "array of interpretive techniques which seek to develop, describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (Cooper *et al.*, 2008:162).

People who perform qualitative research 'rarely try to simplify what they observe' and they believe that the issue under investigation has numerous layers and dimensions and should be studied in its multifaceted form (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:133). Focus groups, in-depth interviews and projective techniques are well known qualitative research techniques for collecting of primary data. According to Sekaran *et al*. (2010:370), qualitative research allows for in-depth analysis of problems opportunities and situations in the business environment and advantages, in some instances, of being less costly than quantitative research technique for gathering data. The disadvantage is that the qualitative research technique has often been blamed for not being scientific and only offers a few well-established and commonly accepted rules and guidelines for analysing data. Therefore, it has been argued that one should not base important managerial decisions on qualitative data.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:133), "qualitative researchers believe that the researcher's ability to interpret and make sense of what he or she sees is critical for understanding any social phenomenon. It also can be said that qualitative approach only gained popularity recently as they 'were once frowned upon' due to the obvious subjectivity of the researcher. Qualitative research can be useful when there is a lack of information on particular topics, when certain variables are unknown and "when a relative theory base is inadequate or missing" (Sekaran, 2003:32). When conducting

qualitative research, the investigator seeks to gain a total or complete picture. A holistic description of events, procedures and philosophies, occurring in natural settings, is often needed to make accurate situational decisions (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2009:184). This differs from quantitative research in which selected, pre-defined variables are studied.

As cited by Cooper *et al.* (2008:162), qualitative research sources data from various sources including the following:

- People (groups or individuals);
- Institutions or organisations;
- Texts (published/virtual);
- Environments and settings (visual, sensory or virtual);
- Objects, artifacts, media products (textual, visual, sensory and virtual); and
- Events and happenings.

The researcher carried out extensive qualitative literature review pertaining to international students and diversity in higher education institutions, drawing data from the sources mentioned above in response to answering the first research question.

The following table highlights the comparison of the characteristics between qualitative and quantitative research.

Table 4.1: Comparison of the Characteristics between Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Point of Comparisons	**Qualitative Research**	**Quantitative Research**
Focus Research	Understand and interpret	Describe, explain and predict
Research involvement	High, researcher is participant or catalyst	Limited, controlled to prevent bias
Research purpose	In-depth understanding, theory building	Describe or predict, build and test theory
Sample design	Non-probability, purposive	Probability
Sample size	Small	Large
Research design	- May evolve or adjust -Often uses multiple methods simultaneously or sequentially	-Determined before commencing the project - Uses single/mixed methods

	- Consistency is not expected - Involves longitudinal approach	- Consistency is critical -Involves either a cross-sectional or longitudinal approach
Data type and preparation	-Verbal or pictorial descriptions -Reduced to verbal codes (sometimes with computer assistance)	-Verbal descriptions -Reduced to numerical codes for computerised analysis
Data analysis	-Human analysis following computer or human coding, primarily non-quantitative -Forces researcher to see contextual framework of the phenomenon being measured -Distinction between facts and judgments less clear -Always ongoing during the project	-Computerised analysis- statistical and mathematical methods dominate -Analysis may be ongoing during the project -Maintains clear distinction between facts and judgments
Insights and meaning	-Deeper level of understanding is the norm, determined by type and quantity of free-response questions - Researcher participation in data collection allows insights to form and be tested during the process	-Limited by the opportunity to probe respondents and the quality of the original data collection instrument - Insights follow data collection and data entry, with limited ability to interview participants
Research Sponsor Involvement	May participate by observing research in real time or via taped interviews	Rarely has either direct or indirect contact with participant
Feedback turnaround	-Smaller sample sizes make data collection faster for shorter possible turnaround - Insights are developed as the research progresses, shortening data analysis	-Larger sample sizes lengthen data collection, internet methodologies are shortening turnaround but inappropriate for many studies -Insight development follows data collection and entry, lengthening research process, interviewing software permits some tallying of responses as data collection progresses
Data security	More absolute given use of restricted access facilities and smaller sample sizes	Act of research in progress is often known by competitors, insights may be gleaned by competitors for some visible, field-based studies

Source: Cooper *et al.* (2008:165)

4.5 Sampling design

Sampling design serves as a master plan of the methods and techniques that are used to select the sample of a population and determine the size of the sample by decision makers (De-Vos *et al*., 2010:125).

4.5.1 Population and sample

In an ideal world, one would prefer to study the entire population or universe to give more meaning and accuracy to findings. However, it is sometimes difficult to use the entire population. Therefore, a sample of the population must be used. A population is defined as, "the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate". In this study, the population comprised all currently registered international students enrolled at the all five campuses making up the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Wood (2004:5) suggested as one possible definition of an international student: "an individual who has moved from one country to another primarily for the purposes of study".

Bailey (1994:83) defines a sample as a subset or portion of the total population. The sample should be looked at as an approximation of the whole rather than the whole. In this study, the sample consisted of 280 international students enrolled at UKZN.

4.5.2 Sampling techniques

According to Kinnear & Taylor (1985), as cited by Perumal (1988:123), various procedures may be used by researchers when selecting their samples. However, an essential concept must be considered at the outset: the difference between probability and non-probability sampling. "In the former type of sample the probability of the selection of each respondent is known. In the latter type, the probability of selection is not known" Bailey (1994:89).

4.5.2.1 Non-probability sampling

This type of sampling occurs with accordance to a plan and is subjective. Welman *et al.* (2001:61) state that the chance of an element being included in a non-probability sample cannot be specified, and although they are simple to draw, they could possibly produce misleading results if they happen to be unrepresentative of the population. Therefore, if possible, a researcher should use a probability sample, which is the case in this study.

4.5.2.2 Probability sampling

This type of sampling, also known as random sampling, results in each unit of the population having a probable or equal chance of being selected in the sample. Bailey (1994:89) states that simple random sampling for surveys is usually considered adequate if the chances of selection are equal at any given stage of the sampling. He then goes on to say that random sampling has the advantage of cancelling out biases and providing a statistical means for estimating sampling errors. It is beneficial using this type of sampling when possible as it is the only method of sampling populations that are completely objective. According to Ghauri *et al.* (1995:74), "This is especially important if we want to estimate unknown parameters or draw valid inferences regarding the population on the basis of the sample".

In using the probability sampling method, there are various types from which a researcher needs to choose such as: stratified random sampling, systematic sampling, multi-stage/cluster sampling and simple random sampling. Due to the nature of this study, size of the population and various variables, the researcher has utilised the simple random sampling technique in this study.

Simple random sampling

Cooper *et al.* (2003:167) explains simple random sampling by stating that, "Since all probability samples must provide a known nonzero chance of selection for each population element, the simple random sample is considered a special case in which each population element has a known and equal chance of selection". Bryman *et al.*

(2007:96) outline the following key steps when devising a simple random sample, these were taken into account when devising the sample for this study:

- Define the population;
- Select a comprehensive sampling frame;
- Decide on the sample size (*n);*
- List all the respondents in the population and assign them consecutive numbers from 1 to *N;*
- Using a computer programme, select *n* different random numbers that lie between 1 and *N; and*
- The respondents to which the *n* random numbers refer constitute the sample.

Once the sampling technique was chosen, the sample size then needed to be looked at.

4.5.3 Sample size

The main requirement of a sample is that it should eventually be representative of the entire population. In this study, the questionnaire survey was used making it impractical to question all international students in the population. Therefore, it was necessary to draw a sample. The Division of Management Information provided the researcher with an updated listing of enrolled international students at UKZN. The researcher randomly chose 300 international students as the sample for the study. The sample was chosen by the generation of random numbers to achieve the objectives of the study. The sample size was chosen in accordance with Sekaran's (2003:294) recommended sample size, given the population size. In this case, UKZN currently has approximately 1900 enrolled international students. Therefore, according to Sekaran (2003:294), the sample size should be 320. The researcher aimed for a round figure of 300 international students which were chosen as per Bryman and colleagues' key steps mentioned above.

4.6 The research instrument

4.6.1 The questionnaire

According to Bless *et al.* (2009:184), a questionnaire is a research instrument including a series of questions relating to the research topic and is answered in writing by respondents. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from international students currently enrolled at UKZN. Statistical analyses of the responses are often considered when designing questionnaires (Bryman *et al*., 2007:254).

(Sekaran, 2003:251) states that questionnaires have the following advantages in comparison to other surveys: they are cost-effective; they allow for doubts to be clarified when administered to respondents; they require minimal effort once they are distributed and, lastly, anonymity of respondents is high.

4.6.2 Construction of the questionnaire

Ghauri *et al.* (1995:62) list the following as fundamental elements in a high quality questionnaire construction, and these were taken into account when the questionnaires were compiled:

- Questions must be asked in a concise and simple language- factors need to be taken into account like the respondents' background, education level and acquaintance with the topic of discussion;
- There should be no unrealistic demand on the respondents' memory and willingness to respond;
- It should be checked that everybody understands the questions in the same manner and draws the same meaning from them;
- Each question should only deal with one dimension or aspect at a time as one cannot ask one question about more than one variable of the study;
- The questions should be produced in a way that offers no escape route- avoid the options of 'I don't know' or 'No comment';

- There should be no double-meanings to any words in the questions and they should all be straight-forward for an accurate response;
- Questions should be placed in a logical order from general questions to specific questions;
- The questionnaire should have a neat and tidy layout to influence the respondents' willingness to answer; and
- There should be a friend or colleague who critically goes through the questionnaire and give comments for improvements.

A variety of question types are deemed useful so the following types of questions were utilised in the questionnaire:

a) Closed-ended questions

Closed-ended questions only allow the respondent to respond with limited answers (e.g., Yes or No). Bailey (1994:118) states that the advantages of closed-ended questions are: 1) The answers are standard; 2) The answers are much easier to code and analyse; and 3) The respondent is often clearer about the meaning of the question. The researcher has included closed-ended questions mainly for demographical questions.

b) Likert-scale responses

As stated by Sekaran *et al.* (2010:152), the Likert scale is designed to examine how strongly subjects agree or disagree with statements on a 5-point scale. The reason for including this item is to identify people who display response sets, like acquiescence. As stated by Bryman *et al.* (2007:249), "One of the advantages of using such questions is that they can be pre-coded, thus turning the processing of data for computer analysis into a fairly simple task". The researcher included the Likert scale in a considerable number of questions to measure the perceptions of international students in relation to certain issues. The format of the Likert scale used in the questionnaire is as follows:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

c) Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions allow the respondent to respond with free-expression and no limitations. According to Geer (1988), as cited by Bailey (1994:121), open-ended questions are quite efficacious. He goes on to state that the advantages of open-ended questions are: 1) They can be used when all of the possible answer categories are unknown; 2) They permit the respondent to answer comprehensively; 3) They are more suitable for complex issues that cannot be condensed into a few categories; and 4) They allow for more creativity and self-expression in responses. The researcher has included open-ended questions to allow for self-expression regarding sensitive issues that could not be condensed into a category.

4.6.3 Administration of the questionnaire

The format of the questionnaire:

- The first page of the questionnaire explained to respondents that all questions should be answered honestly and that all responses were to be treated confidentially;
- Section A of the questionnaire comprised demographical details of the respondent;
- Section B questioned respondents on their perceptions of diversity challenges at UKZN on a 5-point Likert scale and open-ended questions; and
- Section C allowed for additional information that the questions in the questionnaire did not cover.

The questionnaires were accompanied by a covering letter which the respondents were to retain and a consent form which the researcher was to retain. These forms were on a University of KwaZulu-Natal letterhead and outlined the research objectives as well as encouraged international students to participate in the study. The researcher was granted permission to conduct the research by the Division of Management Information. This letter is attached as Appendix B. The aim was to get a high response.

De-Vos *et al.* (2010:192) state that, “Sometimes, fieldworkers deliver questionnaires by hand so that respondents can complete them in their own time, and collect them again later. It is important that an appointment be made for collecting the questionnaires again, and should preferably not be more than 48 hours after delivery”. With the assistance of the International Students Office, questionnaires were distributed on each of the five campuses making up UKZN. The researcher randomly chose 300 students from an updated listing of the registered international students chosen by the generation of random numbers to achieve the objectives of the study. They were then emailed and invited to participate in the study by picking up and returning the questionnaire from the International Students Office.

4.6.4 The pilot study

Cooper *et al.* (2003:86) state that, “A pilot test is conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation and to provide proxy data for selection of a probability sample”. Strydom *et al.* (2002:14) state that, when conducting a pilot test, subjects should be drawn from the target population and should simulate the procedures and protocols that have been selected for data collection.

When conducting the pilot test, subjects were drawn from the target population and the protocols and procedures of the research project were evaluated. The questionnaire was pre-tested on a group of currently enrolled international students at UKZN (the sample group consisted of 20 international students). It is said that pre-testing is a rehearsal and an important preventative measure (helps detect weaknesses). Cooper *et al.* (2003:254) went on to say that pre-testing may be repeated several times to refine procedures, questions and instrument.

4.7 The data collection methods

Data collection is the means or procedures of acquiring the required information from a sample and then analysing the information (Cooper *et al.*, 2003:87). These authors state that data is defined as, “the facts presented to the researcher from the study’s environment”. A total of 300 questionnaires were administered to international students enrolled at UKZN and 280 questionnaires were received. All questionnaires were

unspoilt and adequate for analysis. The response rates were consistently high across all campuses of the University (88 – 97%).

Table 4.2: Dispatched Questionnaires by Campus and Responses

Campus	**Number distributed**	**Responses**	**%**
Howard College	110	105	95
Edgewood	50	44	88
Westville	65	63	97
PMB	45	40	89
Medical School	30	28	93
Total	**300**	**280**	**93**

4.8 Data analysis techniques

A significant step in achieving the objectives of the study is to analyse the collected data. Thomas (2004: 216) remarks that raw data takes the form of field notes, texts, documents, interview notes or transcripts, responses to open-items on questionnaires and textual records. Cooper *et al.* (2003: 82) note that, "data analysis usually involves reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques". When working with questionnaires, the analyst is required to derive various functions, as well as relationships among variables.

Once the data has been collected, it is important to edit to ensure consistency across respondents and to locate omissions (De-Vos *et al*., 2010:193). They go on to say that, in the case of survey methods, editing can reduce errors when recording, improve the legibility, and clarify unclear and inappropriate responses. It is impractical to place raw data into a report. Therefore, the data is put into a form that makes analysis possible. Processing involves the editing, coding, tabulation and analysis of the collected data. The processing of the data in this study was done using a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the results were then analysed.

4.8.1 Processing

a) Editing

The main reason for editing is to detect omissions and errors and to ensure that they are corrected. The schedules arranged for tabulation are known as 'editing'. As cited by Perumal (1988:143), it is essential for the editor to ensure the data is:

- reliable and accurate;
- as complete as possible;
- consistent with other facts secured;
- uniformly entered;
- suitable for tabulation; and
- arranged to facilitate coding and tabulation.

The questionnaires, in this study, were carefully edited to ensure the reliability and completeness of the data.

b) Coding

In this study, selected items in the questionnaire were pre-coded, while the rest of the items were coded at a later stage. Coding is the term given to the process of categorising data. "Coding involves assigning numbers or other symbols to answers so the responses can be grouped into a limited number of classes or categories" (Cooper *et al.,* 2003:424). Classifying data into limited categories is necessary for efficient analysis and helps the researcher include the critical information required for the analysis.

c) Tabulation

As cited by Perumal (1988:144), "Tabulation involves the summarisation of the results in the form of the statistical tables. Only when the raw data has been classified into meaningful groups is it possible to determine what the results mean and to convey the findings in a form in which it can be easily understood". Tabulation may be

accomplished by computer or manually. In this study, the results were tabulated by use of the computer.

The editing and coding of the data received from the respondents have already been discussed. Therefore, analysing the data is known to be the concluding stage of the study. The following chapters focus on the analysis, interpretation and presentation of the data. In this study, the researcher interpreted the findings in light of the research questions to determine consistency of the results and theories.

4.9 The statistical methodology

Cooper *et al.* (2008:234) state that the statistical methodology used by the researcher to analyse and interpret data is usually guided by the research questions of the study. In the case of the questions in this study, the researcher has utilised the following:

4.9.1 Descriptive statistical analysis of the data

Bryman *et al.* (2007:108) state that descriptive statistical measures are utilised to portray the spread, centre and shape of distribution making this tool valuable for describing data.

The descriptive statistics utilised in this research to present findings of the survey were frequency tables and percentages.

4.9.2 Measures of central tendency

- **Mean**

De-Vos *et al.* (2010:233) state that the mean represents the balance point (or centre of gravity) of a distribution. The formula for calculating the average response is as follows:

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum X_i}{n}$$

4.9.3 Measures of variability

- **Standard deviation**

Cooper *et al.* (2008:439) state that the standard deviation summarises how far away the values typically are from the average. The formula for calculating standard deviation is:

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N} (x_i - \overline{x})^2}{N - 1}}$$

In this study, the mean and standard deviation were computed for the dimensions in Section B of the questionnaire.

4.9.4 Inferential statistics

According to Sekaran (2003:418), "Inferential statistics are statistics that help to establish relationships among variables and draw conclusions there from".

- **The One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

The One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test is a statistical test which is utilised to establish the probability that an observed set of values for each category of a variable differs from a particular distribution (Saunders *et al.*, 2007:447).

This test was conducted and the results indicate that the data is not normally distributed. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test was used.

- **Mann-Whitney U test**

According to Sekaran (2003:404), "The Mann-Whitney U test is a nonparametric test for examining significant differences when the dependent variable is measured on an ordinal scale and the independent variable on a nominal scale". Therefore, the Mann-Whitney test was used to compare the differences between under-grad and post-grad respondents which will be presented and discussed further in Chapter five.

- **Reliability: Cronbach's alpha**

Sekaran (1992:284), as cited in Ramsamy (2008:36) states that, "Cronbach's alpha is a reliability co-efficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. Cronbach's alpha is computed in terms of the average intercorrelation among the items measuring the concept. The closer Cronbach's alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency".

It can be seen, in the following table, that the Cronbach's alpha is .770. This value indicates a high degree of internal consistency amongst the items which means the items correlate well together. Table 4.3 reflects the Cronbach's alpha.

Table 4.3: Cronbach's alpha

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.770	34

4.10 Ethical consideration

This research study complied with ethical consideration of dealing with human subjects and ethical clearance was attained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Appendix C includes the ethical clearance certificate. It is essential for data protection to exist in a study.

As stated by Bryman *et al.* (2007:142), the 1998 Act states that personal data must:

- Be processed lawfully and fairly;
- Be attained only for the specified and lawful purposes and not further processed by any means mismatched with the purpose/s;
- Be relevant, adequate and not excess in relation to the purpose/s for which they are processed;
- Be accurate and kept up-to-date where necessary; and
- Not be kept longer than required.

The data will be kept securely for 5 years in the School of Management at UKZN. All information given by the respondents have been treated as strictly confidential and there has been no misrepresentation or distortion in reporting the data collected during this study.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research tools and procedures that the researcher has decided to follow. The tools and procedures covered that ensure the smooth collection of data were the following: the research questions, research design, sampling design, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, statistical methods and ethical considerations. Secondary and primary research methods and the importance of research on diversity and international students were discussed. The primary research methods such as observations; questionnaire and survey; and interviewing were outlined. This was followed by the research survey method utilised for this study. Questionnaires were administered to collect the required data. The population from which the sample was selected was explained as the total number of currently enrolled international students studying at UKZN.

From the population, a sample of 300 international students was selected on a probability random basis which is adequate to achieve the objectives and desired outcome of this research study. From the 300 students contacted, 280 responses were

received. Following the preliminary steps of editing, coding and tabulation, the data was then interpreted by means of a computer.

Chapter 5 will focus on the presentation and discussion of results. The results of the investigation, pertaining to the perceptions of international students on the challenges of diversity management at UKZN, are examined to answer the questions of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises the results attained from the qualitative research (literature review) and from the quantitative research (questionnaires completed by currently enrolled international students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal). The presentation of results will be followed by an analysis and discussion. The results, analysis and discussion will be integrated to achieve the objectives of this study, which were: to identify the major diversity challenges experienced by international students at higher education institutions; assess the perceptions of international students regarding which of these challenges are the most predominant at UKZN; examine the diversity challenges experienced by undergraduate and postgraduate international students; and make recommendations accordingly to improve the perceptions, experiences and satisfaction of international students regarding diversity at UKZN.

A total of 280 questionnaires were completed by international students out of 300 questionnaires dispatched on the five campuses making up the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, the response rate achieved was 93%. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix A and has been divided into three sections. The results and discussion will be presented as per the sections of the questionnaire:

- Section A: Demographics;
- Section B: Perceptions of International Students on Diversity Challenges at UKZN; and
- Section C: Additional Comments.

The statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 15.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, Illinois, USA). The five percent (5%) significance level was used for statistical comparisons. It is imperative to note that SPSS stores values accurately to 15 decimal places. A loss of

precision occurs when the display of decimal numbers is forced to fewer than 15 decimal places. SPSS and other software packages store numbers similarly to Excel.

As Pearson (1998:23) notes, “Excel stores numbers differently that you may have them formatted display on the worksheet. Under normal circumstances, Excel stores numeric values as ‘Double Precision Floating Point’ numbers, or ‘Doubles’ for short. These are 8-byte variables that can store numbers accurate to approximately 15 decimal places”. Therefore, an excel worksheet or software packages may not display the value one believes it should, which is the case for some of the questions below. However, these may only be inaccurate by 0.1%, which does not signify any major loss of precision. Responses for each question via frequency tables and various illustrations will be presented, analysed and discussed in this chapter.

5.2 Demographic profile of the respondents

Information on the demographics of international students were sought to offer a basis for analysis of the main aspects of this study and to present their profiles. It was also taken into account so that future researchers may identify the sub-sections of the population from which these results were obtained. Numbers 5.2.1 to 5.2.12 indicate the results to Section A of the questionnaire which depicts the demographic profile of international students.

5.2.1 Age

The following results reflect the responses to question A1.

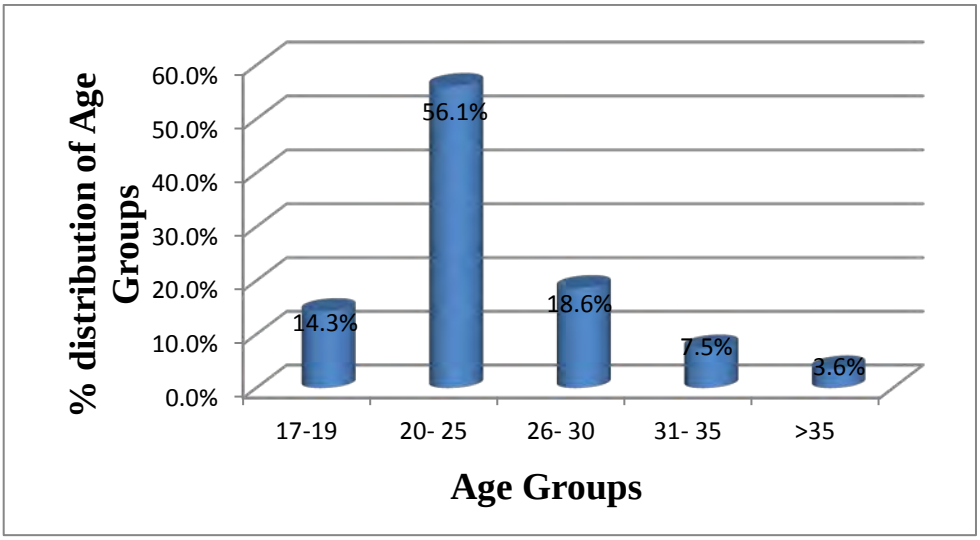

Figure 5.1 Percentage Distribution by Age Groups

Figure 5.1 reflects that the majority of the respondents were between 20-25 years (56.1%) followed by the age group of 26- 30 years (18.6%) followed by 17-19 years (14.3%). Only 7.5% of the respondents were from the age group 31-35 years followed by 3.6% of the respondents being above the age of 35 years.

5.2.2 Gender

The following results reflect the responses to question A2.

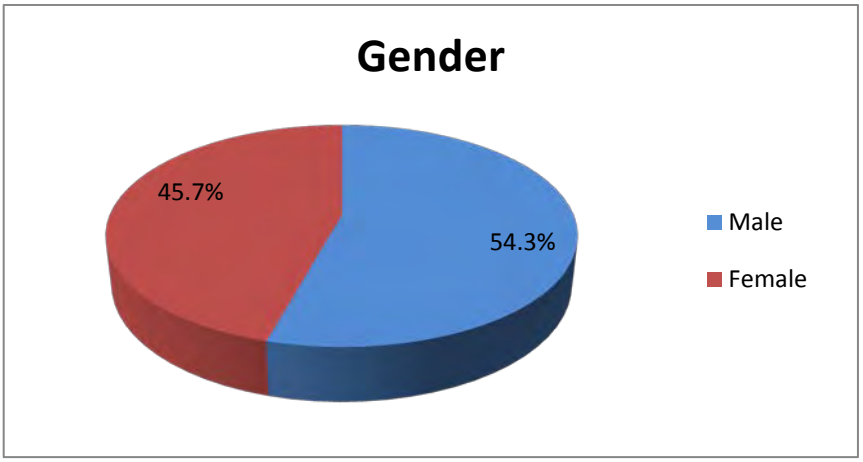

Figure 5.2 Percentage Distribution by Gender Groups

Results of question A2 above in Figure 5.2 reflect 54.3% of the respondents were male and 45.7% of the respondents were female.

5.2.3 Race group

The following results reflect the responses to question A3.

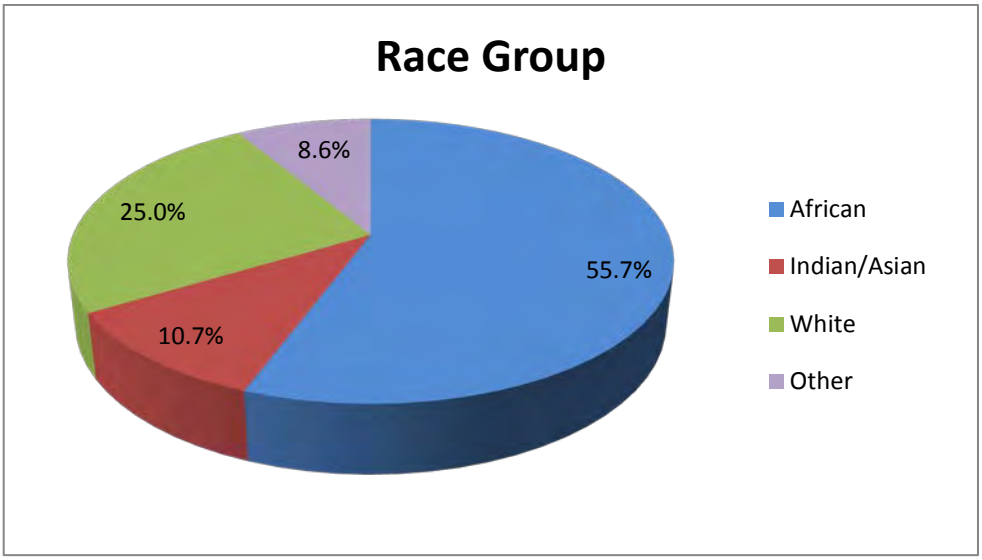

Figure 5.3 Percentage Distribution by Race Groups

The data in Figure 5.3 reflects the distribution by race group. The majority of the respondents were African (55.7%) followed by White (25%) which was followed by Indian (10.7%). The smallest number of respondents were of 'other' unidentified race groups (8.6%).

5.2.4 Year of study

The following results reflect the responses to question A4.

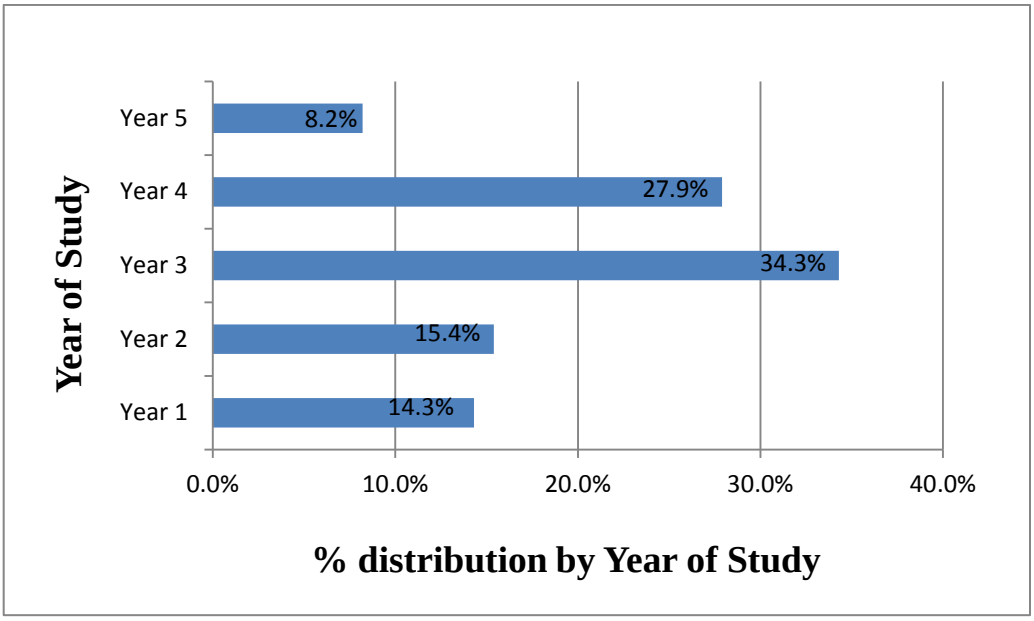

Figure 5.4 Percentage Distribution by Year of Study

Figure 5.4 reflects that the majority of respondents were in their third year of study (34.3%) followed by fourth year of study (27.9%). Following this finding were respondents in their second year of study (15.4%) and their first year of study (14.3%). The smallest number of respondents were in their fifth year of study (8.2%).

5.2.5 Level of study

The following results reflect the responses to question A5.

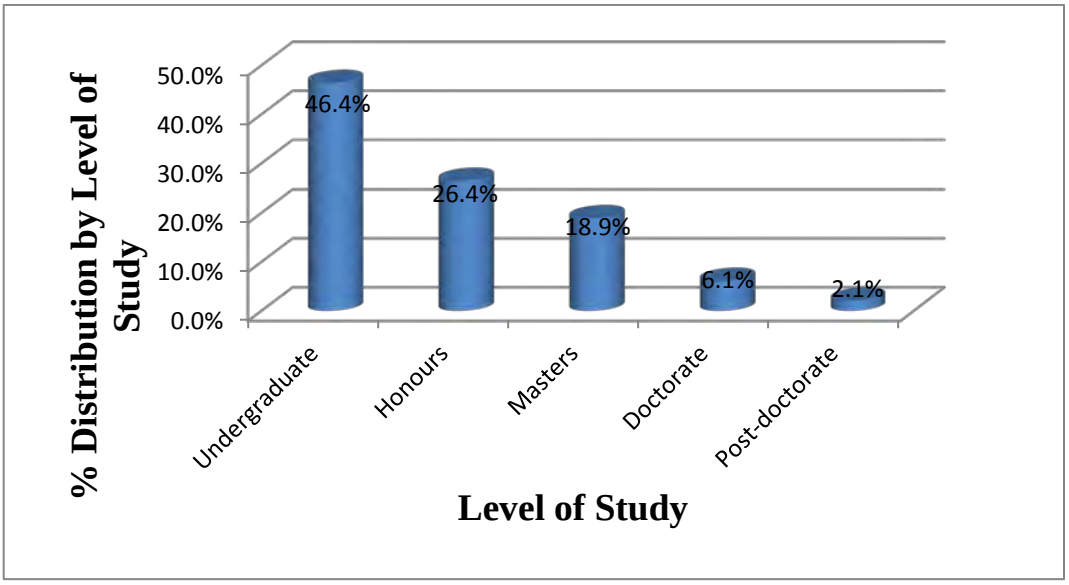

Figure 5.5 Percentage Distribution by Level of Study

Figure 5.5 reflects that the majority of the respondents were in their undergraduate (UG) level of study (46.4%) followed by postgraduate (PG) levels, i.e., the Honours level of study (26.4%) which was followed by the Masters level of study (18.9%). The least respondents came from the Doctorate level (6.1%) followed by the Post-doctorate level (2.1%).

5.2.6 Native English speakers

The following results reflect the responses to question A6.

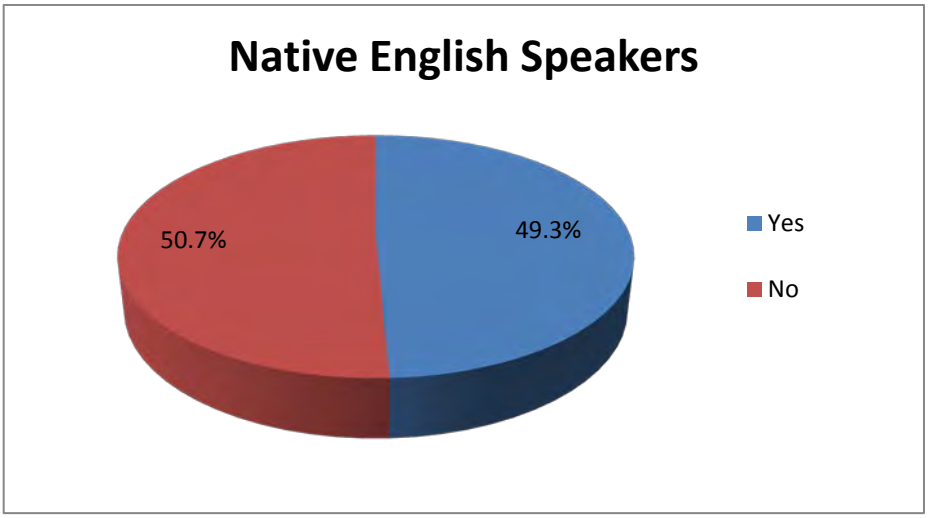

Figure 5.6 Percentage Distribution by Native English speaking respondents

Figure 5.6 reflects that out of 280 respondents, 142 do not have English as a native language (50.7%), whereas 138 respondents have English as a native language (49.3%).

5.2.7 Current residence

The following results reflect the responses to question A7.

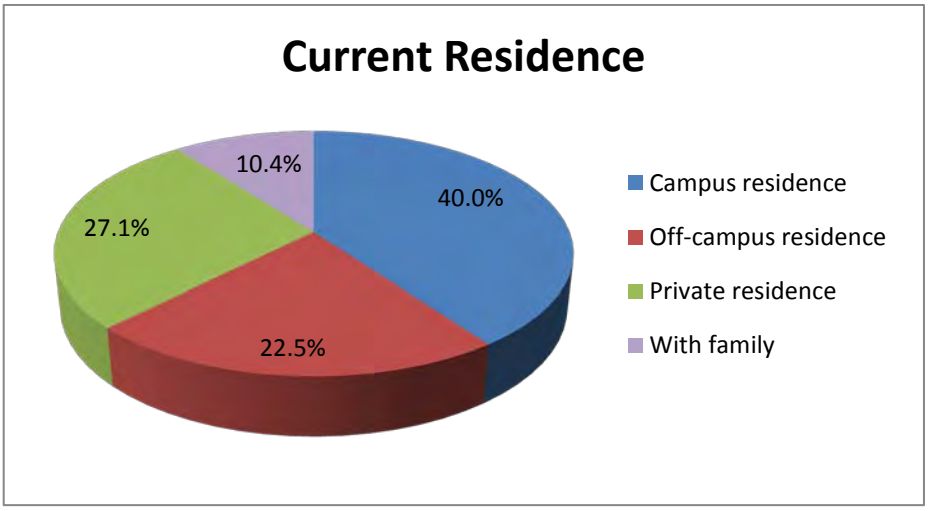

Figure 5.7 Percentage Distribution by Current Residence

Figure 5.7 reflects that majority of the respondents reside at campus residence (40%) followed by private residence (27.1%) which is followed by off-campus residence (22.5%). The least amount of respondents resides with family (10.4%).

5.2.8 Campus

The following results reflect the responses to question A8.

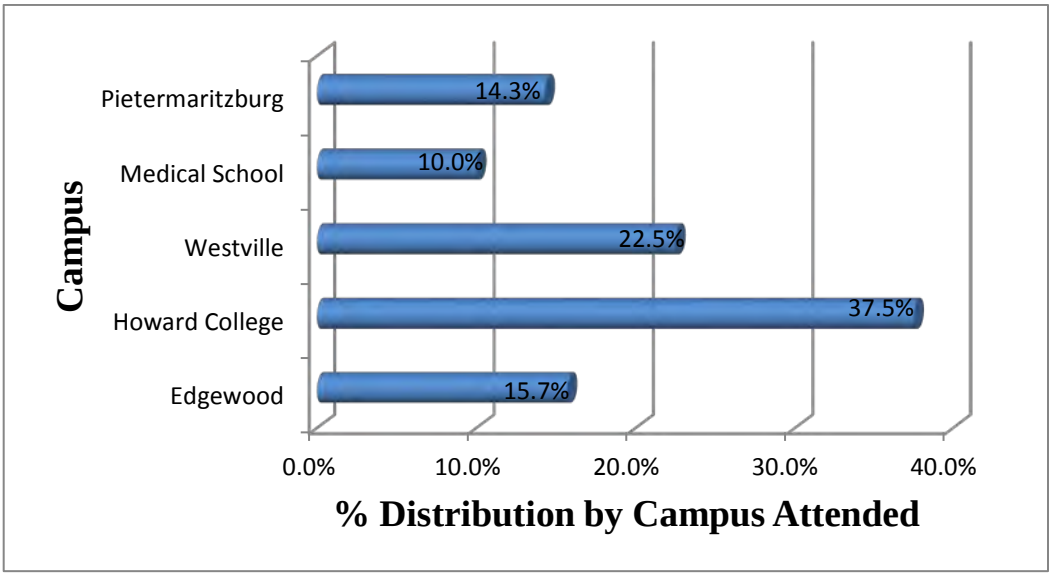

Figure 5.8 Percentage Distribution by Campus Attended

Figure 5.8 reflects that the majority of the respondents were from the Howard College (37.5%) followed by the Westville Campus (22.5%) which was followed by the Edgewood Campus (15.7%). The least number of respondents came from the Pietermaritzburg Campus and Medical School at 14.3% and 10%, respectively.

5.2.9 Respondents that lived in South Africa prior to studying at UKZN

The following results reflect the responses to question A9.

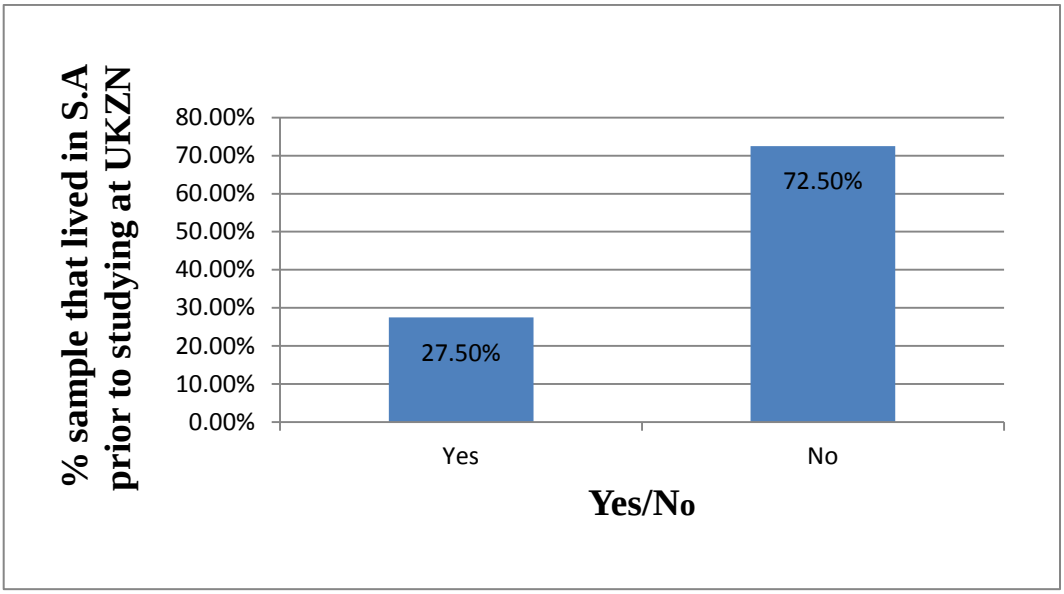

Figure 5.9 Percentage Distribution by Sample that lived in South Africa prior to studying at UKZN

Figure 5.9 reflects that out of 280 respondents, 203 did not live in South Africa prior to studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (72.5%). The remainder of the 77 respondents lived in South Africa prior to studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (27.5%).

5.2.10 Work experience

The following results reflect the responses to question A10.

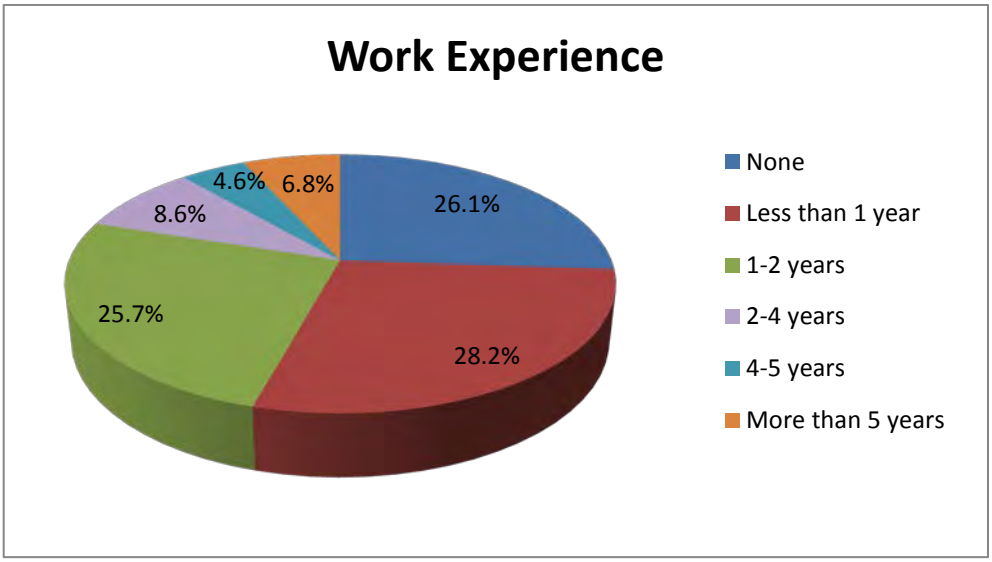

Figure 5.10 Percentage Distribution by Years of Work Experience

Figure 5.10 reflects that the majority of respondents have less than 1 year work experience (28.2%) followed by no work experience (26.1%) which was followed by 1-2 years' work experience (25.7%). It can be seen that 8.6% of the respondents have 2-4 years' work experience while 6.8% have more than 5 years' work experience. Only 4.6% of the respondents have 4-5 years' work experience.

5.2.11 Faculty

The following results reflect the responses to question A11.

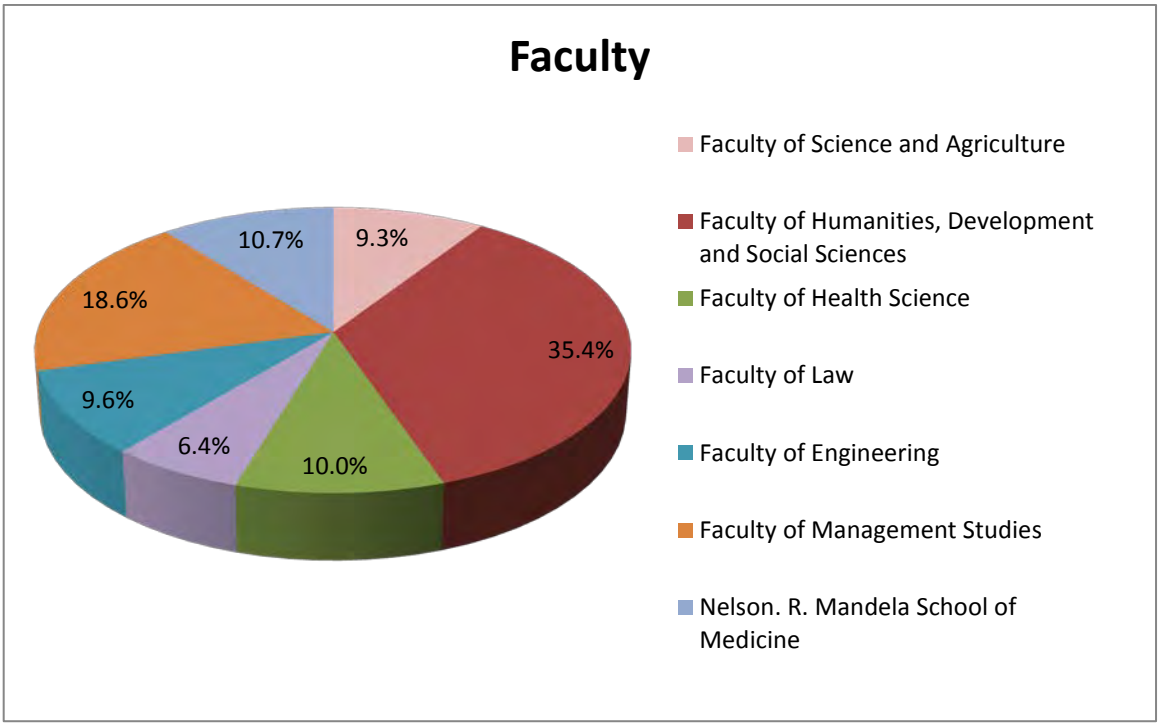

Figure 5.11 Percentage Distribution by Faculty

Figure 5.11 reflects that majority of the respondents study within the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences (35.4%), followed by the Management Faculty (18.6%), which is followed by the Medical Faculty (10.7%). 9.6% of the respondents study within the Faculty of Engineering, 9.3% study within the Faculty of Science and Agriculture and only 6.4% of respondents study within the Law Faculty.

5.2.12 Country of origin

The following results reflect the responses to question A12.

Table 5.1 Percentage Distribution by Country of Origin

Country of Origin	N	%
Argentina	3	1.1
Belgium	3	1.1
Botswana	17	6.1
Brazil	2	.7
Burundi	2	.7
Cameroon	6	2.1
Canada	4	1.4
China	5	1.8
Cote D'ivoire	2	.7
D R Congo	11	3.9
Eritrea	2	.7
Ethiopia	1	.4
Finland	1	.4
France	13	4.6
Germany	12	4.3
Ghana	6	2.1
India	12	4.3
Indonesia	1	.4
Ireland	1	.4
Kenya	12	4.3
Korea	3	1.1
Lesotho	12	4.3
Libya	1	.4
Madagascar	1	.4
Malaysia	1	.4
Malawi	7	2.5
Mauritius	16	5.7
Mexico	3	1.1
Mozambique	5	1.8
Namibia	4	1.4
Netherlands	3	1.1
Nigeria	4	1.4

Norway	4	1.4
Pakistan	1	.4
Russia	1	.4
Rwanda	4	1.4
Sri Lanka	2	.7
Sudan	1	.4
Swaziland	5	1.8
Sweden	1	.4
Tanzania	4	1.4
Uganda	2	.7
United Kingdom	5	1.8
United States of America	16	5.7
Zambia	7	2.5
Zimbabwe	51	18.2
Total	280	100.0

Table 5.1 indicates the wide distribution of countries from which the respondents originate. The majority of respondents originate from Zimbabwe (18.2%) followed by Botswana (6.1%) and then the United States of America and Mauritius, both with 5.7%. Some of the countries with fewer respondents were Pakistan, Russia, Sweden, Malaysia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Indonesia, Finland, Ireland, Libya, Madagascar and Rwanda (0.4%).

This table indicates that UKZN attracts international students from many countries around the world, noting that not all countries are represented in the table. France, Germany, India, Kenya and Lesotho were also some of the well-represented countries in this study, with around 12-13 respondents from each country. According to the Council for Higher Education (Ch 12: 6), it was stated that HEI's should reserve at least 5% of student admissions for students from SADC nations other than their own. It can be seen that there exists a wide representation of international students at UKZN from SADC countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) as well as countries from other continents.

The next section will present and discuss the results to Section B of the questionnaire.

5.3 Perceptions of the study variables

The first research question of the study was to identify the diversity challenges experienced by international students at higher education institutions. According to the literature review of the work of various authors, the following challenges have been identified to answer this question:

- Language and communication;
- Social interaction across race/ethnicity;
- Discrimination;
- Pedagogical approaches;
- Financial pressure;
- Interracial conflict/tension;
- Curriculum;
- Assessment methods;
- Lifestyle adjustment;
- Campus services and facilities;
- Classroom diversity;
- Staff; and
- Campus administration and policies.

The following section outlines the perceptions of international students on the challenges of diversity management at UKZN. The questions included in the questionnaire were categorised as per the diversity challenges mentioned above and were broken down into more specific questions to guide the research design in achieving the objectives of the study. These categories will follow with the results of their relevant questions. The analysis examines the overall perceptions of international students as well as examines the diversity challenges experienced by under-graduate and post-graduate international students to satisfy the second and third research question of the study. A discussion of results will also be presented at the end of each category.

5.3.1 Language and communication

The questions pertaining to this category are B1, B2 and B3 of the questionnaire.

5.3.1.1 *"Lecturers use unfamiliar language and concepts which I find difficult to understand"*

Table 5.2: Percentage of responses to question B1

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	10.0%	25.0%	.0%	11.1%	.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	14.3%	31.8%	1.4%	6.1%	.0%	53.6%
	Total	24.3%	56.8%	1.4%	17.1%	.4%	100.0%

The responses, as seen in Table 5.2, indicate that the majority of the total respondents (56.8%) disagree that lecturers use unfamiliar language and concepts which they find difficult to understand (25% being UG and 31.8% being PG). This is followed by:

- 24.3% of total respondents who strongly disagree (10% being UG and 14.3% being PG);
- 17.1% of the total respondents who agree (11.1% being UG and 6.1% being PG);
- 1.4% of the total respondents who are undecided (1.4% being PG) and, lastly;
- 0.4% of the total respondents who strongly agree with the statement (0.4% being UG).

5.3.1.2 *"There are insufficient language courses available to accommodate international students"*

Table 5.3: Percentage of responses to question B2

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	5.7%	21.8%	4.6%	14.3%	.0%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	9.6%	24.6%	6.8%	11.8%	.7%	53.6%
	Total	15.4%	46.4%	11.4%	26.1%	.7%	100.0%

The responses, as seen in Table 5.3, indicate that the majority of the total respondents (46.4%) disagree that there are insufficient language courses available to accommodate international students (21.8% being UG and 24.6% being PG). This is followed by:

- 26.1% of the total respondents who agree (14.3% being UG and 11.8% being PG);
- 15.4% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (5.7% being UG and 9.6% being PG);
- 11.4% of the total respondents who are undecided (4.6% being UG and 6.8% being PG); and
- 0.7% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.7% being PG)

5.3.1.3 *"As an international student at UKZN, do you feel that language/ communication in the classroom may present a barrier to your performance? If so, please provide reasons"*

Table 5.4: Percentage of responses to question B3

	Level of Study			
	Undergraduate		Postgraduate	
	n	%	n	%
No, it does not present a barrier	79	28.2%	104	37.1%
Yes at first, an adjustment to the English accent in SA is needed	11	3.9%	13	4.6%
Yes, lecturers sometimes mix languages which may mislead students	16	5.7%	14	5.0%
Yes, I am still learning English, therefore some concepts are difficult to understand at the speed lecturers teach in	24	8.6%	19	6.8%

The responses, as seen in Table 5.4, indicate that the majority of the total respondents (65.3%) believe that language/communication does not present a barrier to their performance in the classroom (28.2% being UG and 37.1% being PG). The summary below indicates barriers caused by language/communication in the classroom:

- 15.4% of the total respondents feel that they are still learning English. Therefore, they find some concepts difficult to understand at the speed in which lecturers teach (8.6% being UG and 6.8% being PG);

- 10.7% of the total respondents feel that lecturers sometimes mix languages which could mislead students (5.7% being UG and 5% being PG); and
- Only 8.5% of the total respondents felt that, at first, language/communication presented a barrier to their performance in the classroom due to an adjustment to the English accent in South Africa (3.9% being UG and 4.6% being PG).

In all questions under the language and communication category (B1, B2 and B3), differences were found between undergraduates and postgraduates. At the 95% level, where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, there is a significant difference in the perception of language & communication ($p= .009$). Undergraduates had a higher score. Therefore, this finding indicates that postgraduate respondents displayed a slightly stronger level of agreement for language and communication challenges compared to the undergraduate respondents.

According to Errey (1994), as cited by Ryan *et al.* (2003:14), "Difficulties with language per se are also more likely to arise as a result of the types of language used by lecturers including the use of unfamiliar concepts, acronyms and anecdotes, especially in some discipline areas where certain types of prior knowledge are assumed". While this may be the case in other universities, the majority of the respondents indicated this is not a challenge at UKZN.

A study done on international students in the UK by Ames (1996) as cited by Sulkowski *et al.* (2009:155) showed only 16 percent cited English language problems as a major factor influencing their lack of academic success. This study found that, at UKZN, 34.6% of the respondents agree that language/ communication in the classroom presents a barrier to their performance. Some of the reasons for this finding was an adjustment to the English accent in South Africa is needed; lecturers sometimes mix languages which may mislead students; and some students are still learning English. Therefore, some concepts are difficult to understand at the speed lecturers teach in. Ames (1996) Sulkowski *et al.* (2009:156) went on to say that academic problems, such as use of specific academic genres, peaked in the second and third years of their studies, and continued through their postgraduate years, despite improvement in their English language skills. Lack of sophisticated expression in English can often result in students'

understandings and abilities being unrecognised (Errey, 1994 as cited by Ryan *et al.*, 2003). This finding also supports the finding of this study as it was found that postgraduate respondents displayed a slightly stronger level of agreement for language and communication challenges compared to the undergraduates.

UKZN should designate foreign language as a core subject to alleviate language/communication barriers. Pufahl, Rhodes and Christian (2000:4) argue that "Designating foreign languages as a core subject area is essential for a successful programme. In almost all the countries with successful language education programmes, foreign language has the same status as other core subjects such as mathematics and reading".

5.3.2 Social interaction across race/ethnicity

The questions pertaining to this category are B4, B8, B5 and B7 of the questionnaire.

5.3.2.1 *"As an international student, I feel a cultural distance at UKZN which affects my confidence and performance"*

Table 5.5: Percentage of responses to question B4

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.1%	30.4%	1.1%	13.2%	.7%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	6.1%	30.7%	3.6%	13.2%	.0%	53.6%
	Total	7.1%	61.1%	4.6%	26.4%	.7%	100.0%

Table 5.5 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (61.1%) disagrees to feeling a cultural distance at UKZN, which affects their confidence and performance (30.4% being UG and 30.7% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 26.4% of the total respondents who agree (13.2% being UG and 13.2% being PG);
- 7.1% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.1% being UG and 6.1% being PG);

- 4.6% of the total population who are undecided (1.1% being UG and 3.6% of PG); and
- Only 0.7% of the total population strongly agree with the statement (0.7% being UG).

5.3.2.2 *"The racial composition at UKZN does not assist me in developing cross-racial friendships"*

Table 5.6: Percentage of responses to question B8

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	6.1%	18.6%	2.1%	19.2%	.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	7.5%	19.7%	2.5%	23.1%	.7%	53.6%
	Total	13.6%	38.3%	4.6%	42.3%	1.1%	100.0%

According to Table 5.6, the majority of the total respondents (42.3%) agree that the racial composition at UKZN does not assist them in developing cross-racial friendships (19.2% being UG and 23.1% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 38.3% of the total respondents who disagree (18.6% being UG and 19.7% being PG);
- 13.6% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (6.1% being UG and 7.5% being PG);
- 4.6% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.1% being UG and 2.5% being PG); and
- Only 1.1% of the total respondents strongly agree with the statement (0.4% being UG and 0.7% being PG).

5.3.2.3 *"As an international student, do you feel that UKZN adequately accommodates international students from different cultures?*

Table 5.7: Percentage of responses to question B5

	Level of Study			
	Undergraduate		Postgraduate	
	n	%	n	%
Yes, we are adequately accommodated	77	27.5%	102	36.4%
No, more cultural/ethnic students organisations are needed for social mixing	30	10.7%	26	9.3%
No, wider variety of meals are needed	18	6.4%	15	5.4%
No, international religious days should be more recognised	5	1.8%	7	2.5%

It can be seen that the majority of the total respondents (63.9%) believe that UKZN adequately accommodates international students from different cultures (27.5% being UG and 36.4% being PG). The summary below indicates areas in which UKZN inadequately accommodates international students from different cultures:

- 20% of the total respondents who believe that more ethnic/ cultural organisations are needed for social mixing (10.7% being UG and 9.7% being PG);
- 11.8% of the total respondents believe that a wider variety of meals is required to accommodate international students (6.4% being UG and 5.4% being PG); and
- Only 4.3% of the total respondents believe that international religious days should be more recognised (1.8% being UG and 2.5% being PG).

5.3.3.4 *"As an international student, do you feel that you have not been well-received by any group of people at UKZN?*

Table 5.8: Percentage of responses to question B7

	Level of Study			
	Undergraduate		Postgraduate	
	n	%	n	%
I have been well received	77	27.5%	75	26.8%
Local students are hostile and don't mix	25	8.9%	36	12.9%
Other international students keep to students from their home countries	9	3.2%	10	3.6%
I have not been well received by the opposite gender	7	2.5%	9	3.2%
Mixed reactions: some are welcoming, some are not	12	4.3%	20	7.1%

According to Table 5.8, it can be seen that the majority of the total respondents (54.3%) feel that they have been well received at UKZN (27.5% being UG and 26.8% being PG). The summary below indicates groups of people that international students felt they were not well-received by:

- 21.8% of the total respondents feel that local students are hostile and do not mix with other groups of people (8.9% being UG and 12.9% being PG);
- 11.4% of the total respondents indicated they have had mixed reactions (some people are welcoming, some are not) (4.3% being UG and 7.1% being PG);
- 6.8% of the total respondents feel that other international students keep to other students from their home country (3.2% being UG and 3.6% being PG); and
- Only 5.7% of the total respondents feel that they have not been well received by the opposite gender (2.5% being UG and 3.2% being PG).

In all questions under the social interaction across race/ethnicity category (B4, B5, B7 and B8), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards social interaction across race/ethnicity (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.681$).

Sulkowski *et al.* (2009:160) state that, apart from perceived low educational performance, a cultural distance may lead to alienation from the system resulting in low levels of confidence and disruptive behaviour. It was found that 27.1% of respondents agree to feeling a cultural distance at UKZN which affects their confidence and performance.

Krause (2005:23) states that international students may feel powerless in building social networks in a foreign environment. International students might also find it difficult to establish friendships in their new surrounding and some only befriend other students from their home countries. A convergence was found since 43.4% of respondents agree that the racial composition at UKZN does not assist them in developing cross-racial friendships.

Racial/ethnic student organisations provide students with opportunities for identity development, cross-cultural learning, and peer support. Social facilitates including unions and catering facilities, religious and sports clubs, and societies of special interest can accommodate international students from different cultures (Watts, 1972:143). It was found in this study that 36.1% of respondents believe there can be more done to adequately accommodate international students from different cultures by taking into account students' organisations, meals and religious days.

It was stated by Hurtado *et al.* (1998, 1999) that absence of inter-racial and diverse interaction does influence the perceptions of students toward others, their support for campus diversity initiatives, and their development of key educational outcomes. Evidently, intergroup and same-group and intergroup contact need not be mutually limited. This study ascertained that 45.7% of respondents feel that they have not been well-received by a certain group of people at UKZN.

The researcher supports the view of including social interaction across race/ethnicity as a behavioural dimension in a university's diversity model due to a significant percentage of respondents who feel that social interaction across race/ethnicity is a challenge to them at UKZN.

5.3.3 Discrimination

The question pertaining to this category is B9 of the questionnaire.

5.3.3.1 *"Have you experienced/ know of an international student who has experienced any form of discrimination at UKZN?*

Table 5.9: Percentage of responses to question B9

	Level of Study			
	Undergraduate		Postgraduate	
	n	%	n	%
No	86	30.7%	101	36.1%
Yes, gender discrimination	5	1.8%	6	2.1%
Yes, racial discrimination	14	5.0%	18	6.4%
Yes, cultural discrimination	21	7.5%	18	6.4%
Yes, sexual discrimination	4	1.4%	7	2.5%

The responses, as seen in Table 5.9, indicate that the majority of the total respondents (66.8%) have not experienced or know of an international student who has experienced any form of discrimination at UKZN (30.7% being UG and 36.1% being PG). The summary that follows indicates the form of discrimination experienced by an international student or by an international student they know:

- 13.9% of the total respondents indicated cultural discrimination (7.5% being UG and 6.4% being PG);
- 11.4% of the total respondents who indicated racial discrimination (5% being UG and 6.4% being PG);
- 3.9% of the total respondents indicated gender discrimination (1.8% being UG and 2.1% being PG); and
- 3.9% of the total respondents indicated sexual discrimination (1.4% being UG and 2.5% being PG).

In the discrimination category (question B9), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards discrimination (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.840$).

Discrimination is a factor that may occur on various levels between students, staff, faculty and others (gender, cultural, racial, and sexual). Sadri *et al.* (2002:234) state that discrimination can cause high levels of alienation, dissatisfaction and exclusion. Hanassab (2006:28) argues that international educators must realise the importance of developing a better understanding of diverse cultures and customs. It is crucial for educators to learn more about the parts of the world, religions, and customs most foreign to them and promote study of those areas by their students and scholars (Soppelsa, 2002, as cited in Hanassab, 2006:27). There appears to be a convergence in this study as 13.9% of the respondents have experienced/ know of an international student who has experienced cultural discrimination at UKZN.

In a study done by Sutton (2002) in the USA, the focus group discussions revealed that international students do experience racial forms of discrimination and harassment. A situation arose where a Muslim student was spat on by an American student after the September 11th attack. Some forms of discrimination and harassment may seem less overt, such as policies that do not take into account the special needs of international students or the remarks some foreign students indirectly receive from lecturers in class. Seemingly, focus group participants reported that most of the discrimination was based on religion, national origin or race. It was determined that 11.4% of the respondents have experienced/ know of an international student who has experienced racial discrimination at UKZN.

Sutton's study also revealed a considerable amount of sexual discrimination experienced by international students. The focus group participants noted that women experience sexual assault/harassment in their own countries. He also states that women are treated unfairly when they experience sexual harassment and attempt reporting it. Hanassab (2006:39) argues that gender discrimination is also a common form of discrimination as traditional gender roles differ in various countries, i.e., oppression of women should also be taken into account as a student explained that, in her culture, males were quite outrageous and more likely to act out compared to males from other cultures and that

there were not consequences for these men due to women not speaking out. A divergence was found in this study as very few respondents found sexual and gender discrimination to be a challenge at UKZN (only 3.9% each).

5.3.4 Pedagogical approaches

Questions pertaining to this category are B13, B14 and B15 of the questionnaire.

5.3.4.1 *"UKZN does not incorporate diversity in the production of teaching and learning materials which international students can relate to"*

Table 5.10: Percentage of responses to question B13

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.4%	31.4%	2.5%	11.1%	.0%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	1.8%	33.6%	2.9%	14.6%	.7%	53.6%
	Total	3.2%	65.0%	5.4%	25.7%	.7%	100.0%

According to Table 5.10, the majority of the total respondents (65%) disagree that UKZN does not incorporate diversity in the production of teaching and learning materials which international students can relate to (31.4% being UG and 33.6% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 25.7% of the total respondents who agree (11.1% being UG and 14.6% being PG);
- 5.4% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.5% being UG and 2.9% being PG);
- 3.2% who strongly disagree (1.4% being UG and 1.8% being PG); and
- Only 0.7% of the total respondents strongly agree (0.7% being PG).

5.3.4.2 *"In comparison to my home country, I find there to be a mismatch between teaching & learning styles"*

Table 5.11: Percentage of responses to question B14

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.8%	24.6%	2.9%	17.1%	.0%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	1.4%	30.0%	5.4%	16.8%	.0%	53.6%
	Total	3.2%	54.6%	8.2%	33.9%	.0%	100.0%

Table 5.11 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (54.6%) disagree that, in comparison to their home country, there is a mismatch between teaching and learning styles (24.6% being UG and 30% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 33.9% of the total respondents who agree (17.1% being UG and 16.8% being PG);
- 8.2% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.9% being UG and 5.4% being PG); and
- Only 3.2% of the total respondents strongly disagree (1.8% being UG and 1.4% being PG).

5.3.4.3 *"Do you believe that lecturers at UKZN provide good teaching methods for international students?"*

Table 5.12: Percentage of responses to question B15

	Level of Study			
	Undergraduate		Postgraduate	
	n	%	n	%
Yes, they provide good teaching methods	84	30.0%	97	34.6%
Oral methods can improve	23	8.2%	19	6.8%
Written methods can improve	14	5.0%	20	7.1%
Visual usage	9	3.2%	14	5.0%

Table 5.12 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (64.6%) believe that lecturers at UKZN provide good teaching methods for international students (30% being

UG and 34.6% being PG). The summary below indicates teaching methods that lecturers at UKZN can improve on:

- 15% of the total respondents who believe lecturers can improve on oral methods (8.2% being UG and 6.8% being PG);
- 12.1% of the total respondents believe that lecturers can improve written methods (5% being UG and 7.1% being PG); and
- Only 8.2% of the total respondents believe that lecturers can improve on visual usage (3.2% being UG and 5% being PG).

In all questions under the pedagogical approaches category (B13, B14 and B15), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards pedagogical approaches (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.891$).

Teaching methods used are entirely different from country to country, therefore, to teach to a diverse group of students may require uniformity and inclusion of many teaching methods. This can directly influence international students' experiences at a university (Watts, 1972:123). According to the work of Errey (1994), as cited by Ryan *et al.* (2003:21), sources of the challenges posed for international students may be through the traditional Western question-answer meetings between students and educators; the suitability of the curriculum to foreign students or the mismatch between the student's learning style and the lecturer's teaching style. It was found that 33.9% of respondents agree that, in comparison to their home country, there is a mismatch between teaching and learning styles.

Instructors are expected to use the acceptable oral, visual and written teaching methods as the medium to deliver content. By the use of the language of instruction, the instructor assumes that communication is taking place, that content is being conveyed to students, and that students are cognitively interacting with the content (Trigwell & Shale, 2004:22). This study ascertained that 35.4% of respondents feel that there is room for improvement in teaching methods at UKZN.

Stipulations in relation to higher education include that member states will collaborate diversity in the production of teaching and learning materials (Council for Higher Education, 2004:6). Hellsten *et al.* (2004:348) state that educators need to understand the diverse caliber of students, their cultures and expectations. Once this is achieved, existing teaching and learning materials can be enhanced to create inclusion and optimised productivity from students. It was found that, overall, 26.4% of respondents agree that UKZN does not incorporate diversity in the production of teaching and learning materials which international students can relate to.

Therefore, in highlighting the campus diversity model by Hurtado (1998, 1999), this study confirms the behavioral dimension which states that pedagogical approaches are one of the key factors that need to be internationalised to assist international students.

5.3.5 Financial pressure

Questions pertaining to this category are B20, B21 and B22 of the questionnaire.

5.3.5.1 *"As an international student at UKZN, financial aid is not easily accessible"*

Table 5.13: Percentage of responses to question B20

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.0%	6.1%	16.1%	17.9%	6.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	2.5%	7.9%	9.6%	19.3%	14.3%	53.6%
	Total	2.5%	13.9%	25.7%	37.1%	20.7%	100.0%

Table 5.13 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (37.1%) agree that, as an international student at UKZN, financial aid is not easily accessible (17.9% being UG and 19.3% being PG). This finding was followed by:

- 25.7% of the total respondents who are undecided (16.1% being UG and 9.6% being PG);
- 20.7% of the total respondents who strongly agree (17.9% being UG and 19.3% being PG);

- 13.9% of the total respondents who disagree (6.1% being UG and 7.9% being PG); and
- Only 2.5% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (6.4% being UG and 14.3% being PG).

5.3.5.2 *"In comparison to my home country, the fees at UKZN are less affordable/ suitable to my budget"*

Table 5.14: Percentage of responses to question B21

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	3.6%	24.6%	2.1%	15.4%	.7%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	3.6%	27.5%	3.2%	15.4%	3.9%	53.6%
	Total	7.1%	52.1%	5.4%	30.8%	4.6%	100.0%

Table 5.14 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (52.1%) strongly disagree that the fees at UKZN are less affordable/ suitable to their budget in comparison to their home countries (24.6% being UG and 27.5% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 30.7% of the total respondents who agree (15.4% being UG and 15.4% being PG);
- 7.1% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (3.6% being UG and 3.6% being PG);
- 5.4% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.1% being UG and 3.2% being PG); and
- 4.6% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.7% being UG and 3.9% being PG).

5.3.5.3 *"International students do not have sufficient opportunities to obtain part-time/casual jobs"*

Table 5.15: Percentage of responses to question B22

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.4%	1.8%	21.1%	16.4%	6.8%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	1.8%	2.9%	16.8%	24.6%	7.5%	53.6%
	Total	2.1%	4.6%	37.9%	41.1%	14.3%	100.0%

Table 5.15 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (41.1%) agree that international students do not have sufficient opportunities to obtain part-time/casual jobs (16.4% being UG and 24.6% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 37.9% of the total respondents who are undecided (21.1% being UG and 16.8% being PG);
- 14.3% of the total respondents who strongly agree (6.8% being IG and 7.5% being PG);
- 4.6% of the total respondents who disagree (1.8% being UG and 2.9% being PG); and
- Only 2.1% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (0.4% being UG and 1.8% being PG).

In all questions under the financial pressure category (B20, B21 and B22), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards financial pressure (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.291$, no significant differences).

Financial restrictions make it difficult for international students to earn money while studying and leave them with few feasible opportunities. According to Seow (2005:32), Australia allows international students to work up to 20 hours a week and almost all international students take advantage of this facility. Arambewela *et al.* (2009:8) found that a concern for students is the lack of opportunities to obtain a casual/ part-time job on campus. On the whole, satisfaction of international students is impacted by the negative experience of being unable to secure employment. They also found that, largely,

postgraduate students indicate a concern for this issue. This study indicates a convergence as the majority of respondents that agreed to there being insufficient opportunities to obtain part-time/casual jobs for international students at UKZN were postgraduate students.

According to Chapman *et al.* (1981), as cited in Veloutsou *et al.* (2004:12), when international students begin collating information on potential study destinations, fees is an important variable which may be related to the university fees or/and the living costs in the country, or even the possibility of securing financial aid. It has been recognised that cost considerations are very much related to the amount of money required as fees by the university and the expected cost for the everyday expenses in comparative conditions. This study indicates that the majority of respondents disagree that, in comparison to their country, the fees at UKZN are less affordable/ suitable to their budget.

International students' debt can grow immensely due to increases in various education-related costs, higher tuition, and changes in the availability of financial aid. UKZN Central Students' Representative Council President (2009), Ms Bavelile Hlongwa, as cited in the *UKZNTOUCH* Magazine by Maharaj (2010:22), believes that Government should look at the possibility of freeing up funding from other State departments and diverting it to higher education institutions. As indicated in the results, the majority of respondents agree that, as an international student at UKZN, financial aid is not easily accessible. The researcher confirms the factor of managing financial aid and budgets being a part of a university's organisational/structural dimension of the campus diversity model.

5.3.6 Inter-racial conflict/tension

Questions pertaining to this category are B16 and B39 of the questionnaire.

5.3.6.1 *"As an international student, I have experienced inter-racial conflict/ tension during social/ classroom activities at UKZN"*

Table 5.16: Percentage of responses to question B16

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.4%	25.0%	.7%	17.9%	1.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	3.6%	23.6%	4.6%	20.7%	1.1%	53.6%
	Total	5.0%	48.6%	5.4%	38.6%	2.5%	100.0%

Table 5.16 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (48.6%) disagree that they have experienced inter-racial conflict/tension during social/classroom activities at UKZN (25% being UG and 23.6% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 38.6% of the total respondents who agree (17.9% being UG and 20.7% being PG);
- 5.4% of the total respondents who are undecided (0.7% being UG and 4.6% being PG);
- 5% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.4% being UG and 3.6% being PG); and
- Only 2.5% of the total respondents strongly agree (1.4% being UG and 1.1% being PG).

5.3.6.2 *"In comparison to my home country, there is a higher level of competition between races at UKZN"*

Table 5.17: Percentage of responses to question B39

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.1%	23.6%	4.3%	17.1%	.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	1.8%	22.1%	11.1%	17.1%	1.4%	53.6%
	Total	2.9%	45.7%	15.4%	34.3%	1.8%	100.0%

According to Table 5.17, the majority of the total respondents (45.7%) disagree that there is a higher level of competition between races at UKZN, in comparison to their home countries (23.6% being UG and 22.1% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 34.3% of the total respondents who agree (17.1% being UG and 17.1% being PG);
- 15.4% of the total respondents who are undecided (4.3% being UG and 11.1% being PG);
- 2.9% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.1% being UG and 1.8% being PG); and
- 1.8% of the total respondents strongly agree (0.4% being UG and 1.4% being PG).

In all questions under the interracial conflict/tension category (B16 and B39), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards inter-racial conflict/tension (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.600$, no significant differences).

A study done by Hurtado (1992:32), at the University of Ohio, revealed that approximately one in three students in a university setting perceive considerable racial conflict. A key finding to her study is that racial tension may arise in an environment where there is a lack of concern for individual students. She went on to say that,

> "Across all groups, perceptions of student-centered priorities were important predictors of perceptions of low racial tension. These results provide empirical support for the importance of "setting a 'tone' that is congenial to all

students on college campuses. It may be that racial tensions are higher in environments where students believe that particular groups have special privileges or receive more attention when, in fact, all groups are experiencing a decline in the quality of support for students".

Hanassab (2006:26) indicated a response from a Korean student in her study, "I feel tension toward me. I have overheard them saying Koreans are aggressive". Another student wrote, "Racism is not openly expressed for fear of criticism; however, it does not mean that it doesn't exist." This study reveals a convergence as 41.1% of the respondents agree that they have experienced inter-racial conflict/tension during social/classroom activities at UKZN and 35.1% of the respondents agree that, in comparison to their home country, there is a higher level of competition between races at UKZN.

This finding confirms the psychological dimension of the campus diversity model where Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999) assert that an individual's experience and view of a university, its mission, and its climate are affected by who they are and where they are positioned in the institution.

5.3.7 Curriculum

Questions pertaining to this category are B26, B27, B28 and B29 of the questionnaire.

5.3.7.1 *"The diversity of the curriculum at UKZN has inadequately prepared me for the global workplace"*

Table 5.18: Percentage of responses to question B26

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.8%	32.5%	2.5%	9.3%	.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	3.2%	36.1%	4.6%	9.3%	.4%	53.6%
	Total	5.0%	68.6%	7.1%	18.6%	.7%	100.0%

Table 5.18 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (68.6%) disagree that the diversity of the curriculum at UKZN has inadequately prepared them for the global workplace (32.5% being UG and 36.1% being PG). This is followed by:

- 18.6% of the total respondents who agree (9.3% being UG and 9.3% being PG);
- 7.1% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.5% being UG and 4.6% being PG);
- 5% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.8% being UG and 3.2% being PG); and
- 0.7% of the total respondents strongly agree (0.4% being UG and 0.4% being PG).

5.3.7.2 *"The curriculum at UKZN inadequately incorporates international systems"*

Table 5.19: Percentage of responses to question B27

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.7%	26.1%	5.4%	14.3%	.0%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	3.6%	28.2%	3.2%	18.2%	.4%	53.6%
	Total	4.3%	54.3%	8.6%	32.5%	.4%	100.0%

Table 5.19 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (54.3%) disagree that the curriculum at UKZN inadequately incorporates international systems (26.2% being UG and 28.2% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 32.5% of the total respondents who agree (14.3% being UG and 18.2% being PG);
- 8.6% of the total respondents who are undecided (5.4% being UG and 3.2% being PG);
- 4.3% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (0.7% being UG and 3.6% being PG); and
- 0.4% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.4% being PG).

5.3.7.3 *"There are inadequate ethnic studies courses included in the curriculum for international students"*

Table 5.20: Percentage of responses to question B28

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.0%	20.4%	7.1%	18.9%	.0%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	1.4%	27.5%	7.9%	16.4%	.4%	53.6%
	Total	1.4%	47.9%	15.0%	35.4%	.4%	100.0%

Table 5.20 indicates the majority of the total respondents (47.9%) disagree that there are inadequate ethnic studies courses included in the curriculum for international students (20.4% being UG and 27.5% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 35.4% of the total respondents who agree (18.9% being UG and 16.4% being PG);
- 15% of the total respondents who are undecided (7.1% being UG and 7.9% being PG);
- 1.4% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.4% being PG); and
- Only 0.4% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.4% being PG).

5.3.7.4 *"International students are limited in researching international contexts and issues at UKZN"*

Table 5.21: Percentage of responses to question B29

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.1%	19.6%	23.9%	1.8%	.0%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	1.8%	27.5%	9.3%	14.6%	.4%	53.6%
	Total	2.9%	47.1%	33.2%	16.4%	.4%	100.0%

Table 5.21 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (47.1%) disagree that international students are limited in researching international contexts and issues at UKZN (19.6% being UG and 27.5% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 33.2% of the total respondents who are undecided (23.9% being UG and 9.3% being PG);

- 16.4% of the total respondents who agree (1.8% being UG and 14.6% being PG);
- 2.9% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.1% being UG and 1.8% being PG); and
- 0.4% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.4% being PG).

In all questions under the curriculum category (B26, B27, B28 and B29), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards curriculum (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.609$, no significant differences).

It is a certainty that no matter what job one gets into, or what profession one enters, one will encounter working with clients, customers, co-workers, employees and employers from diverse backgrounds- worldwide (Jayakumar, 2008:620). He further mentions that racial and ethnic diversity are associated with "active thinking skills, intellectual engagement and motivation, and variety of academic skills". This study found that, overall, 19.3% of respondents feel that the diversity of the curriculum at UKZN has inadequately prepared them for the global workplace. This did not prevail as a predominant challenge.

Hellsten *et al.* (2004:348) argue that including international systems in the curriculum of a university is essential for the benefit of all student bodies regardless of where they come from. They further state, "The commitment to internationalising the curriculum needs to seek critical and innovative solutions to a re-evaluation of existing curriculum content, enhanced capacity and mode of programme delivery". This study found that, overall, 32.9% of respondents agree that the curriculum at UKZN inadequately incorporates international systems.

Gurin *et al.* (2002, 2003), as cited by Morris (2006:20), define classroom diversity as having multicultural course content included in the curriculum. They go on to say that, "This provides opportunity for discourse on the ethnic and racial backgrounds, values, and cultures. Such an education provides for better understanding that improves race

relations, the authors assert". Overall, 35.8% of the respondents agree that there are inadequate ethnic studies courses included in the curriculum for international students.

Research can often be adjusted to enable students to respond with relevance to their home situation. This may both make the educational process more relevant to their needs and be developmental for staff who may gain a greater understanding of their students' needs. Researching international contexts may also lead to the development of expertise and assessment methods relevant to other countries (Astin, 1993:13). This study ascertained that, overall, only 16.8% of respondents agree that international students are limited in researching international contexts and issues at UKZN. Therefore, this did not prevail as a predominant challenge.

According to Hurtado's campus diversity model, the diversity of the curriculum is a part of the organisational/structural diversity dimension which represents the organisational and structural factors of a university and the ways in which benefits for some groups become embedded into these organisational and structural processes. The researcher confirms implementing diversity into the curriculum as it is a factor that guides the campus's day-to-day 'business'.

5.3.8 Assessment methods

Questions pertaining to this category are B11 and B12 of the questionnaire.

5.3.8.1 *"International students are not accommodated with regards to examination methods at UKZN"*

Table 5.22: Percentage of responses to question B11

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.7%	37.9%	3.9%	3.9%	.0%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	4.6%	40.4%	5.4%	2.5%	.7%	53.6%
	Total	5.4%	78.2%	9.3%	6.4%	.7%	100.0%

As indicated in Table 5.22, the majority of the total respondents (78.2%) disagree that international students are not accommodated with regards to examination methods at UKZN (37.9% being UG and 40.4% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 9.3% of the total respondents who are undecided (3.9% being UG and 5.4% being PG);
- 6.4% of the total respondents who agree (3.9% being UG and 5.4% being PG);
- 5.4% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (0.7% being UG and 4.6% being PG); and
- Only 0.7% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.7% being PG).

5.3.8.2 "*The assessment methods at UKZN are unsuitable for international students*"

Table 5.23: Percentage of responses to question B12

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	2.1%	24.3%	2.9%	16.4%	.7%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	4.3%	33.6%	5.4%	9.6%	.7%	53.6%
	Total	6.4%	57.9%	8.2%	26.1%	1.4%	100.0%

Table 5.23 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (57.9%) disagree that the assessment methods at UKZN are unsuitable for international students (24.3% being UG and 33.6% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 26.1% of the total respondents who agree (16.4% being UG and 9.6% being PG);
- 8.2% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.9% being UG and 5.4% being PG);
- 6.4% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (2.1% being UG and 4.3% being PG); and
- 1.4% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.7% being UG and 0.7% being PG).

In all questions under the assessment methods category (B11 and B12), significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students

towards assessment methods (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.006$).

Examinations pose variations in methods such as the unseen examination paper administered at the end of a degree course, dissertations may be compulsory, extended time examinations, oral examinations, tutorial essays and creative work (Watts, 1972:144). He goes on to say that international students may be unfamiliar with certain methods due to their previous experience with examination methods and this may affect their performance. This study showed a divergence as the majority of respondents did not find this to be a challenge and only 7.1% of the respondents agreed to not being accommodated with regards to examination methods at UKZN.

Brown (2001:4) states that, "effective assessment methods and tasks are related to the learning outcomes and the methods of learning which are linked to external influences, i.e., standards and benchmarking, as well as university policy and strategy. It could be argued that methods and tasks of both learning and assessment are also based on specific cultures of learning". Brown then suggests that international students may feel that certain assessment methods are unsuitable, depending on their culture and background. Therefore, diversity of assessment methods should be adopted at a university for fair assessment and results. Although the majority of respondents disagreed, 27.5% of respondents agreed that assessment methods at UKZN are unsuitable for international students. The researcher believes that suitable assessment methods should be included in the campus diversity model as a structural factor.

5.3.9 Lifestyle adjustment

Questions pertaining to this category are B10 and B34 of the questionnaire.

5.3.9.1 *"In comparison to universities in my home country, the life-style at UKZN is less manageable"*

Table 5.24: Percentage of responses to question B10

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.4%	28.2%	2.1%	13.6%	1.1%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	2.5%	31.8%	3.9%	14.6%	.7%	53.6%
	Total	3.9%	60.0%	6.1%	28.2%	1.8%	100.0%

Table 5.24 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (60%) disagree that in comparison to universities in their home country, the life-style at UKZN is less manageable (28.2% being UG and 31.8% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 28.2% of the total respondents who agree (13.6% being UG and 14.6% being PG);
- 6.1% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.1% being UG and 3.9% being PG);
- 3.9% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.4% being UG and 2.5% being PG); and
- Only 1.8% of the total respondents who strongly agree (1.1% being UG and 0.7% being PG).

5.3.9.2 *"As an international student, I have not found it enjoyable participating in extracurricular activities at UKZN"*

Table 5.25: Percentage of responses to question B34

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.4%	21.4%	16.1%	6.8%	.7%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	2.9%	22.1%	17.1%	10.4%	1.1%	53.6%
	Total	4.3%	43.6%	33.2%	17.1%	1.8%	100.0%

According to Table 5.25, the majority of the total respondents (43.6%) disagree that they have not found it enjoyable participating in extra-curricular activities at UKZN as an international student (21.4% being UG and 22.1% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 33.2% of the total respondents who are undecided (16.1% being UG and 17.1% being PG);
- 17.1% of the total respondents who agree (6.8% being UG and 10.4% being PG);
- 4.3% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.4% being UG and 2.9% being PG); and
- Only 1.8% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.7% being UG and 1.1% being PG).

In all questions under the lifestyle adjustment category (B10 and B34), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards lifestyle adjustment (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.840$, no significant differences).

According to D'Zurilla and Sheedy (1991), as cited in Doble *et al.* (2011:18), college students, especially undergraduates, are prone to more stress (due to their transition from home to college life). They must adjust to:

- “being away from home for the first time;
- maintain high academic achievement; and
- adjust to a new social environment”.

Krause (2005:201) also states that international students often require time in a foreign country and institution to adapt, socialise and learn. However, should workloads become too demanding to achieve a good study and life balance, especially in comparison to what they were used to in the home country, the student may feel that the lifestyle is difficult to manage. This study established that, overall, 30% of the respondents agree that in comparison to their home country, the life-style at UKZN is less manageable.

Krause (2005:203) undertook a study on international students at the University of Melbourne and states that they were more positive about their lifestyle and identity as a university student and were more likely to have made a few close friends at university when involved in extra-curricular activities. Hellsten *et al.* (2004:349) state that, participating in extra-curricular activities, contributes to a student’s feel for the university and happiness with the lifestyle. This study ascertained that, overall, 18.9% of respondents feel that, as an international student, he/she has not found it enjoyable participating in extra-curricular activities at UKZN.

The researcher points out that this factor did seem to be a predominant challenge for international students at UKZN and, that being consistent with diversity initiatives in other aspects of a university, will help international students live a well-balanced and happy life-style.

5.3.10 Campus services and facilities

Questions pertaining to this category are B30, B31, B32, B36, B37, B38 and B40 of the questionnaire.

5.3.10.1 *"UKZN inadequately provides counseling services and orientation programmes to assist international students"*

Table 5.26: Percentage of responses to question B30

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.1%	20.0%	21.1%	3.9%	.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	3.9%	20.4%	22.5%	5.4%	1.4%	53.6%
	Total	5.0%	40.4%	43.6%	9.3%	1.8%	100.0%

Table 5.26 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (43.6%) are undecided as to whether UKZN inadequately provides counseling services and orientation programmes to assist international students (21.1% being UG and 22.5% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 40.4% of the total respondents who disagree (20% being UG and 20.4% being PG);
- 9.3% of the total respondents who agree (3.9% being UG and 5.4% being PG);
- 5% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.1% being UG and 3.9% being PG); and
- Only 1.8% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.4% being UG and 1.4% being PG).

5.3.10.2 *"UKZN provides insufficient accommodation for international students"*

Table 5.27: Percentage of responses to question B31

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.7%	15.4%	6.8%	18.9%	4.6%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	.0%	11.4%	4.6%	30.4%	7.1%	53.6%
	Total	.7%	26.8%	11.4%	49.3%	11.8%	100.0%

As indicated in Table 5.27, the majority of the total respondents (49.3%) agree that UKZN provides insufficient accommodation for international students (18.9% being UG and 30.4% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 26.8% of the total respondents who disagree (15.4% being UG and 11.4% being PG);
- 11.8% of the total respondents who strongly agree (4.6% being UG and 7.1% being PG);
- 11.4% of the total respondents who are undecided (6.8% being UG and 4.6% being PG); and
- Only 0.7% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (0.7% being UG).

5.3.10.3 *"In comparison to my home country, UKZN residence does not foster a conducive learning environment"*

Table 5.28: Percentage of responses to question B32

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.3%	8.9%	15.4%	20.0%	1.8%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	1.1%	9.3%	19.6%	21.8%	1.8%	53.6%
	Total	1.4%	18.2%	35.0%	41.8%	3.6%	100.0%

Table 5.28 indicates the majority of the total respondents (41.8%) agree that in comparison to their home country, UKZN residence does not foster a conducive learning environment (20% being UG and 21.8% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 35% of the total respondents who are undecided (15.4% being UG and 19.6% being PG);
- 18.2% of the total respondents who disagree (8.9% being UG and 9.3% being PG);
- 3.6% of the total respondents who strongly agree (1.8% being UG and 1.8% being PG); and
- Only 1.4% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (0.3% being UG and 1.1% being PG).

5.3.10.4 *"International students are provided with inadequate security at UKZN"*

Table 5.29: Percentage of responses to question B36

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	2.5%	29.6%	2.9%	10.7%	.7%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	3.6%	33.9%	4.6%	10.7%	.7%	53.6%
	Total	6.1%	63.6%	7.5%	21.4%	1.4%	100.0%

Table 5.29 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (63.6%) disagree that international students are provided with inadequate security at UKZN (29.6% being UG and 33.9% being PG). This is followed by:

- 21.4% of the total respondents who agree (10.7% being UG and 10.7% being PG);
- 7.5% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.9% being UG and 4.6% being PG);
- 6.1% who strongly disagree (2.5% being UG and 3.6% being PG); and
- 1.4% who strongly agree (0.7% being UG and 0.7% being PG).

5.3.10.5 *"Computer laboratories are inadequately provided/accessible for international students at UKZN"*

Table 5.30: Percentage of responses to question B37

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	10.4%	23.2%	.4%	11.4%	1.1%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	8.6%	32.9%	1.1%	9.6%	1.4%	53.6%
	Total	18.9%	56.1%	1.4%	21.1%	2.5%	100.0%

It can be seen above the majority of the total respondents (56.1%) disagree that computer laboratories are inadequately provided accessible for international students at UKZN (23.2% being UG and 32.9% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 21.1% of the total respondents who agree (11.4% being UG and 9.6% being PG);
- 18.9% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (10.4% being UG and 8.6% being PG);
- 2.5% of the total respondents who strongly agree (1.1% being UG and 1.4% being PG); and
- 1.4% of the total respondents who are undecided (0.4% being UG and 1.1% being PG).

5.3.10.6 *"Do you feel that any service at UKZN inadequately supports and accommodates international students?"*

Table 5.31: Percentage of responses to question B38

	Level of Study			
	Undergraduate		Postgraduate	
	n	%	n	%
No, services at UKZN adequately support & accommodate International students	78	27.9%	84	30.0%
International Students Office	9	3.2%	9	3.2%
Financial Aid services	14	5.0%	19	6.8%
Student Representative Council	11	3.9%	13	4.6%
Student Residence Service	10	3.6%	16	5.7%
Risk Management Services	8	2.9%	9	3.2%

Table 5.31 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (57.9%) feel that services at UKZN adequately supports and accommodates international students (27.9% being UG and 30% being PG). The summary that follows indicates the areas that do not adequately support and accommodate international students:

- 11.8% of the total respondents indicated Financial Aid Services (5% being UG and 6.8% being PG);
- 9.3% of the total respondents indicated Student Residence Services (3.6% being UG and 5.7% being PG);
- 8.5% of the total respondents indicated Student Representative Council (3.9% being UG and 4.6% being PG);
- 6.4% of the total respondents indicated International Students' Office (3.2% being UG and 3.2% being PG); and
- Only 6.1% of the total respondents indicated Risk Management Services (2.9% being UG and 3.2% being PG).

5.3.10.7 *"As an international student, there are limited opportunities at UKZN for interracial campus involvements"*

Table 5.32: Percentage of responses to question B40

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.0%	9.3%	3.2%	29.3%	4.6%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	1.1%	8.6%	7.1%	30.0%	6.8%	53.6%
	Total	1.1%	17.9%	10.3%	59.3%	11.4%	100.0%

Table 5.32 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (59.3%) agree that, as an international student, there are limited opportunities at UKZN for inter-racial campus involvement (29.3% being UG and 30% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 17.9% of the total respondents who disagree (9.3% being UG and 8.6% being PG);
- 11.4% of the total respondents who strongly agree (4.6% being UG and 6.8% being PG);
- 10.3% of the total respondents who are undecided (3.2% being UG and 7.1% being PG); and
- Only 1.1% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.1% being PG).

In all questions under the campus services and facilities category (B30, B31, B32, B36, B37, B38 and B40), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards campus services and facilities (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.690$, no significant differences).

Ramsden (2008:26) states that,

> "There is some evidence that students are more insistent on high quality support services, easily available technology and better infrastructure. New styles of communication outside higher education have led to expectations of 24 hour, seven day a week availability of support. The extent to which students expect greater staff availability, better support services and facilities, and assessments

to be fully explained and justified depends on the context in which they find themselves – including the other students they encounter".

The main facilities' challenges in this dimension were found to be insufficient campus accommodation; an inconducive learning environment at residence and limited services/opportunities for interracial campus involvement. 61% of the respondents agree that UKZN provides insufficient accommodation for international students. 30.4% of the respondents agree that, in comparison their home country, UKZN residence does not foster a conducive learning environment. The main services' challenges found in this dimension are Financial Aid Services and Student Residence Services. It was found that 11.8% of respondents stated Financial Aid Services and 9.3% Student Residence Services. Khalid and Goe (1999:15) said that, "services must be transformed to tangible offerings for evaluation and comparison with the competition. If the institution does not do this itself, students will form their own judgement".

5.3.11 Classroom diversity

Questions pertaining to this category are B17, B18 and B19 of the questionnaire.

5.3.11.1 *"In class, there are insufficient opportunities for international students to achieve intergroup dialogue"*

Table 5.33: Percentage of responses to question B17

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.4%	23.6%	2.1%	18.2%	1.1%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	3.2%	28.2%	3.2%	18.6%	.4%	53.6%
	Total	4.6%	51.8%	5.3%	36.8%	1.5%	100.0%

According to Table 5.33, the majority of the total respondents (51.8%) disagree that there are insufficient opportunities for international students to achieve inter-group dialogue in class (23.6% being UG and 28.2% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 36.8% of the total respondents who agree (18.2% being UG and 18.6% being PG);

- 5.3% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.1% being UG and 3.2% being PG);
- 4.6% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (1.4% being UG and 3.2% being PG); and
- 1.5% of the total respondents who strongly agree (1.1% being UG and 0.4% being PG).

5.3.11.2 *"As an international student, I find it difficult to partake in group-work during classroom discussions"*

Table 5.34: Percentage of responses to question B18

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	1.4%	26.8%	1.1%	16.8%	.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	3.2%	34.6%	3.2%	12.5%	.0%	53.6%
	Total	4.6%	61.4%	4.3%	29.3%	.4%	100.0%

Table 5.34 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (61.4%) disagree that they found it difficult to partake in group-work during classroom discussions as international students (26.8% being UG and 34.6% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 29.3% who agree (16.8% being UG and 12.5% being PG);
- 4.6% who strongly disagree (1.4% being UG and 3.2% being PG);
- 4.3% who are undecided (1.1% being UG and 3.2% being PG); and
- Only 0.4% who strongly agree (0.4% being UG).

5.3.11.3 *"In comparison to my home country, the class sizes at UKZN are too large for me to perform well"*

Table 5.35: Percentage of responses to question B19

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	6.1%	36.8%	1.4%	2.1%	.0%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	5.4%	40.0%	3.9%	3.6%	.7%	53.6%
	Total	11.4%	76.8%	5.4%	5.7%	.7%	100.0%

Table 5.35 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (76.8%) disagree that in comparison to their home country, the class sizes at UKZN are too large for them to perform well (36.8% being UG and 40% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 11.4% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (6.1% being UG and 5.4% being PG);
- 5.7% of the total respondents who agree (2.1% being UG and 3.6% being PG);
- 5.4% of the total respondents who are undecided (1.4% being UG and 3.9% being PG); and
- 0.7% of the total respondents strongly agree (07% being PG).

In all questions under the classroom diversity category (B17, B18 and B19), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards classroom diversity (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.225$, no significant differences).

A study done by Hellsten *et al.* (2004:351) points out that one of the common challenges for international students is that they find it difficult to contribute in class and to participate in classroom discussions. There are many substantial explanations for this difficulty, the most salient being that international students feel self-conscious if conversational flow does not come easily in the English language. He also states that their unwillingness in trying to speak may be the fear to fail as they might be criticised by native speakers. The Society for Research into Higher Education (1981) states that, "At its simplest, language bias occurs when the official language of study does not coincide with the student's first language". This study found that 29.7% of

the respondents agree that, as international students, they found it difficult to partake in group-work during classroom discussions.

Bandiera *et al.* (2010:34) suggest that class size matters for student performance as the larger the class, the less personal attention or assistance the student receives. Also, this might affect their concentration levels as students may feel overcrowded and unheard. This study determined that only 6.4% of the respondents agree that, in comparison to their home country, the class sizes at UKZN are too large to perform well. The researcher argues that class size did not seem to be much of a challenge to international students at UKZN.

Dessel *et al.* (2006:305) state that several academic programmes have developed innovative approaches to diversity and multi-culturalism that incorporate inter-group dialogue using pedagogical and experiential dialogue techniques, as well as extra-curricular inter-group dialogue opportunities. Hurtado (2005), as cited in Dessel *et al.* (2006:306), argues that, "participating students improved their analytical skills, cultural awareness, and ability to the think pluralistically and take the perspective of others". Milem *et al.* (2005:41) state, "One way to encourage cross-racial dialogue among students is to provide a structured format in which students can learn how to engage positively in such dialogue. Institutions can provide regular opportunities for people to come together in a sustained and structured manner by offering dialogues for credit or building them into existing courses". It was found that 38.2% of the respondents agree that, in class, there are insufficient opportunities for international students to achieve inter-group dialogue.

Classroom diversity, as indicated by Hurtado's model, falls under the behavioural dimension. This dimension implicates social interaction across races and cultures in the campus environment, including the classroom. The researcher confirms this factor as being included in the behavioural dimension of a campus diversity model.

5.3.12 Staff

Questions pertaining to this category are B6, B23, B24 and B25 of the questionnaire.

5.3.12.1 *"In comparison to universities in my home country, UKZN has a less diverse group of staff members"*

Table 5.36: Percentage of responses to question B6

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	2.9%	33.2%	2.9%	7.1%	.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	5.4%	33.2%	5.4%	9.3%	.4%	53.6%
	Total	8.2%	66.4%	8.2%	16.4%	.7%	100.0%

Table 5.36 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (66.4%) disagree that, in comparison to universities in their home country, UKZN has a less diverse group of staff members (33.2% being UG and 33.2% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 16.4% of the total respondents who agree (7.1% being UG and 9.3% being PG);
- 8.2% of the total respondents who are undecided (2.9% being UG and 5.4% being PG);
- 8.2% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (2.9% being UG and 5.4% being PG); and
- 0.7% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.4% being UG and 0.4% being PG).

5.3.12.2 *"Hosts are inadequately provided for international students during orientation programmes"*

Table 5.37: Percentage of responses to question B23

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.7%	6.4%	4.6%	26.4%	8.2%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	.0%	8.9%	7.9%	26.8%	10.0%	53.6%
	Total	.7%	15.4%	12.5%	53.2%	18.2%	100.0%

Table 5.37 indicates that the majority of respondents (53.2%) agree that hosts are inadequately provided for international students during orientation programmes (26.4% being UG and 26.8% being PG. This finding is followed by:

- 18.2% of respondents who strongly agree (8.2% being UG and10% being PG);
- 15.4% who disagree (6.4% being UG and 8.9% being PG);
- 12.5% who are undecided (4.6% being UG and 7.9% being PG); and
- 0.7% who strongly disagree (0.7% being UG).

5.3.12.3 *"As an international student, I do not feel safe in my transactions/interactions with the staff at UKZN"*

Table 5.38: Percentage of responses to question B24

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	11.8%	27.5%	.7%	6.1%	.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	8.2%	37.5%	2.5%	5.0%	.4%	53.6%
	Total	20.0%	65.0%	3.2%	11.1%	.7%	100.0%

Table 5.38 indicates that the majority of respondents (65%) disagree that, as an international student, they do not feel safe in their transactions/interactions with the staff at UKZN (27.5% being UG and 37.5% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 20% who strongly disagree (11.8% being UG and 8.2% being PG);
- 11.1% who agree (6.1% being UG and 5% being PG);
- 3.2% who are undecided (0.7% being UG and 2.5% being PG); and
- 0.7% who strongly agree (0.4% being UG and 0.4% being PG).

5.3.12.4 *"As an International student, do you feel the staff at UKZN is inadequately qualified to accommodate a diverse group of students? If so, please state the reason/s"*

Table 5.39: Percentage of responses to question B25

	Level of Study			
	Undergraduate		Postgraduate	
	n	%	n	%
They are adequately qualified	81	28.9%	93	33.2%
They are inadequately qualified	49	17.5%	57	20.4%
Total	130	46.4%	150	53.6%

Table 5.39 indicates that the majority of respondents (62.1%) believe that the staff at UKZN is adequately qualified to accommodate a diverse group of students (28.9% being UG and 33.2% being PG). This finding is followed by 37.9% of respondents who believe that the staff is inadequately qualified (17.5% being UG and 20.4% being PG).

In all questions under the staff interaction category (B6, B23, B24 and B25), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards staff interaction (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.549$, no significant differences).

According to Hurtado's model, compositional diversity refers to the numerical and proportional representation of various racial and ethnic groups on a campus. They go on to argue that, "Institutional programmes and policies that increase the compositional diversity of a campus play an important symbolic role by communicating to interested internal and external constituents that diversity is a priority for the campus and its leaders". Compositional diversity is the single dimension of the climate that most campus leaders think about when they consider creating programmes and initiatives targeted at improving the climate.

Milem *et al.* (2005:39) observe that, "Having a diverse faculty ensures that students see people of colour in roles of authority and as role models or mentors. Faculty of colour are also more likely than other faculty to include content related to diversity in

their curricula and to utilise active learning and student-centred teaching techniques". They further state that international students are highly weary should there be an inconsistency in diversity among students and faculty in the university, and a breakdown to keenly and openly practise a united and diversified faculty which may give them a sign of dishonest loyalty to diversity. In this way, faculty diversity initiatives are not only important in their own right but they also serve to enhance the perceived climate for diversity. This study found that 17.1% of the respondents agree that, in comparison to universities in their home country, UKZN has a less diverse group of staff members.

Dardagan (2010:6) notes that UKZN is currently investigating the possibility of introducing a Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course in which lecturers will receive training in how to impart their knowledge or how to teach, organise learning and activate assessment for learning within the diverse higher education system. UKZN's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning Professor Vithal (2010:7) notes, "There is undoubtedly a need to skill lecturers to teach but they also need to be skilled in how to work with a diverse student body in which you have young people with different language proficiencies perhaps struggling in large classes". She added that higher education has the responsibility to respond to diversity among all students and teach in a fair and equal way. Therefore, international students would benefit should staff be trained on teaching a diverse group of students. This study found that 37.8% of the respondents feel that the staff at UKZN is inadequately qualified to accommodate a diverse group of students.

Past studies by Arambewela (2009:12) have indicated that university counselors or course advisers are not always the first choice for seeking advice and redress; rather international students turn to lecturers. This study indicates that 11.8% agree that, as international students, they do not feel safe in their transactions/interactions with the staff at UKZN.

In this context, the creation of a suitable environment, whereby students are able to interact with their lecturers, friends and relatives will be important. Milem *et al.* (2005:37) mention that seeking volunteers from senior students to be hosts of the new foreign students will be useful. It was found that 71.4% of respondents firmly agree

that hosts are inadequately provided for international students during orientation programmes at UKZN. Most of these respondents are post-graduate students (53.6%). The researcher confirms that staff interaction and diversity is a vital factor which should be taken into account in diversity initiatives.

5.3.13 Campus administration and policies

Questions pertaining to this category are B33, B35 and B41 of the questionnaire.

5.3.13.1 *"Transferring course credits to UKZN is an inefficient and lengthy process for international students"*

Table 5.40: Percentage of responses to question B33

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	.7%	9.6%	30.7%	3.6%	1.8%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	.0%	12.5%	32.5%	7.5%	1.1%	53.6%
	Total	.7%	22.1%	63.2%	11.1%	2.9%	100.0%

Table 5.40 indicates that the majority of the total respondents (63.2%) are undecided as to whether transferring course credits to UKZN is an inefficient and lengthy process for international students (30.7% being UG and 32.5% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 22.1% of the total respondents who disagree (9.6% being UG and 12.5% being PG);
- 11.1% of the total respondents who agree (3.6% being UG and 7.5% being PG);
- 2.9% of the total respondents who strongly agree (1.8% being UG and 1.1% being PG); and
- 0.7% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (0.7% being UG).

5.3.13.2 *"As an international student, I found the student enrolment process to be an inefficient experience"*

Table 5.41: Percentage of responses to question B35

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	2.5%	23.6%	3.2%	15.7%	1.4%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	1.4%	25.4%	3.6%	21.4%	1.8%	53.6%
	Total	3.9%	48.9%	6.8%	37.1%	3.2%	100.0%

It can be seen that the majority of respondents (48.9%) disagree that they found the student enrolment process to be an inefficient experience as international student (23.6% being UG and 25.4% being PG). This is followed by:

- 37.1% who agree (15.7% being UG and 21.4% being PG);
- 6.8% who are undecided (3.2% being UG and 3.6% being PG);
- 3.9% who strongly disagree (2.5% being UG and 1.4% being PG); and
- 3.2% of respondents who strongly agree (1.4% being UG and 1.8% being PG).

5.3.13.3 *"UKZN is not run according to good values and philosophies which respect international students"*

Table 5.42: Percentage of responses to question B41

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Level of study	Undergraduate	5.4%	36.1%	3.2%	1.1%	.7%	46.4%
	Postgraduate	7.1%	38.6%	2.9%	4.3%	.7%	53.6%
	Total	12.5%	74.6%	6.1%	5.4%	1.4%	100.0%

It can be seen that the majority of respondents (74.6%) disagree that they found the student enrolment process to be an inefficient experience as international student (36.1% being UG and 38.6% being PG). This finding is followed by:

- 12.5% of the total respondents who strongly disagree (5.4% being UG and 7.1% being PG);
- 6.1% of the total respondents who are undecided (3.2% being UG and 2.9% being PG);

- 5.4% of the total respondents who agree (1.1% being UG and 4.3% being PG); and
- 1.4% of the total respondents who strongly agree (0.7% being UG and 0.7% being PG).

In all questions under the campus administration and policies category (B33, B35 and B41), no significant differences were found in the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards campus administration and policies (at the 95% level where $p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p= 0.231$, no significant differences).

Institutions need to understand how their policies and practices influence student perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity and intergroup relations. Milem *et al.* (2005:34) said that an institution's commitment to diversity should filter through policy in every area of institutional life. They go on to say that issuing statements of support, purpose and action by top campus leadership is an initial step in signalling an institution-wide commitment to diversity. Institutional leaders can also be held accountable for keeping their diversity-related promises by the campus community using these statements. Only 6.8% of the respondents believe that UKZN is not run according to good values and philosophies which respect international students. Therefore, this finding was not revealed as a predominant challenge at UKZN.

As far as possible, transferring course credits should be catered for within a learning institution. Seow (2005:34) states the University of South Australia holds a policy of agreements on prior learning recognition which is based on the broad principles:

- "Granting maximum credit for prior learning;
- Granting block credit or specified credit to minimise the time taken to complete a course;
- Support for articulation with tertiary providers;
- Public availability and scrutiny of credit transfer provisions; and
- A consistent approach to the granting of credit".

She goes on to say that these agreements with overseas colleges and universities either involve partner institution arrangements where the Australian university staff teach some courses at the partner institution or formal credit transfer agreements for courses and programmes taught at these institutions. It was established that only 14% of the respondents agree that transferring course credits to UKZN is an inefficient and lengthy process for international students. Hence, this finding is not one of the predominant diversity challenges experienced by international students.

The enrolment process is known to be the first impression a student has of a university. Hanson and Zambito (2003:253) state that due to difficult enrollment procedures, international students and their campus advisors may face challenging experiences both before and after the arrival of international students with the application process. They went on to say that the process of obtaining a student visa can be lengthy and strenuous. This study reveals a convergence as 40.3% of the respondents, which is quite a significant percentage, agreed that the student enrolment process is an inefficient experience as an international student.

The researcher believes that this dimension did not prove to be much of a challenge to international students at UKZN. However, extra management and support to international students around the enrollment process would be beneficial.

The results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test indicate that the data is not normally distributed. Hence, the Mann-Whitney U-test was conducted to ascertain whether there is any significant difference in the perceptions of the challenges between undergraduate and postgraduate respondents. The questions used to generate the data were from the questionnaire, which consisted of questions under each of the diversity challenge factors. The factors are read in the negative, e.g., a mean close to 5 suggests the factor is a challenge and a mean close to 1 suggests the factor is not a challenge. A mean of 3 tends to a neutral position.

The following table reflects the comparison of the Likert- scale questions between UG and PG respondents using this test. The results are outlined and explained in the following table.

Table 5.43 Comparison of scores between levels of study using the Mann-Whitney U test

	Level of study						Mann-Whitney U	Z	p
	Undergraduate			Postgraduate					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation			
Language & Communication	130	2.44	.747	150	2.21	.773	8030.000	-2.622	.009*
Social Interaction across Race/Ethnicity	130	2.67	.862	150	2.61	.859	9481.500	-.411	.681
Pedagogical Approaches	130	2.63	.666	150	2.65	.697	9662.000	-.138	.891
Financial Pressure	130	3.27	.648	150	3.35	.822	9043.000	-1.056	.291
Interracial Conflict/Tension	130	2.84	.824	150	2.87	.780	9405.500	-.524	.600
Curriculum	130	2.67	.403	150	2.64	.564	9411.500	-.511	.609
Assessment Methods	130	2.50	.660	150	2.28	.691	8067.000	-2.733	.006*
Lifestyle adjustment	130	2.66	.705	150	2.66	.738	9617.000	-.202	.840
Campus Services & Facilities	130	2.93	.404	150	2.95	.487	9483.000	-.398	.690
Classroom Diversity	130	2.53	.644	150	2.44	.653	8955.500	-1.214	.225
Staff	130	2.71	.529	150	2.72	.597	9352.500	-.599	.549
Campus Admin & Policies	130	2.58	.565	150	2.67	.608	8957.500	-1.197	.231

The results in Table 5.43 reflect the similar perceptions of UG and PG respondents across all factors, however, at the 95% level where $p<0.05$, there are significant differences in the perception of Language & Communication ($p= .009$) and Assessment Methods ($p= .006$) between UG and PG respondents. The UG students have a higher score than the PG students. The results indicate that postgraduate respondents displayed a slightly stronger level of agreement for language and communication and assessment methods compared to the undergraduate respondents.

5.4 Additional comments of the respondents

This section presents the results to Section C of the questionnaire, “Additional Comments” and will outline general comments that respondents put forward. This section was included in the questionnaire to allow the respondents to comment on any issue or diversity challenge that was not covered in the questionnaire and for self-expression of their perceptions.

The most common comments as indicated by the respondents were as follows:

- IsiZulu classes should be a compulsory course for all international students;
- Part-time/casual jobs need to be more available to international students;
- More effective Local Area Network (LAN) equipment is required such as wireless devices, webcams etc to communicate with family and friends in home countries;
- International students should be allowed to use their medical aid from their home countries;
- Residence issues:
    - Mixing under-graduates and post-graduates at residence destroys the system;
    - Insufficient accommodation for students from SADC countries opposed to other continents;
- There is inadequate financial aid services available to international students;
- A more liberal and accessible social paradigm is needed for social mixing;
- A better transmission of information between campus services is needed; and
- There should be a mature, post-graduate student as president of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) to represent international students.

Several points are common to what has already been established in the questions asked in Section B. However, certain points in Section C should be highlighted and taken into account by UKZN, i.e., more effective LAN equipment is required such as wireless devices and webcams; international students being allowed to use medical aid from their home countries; and an effective, mature representation as president of the SRC to represent international students.

5.5 Conclusion

The research results and findings of the study were presented, discussed and compared with findings of other authors.

The findings of this study corroborate that diversity management is essential to international students in higher education institutions despite their level of study. Be it at different levels or not, it is essential for management of diversity issues to take place in terms of language and communication; social interaction across race/ethnicity; discrimination; pedagogical approaches; finances; interracial conflict/tension; curriculum; assessment methods; lifestyle adjustment; campus services and facilities; classroom diversity; staff and lastly, campus administration and policies.

The following challenges were found to be the most predominant at UKZN which satisfy the second research question:

- Insufficient financial aid;
- Inadequate part-time/casual jobs;
- Lack of platforms for social and interracial mixing;
- Inadequate campus accommodation;
- An inconducive learning environment at campus residency; and
- A lack of hosts on arrival for guidance and peer support.

In response to the third research question, undergraduate and postgraduate students indicated similar perceptions across all diversity challenges. However, postgraduate respondents displayed a slightly stronger level of agreement for language and communication and assessment methods being a challenge compared to the undergraduate respondents.

The following chapter will offer recommendations to answer the final research question of the study as well as conclude the study.

CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The objectives of this study, which have been achieved up to this stage, were to identify the major diversity challenges experienced by international students at higher education institutions, assess the perceptions of international students regarding which of these challenges are the most predominant at UKZN and examine the diversity challenges experienced by under-graduate and post-graduate international students. These objectives were achieved through:

- Extensive literature review that provided knowledge and views on diversity management and international students at higher education institutions; and
- An empirical survey which consisted of a structured questionnaire.

It is essential for higher education institutions to understand international students. They must realise why these students choose a certain university as a study destination, what needs to try and fulfill and what campus influences affect their perceptions, experiences and satisfaction with the university.

This chapter will attempt to achieve the final objective by providing recommendations that will assist UKZN and other higher education institutions improve the perceptions, experiences and satisfaction of international students regarding diversity. The researcher will then conclude the study and offer recommendations for future research.

6.2 Recommendations

The researcher offers the following recommendations for consideration:

6.2.1 Financial aid

Financial aid has been highlighted as a challenge to international students, especially to students from the SADC regions. It was found that 37.1% of the total respondents agreed and 20.7% of the total respondents strongly agreed that, as an international student at UKZN, financial aid is not easily accessible. While financial resources remain scarce for all students of higher education in South Africa, the increasing appeal of the country as a site for higher education necessitates some investigation into possible methods of assisting foreign students financially. Existing policies should also be clear on what kind of financial assistance foreign students can expect, and the minimum financial resources they should be required to have in order to live and study in South Africa.

6.2.2 Part-time/casual jobs

This study ascertained that 41.1% of the total respondents agreed and 14.3% of the total respondents strongly agreed that international students at UKZN do not have sufficient opportunities to obtain a part-time/casual job. The lack of opportunities for part-time/casual work may be viewed as symptomatic of the broader problem of unemployment and lack of employment opportunities facing South Africa at large. However, the unique financial vulnerabilities of international students does require that opportunities be created or that assistance be available to secure such opportunities. The possibility of extending graduate assistant opportunities to international students and of broadening casual employment at the university in a directed effort to help support these students must be pursued.

6.2.3 Inter-racial activities

One of the key reasons cited for the growing popularity of South Africa as an international student choice is the racial and cultural diversity of the country. It is therefore unacceptable that international students report dissatisfaction with the limited opportunity for inter-racial activities. The findings were as follows:

- 59.3% of the total respondents and 11.4% indicated that, as an international student, there are limited opportunities at UKZN for inter-racial campus involvements.
- Additionally, 20% of the total respondents indicated that more cultural or ethnic students' organisations are needed for social mixing.

In response to this, and in keeping with a broader socio-ethical imperative, universities must prioritise racial cohesion and inter-racial activity. This study recommends that:

- Platforms/organisations for social and cultural campus involvement should be accessible and provide students with opportunities for identity development, peer support and cross-cultural learning. Examples of such spaces are racial/ethnic community centres, social student organisations, and culturally-themed residence halls;

- The International Students' Office, in conjunction with Student Affairs, should develop and implement a model for increasing dialogue between different groups on campus, establish norms for cross-racial cooperation and learning; as well as create programmes and incentives that require inter-organisational involvement. It may be particularly necessary to break down a potential divide between home and overseas students; and

- Campus leaders can offer formal and informal opportunities for cross-racial interaction at various times of the day to accommodate the range of students' schedules.

6.2.4 Campus accommodation

This study revealed that 49.3% of the total respondents agreed and 11.8% of the total respondents strongly agreed that UKZN provides insufficient accommodation for international students. Issues pertaining to the availability of sufficient accommodation may also allude to the general difficulty of provision of accommodation to university students. This can be addressed by advising international students on the availability of accommodation before they arrive in South Africa, or by clearly outlining a reasonable expectation regarding the provision or assistance in securing accommodation.

6.2.5 Hosts on arrival

Many respondents in this study have indicated a lack of hosts on arrival and also indicated the need for them. This study found that 53.2% of the total respondents agreed and 18.2% of the total respondents strongly agreed that hosts are inadequately provided for international students during orientation programmes. It is recommended that international students be provided with hosts (senior students) on arrival for a certain time period. This provision will assist the student with having some form of initial support and constant guidance/direction on campus and in the new country.

6.2.6 Inconducive learning environments at campus residence

Inconducive learning environments can hinder the performance of international students living at campus residence. The majority of the total respondents (41.8%) agree that in comparison to their home country, UKZN residence does not foster a conducive learning environment. It is recommended that Risk Management Services and Students' Residence Services reinforce the rules and policies of campus residence as well as implement tighter control around these areas, especially at night when many students use these hours as vital study time.

6.2.7 Language barriers

As presented in the literature review, language barriers can affect communication and, therefore, may pose a challenge to learning for some international students. Although the majority of respondents disagreed that there are insufficient language courses available to accommodate international students, a significant number of respondents agreed (26.1%) and strongly agreed (0.7%) that there are insufficient language courses available to accommodate international students. Due to language and communication playing a vital role for international students academically and socially, it is recommended that students take remedial language courses to improve their comprehension skills and, consequently, their academic performance. The university should consider offering English and/or IsiZulu as a compulsory core subject for international students, whether they enter at an undergraduate or postgraduate level, as this will assist international students, not only academically but socially as well.

6.2.8 Discrimination

Although the majority of respondents suggested that they did not experience or know of an international student that experienced any form of discrimination at UKZN, there is a significant percentage that suggested otherwise which needs to be dealt with, i.e., 13.9% of the total respondents indicated cultural discrimination; 11.4% of the total respondents indicated racial discrimination; 3.9% of the total respondents indicated gender discrimination and 3.9% of the total respondents indicated sexual discrimination.

Across all the research on diversity, an important aspect is that student interaction with other students, staff and faculty members is essential for realising the educational benefits of diversity. Due to discrimination of all forms being a sensitive issue which may negatively affect campus climate, the researcher recommends that UKZN promotes cross-cultural communication and efforts toward tolerance among people of different customs and values to achieve high levels of cross-racial integration. This can build respect between diverse people, advance learning across cultures, as well as support the creation of a global community. Additionally, it can allow all individuals to improve their knowledge of and ability to accept others from diverse backgrounds

which broaden their access to beneficial relationships among fellow peers, staff and faculty members in creating a positive campus climate and minimising discrimination of all forms.

6.2.9 Student services

It is known that student services secure the environment of support for student development and results in a more favourable climate. Although the majority of the total sample did not feel that any service at UKZN inadequately supports and accommodates international students, a number of students indicated that certain services are inadequately supportive, i.e., 11.8% of the total respondents indicated Financial Aid Services; 9.3% of the total respondents indicated Students' Residence Services; 8.5% of the total respondents indicated Student Representative Council; 6.4% of the total respondents indicated International Students' Office and 6.1% of the total respondents indicated that Risk Management Services. Due to the fact that support services play such a vital role in a university setting and that there is always room for improvement, the researcher recommends that:

- UKZN should stand firm on issues that sustain support for international students. The university should exploit opportunities which maximise resources to create student-centred priorities which will benefit all students; and
- Student services should be audited internally on a consistent basis to make certain that service delivery meets with student expectations.

The researcher has taken a holistic view on the findings of research questions 1, 2 and 3 and asserts that she was able to answer the final research question of the study, *"What recommendations can be made to improve the perceptions, experiences and satisfaction of international students regarding diversity at UKZN?"* by offering recommendations 6.2.1 to 6.2.9.

The conclusions of the study will now be presented including a brief summary of the study.

6.3 Conclusions

It has been shown that international students face several diversity challenges at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. While these do not affect each student the same way, students indicated variations in being affected by each diversity challenge. This suggests a demand for these diversity challenges faced by international students to be of prime concern for all those who are involved in teaching and mentoring at UKZN.

Information on the demographics of international students indicated a basis for analysis of the main aspects of this study and presented their profiles. This information is essential so that future researchers can identify the sub-section of the population from which these results were obtained.

This study required the review of literature on diversity management and international students at higher education. In order to understand diversity, it was necessary to examine literature relating to diversity such as diversity management; strategic diversity initiatives; diversity in higher education and diversity in the University of KwaZulu-Natal. In order to understand international students at higher education, it was necessary to examine literature relating to international students such as the numbers of enrolled international students at UKZN and the forces in their environment (challenges faced by international students; factors considered by international students when choosing a study destination; and structural factors influencing international students' perceptions at university).

The survey research method was employed as a data collection method for this study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher randomly chose 300 students from an updated listing of the registered international students (provided by the Division of Management Information) chosen by the generation of random numbers to achieve the objectives of the study. The responses of 280 international students were analysed. All data was processed and analysed using SPSS version 15.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA).

The first research question of the study was, “What are the diversity challenges experienced by international students at higher education institutions?”. According to the literature review put forward by various authors, the following challenges have been noted to answer this question:

- Language and communication;
- Social interaction across race/ethnicity;
- Discrimination;
- Pedagogical approaches;
- Financial pressure;
- Inter-racial conflict/tension;
- Curriculum;
- Assessment methods;
- Lifestyle adjustment;
- Campus services and facilities;
- Classroom diversity;
- Staff; and
- Campus administration and policies.

Higher education institutions in South Africa are experiencing a major increase in its diversity, as seen in the wide range of countries students come from and their native languages. As indicated in the historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion and compositional dimensions of the Campus Diversity Model, UKZN has come a long way in achieving the numerical and proportional representation of various racial and ethnic groups since the apartheid era. This progress can be seen by the number of students and staff from SADC countries and other continents. This must be maintained and improved, where possible, so that South African universities can meet stipulations of the national and regional policies for higher education, such as widening access, and achieving equity and diversity in the student and staff bodies, to name a few.

The second research question of the study was, “What are the perceptions of international students regarding which of the diversity challenges are predominant at UKZN?”. The perceptions of international students suggest that while many diversity

factors are not a challenge, specific issues are a challenge, especially in the psychological, organisational/structural and behavioral dimensions of Hurtado and colleagues' Campus Diversity Model. These challenges are:

- Insufficient financial aid;
- Inadequate part-time/casual jobs;
- Lack of platforms for social and interracial mixing;
- Inadequate campus accommodation;
- An inconducive learning environment at campus residency; and
- A lack of hosts on arrival for guidance and peer support.

This implies there is still much to be done in terms of remedial diversity initiatives in these dimensions to change the perceptions and attitudes of international students before diversity management can be perceived as properly achieved at UKZN.

The third research question of this study was, "What are the diversity challenges experienced by undergraduate and postgraduate international students?". It was found that undergraduates and postgraduates have the same perceptions on all challenges outlined. However, incongruities between UG and PG students for language and communication, and assessment methods call for further diversity management around these factors for postgraduate international students.

The final research question of this study was, "What recommendations can be made to improve the perceptions, experiences and satisfaction of international students regarding diversity at UKZN?". This has been achieved earlier in this chapter with specific reference to the predominant diversity challenges indicated by international students at UKZN.

That being said, there is a demand for UKZN to recognise the Campus Diversity Model and implement further diversity management initiatives to alleviate inequities and challenges faced by international students.

The results of this study suggest that there are several related areas for further research which future researchers may consider.

6.4 Recommendations for further study

The following areas are recommended for further study:

i) The limitation that the results of the study will be different if it were conducted in other universities opens the following avenue:

- Further research could gainfully be directed towards exploring the perceptions of international students at other higher education institutions around the KwaZulu-Natal province and in the rest of the country.

ii) It is envisaged that the current study will prompt further research to deal with the progress of international students' careers once they have left the university.

6.5 Final remark

It is trusted that this study will be beneficial to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, other higher education institutions and international students.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management

Dear Respondent,

M Comm Research Project

Researcher: Preesha Maharaj (083 248 0162)

Supervisor: Prof. Sadhasivan Perumal (031- 260 7554)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (031-260 3587)

I, Preesha Maharaj am a Master of Commerce student in the School of Management, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled:

Perceptions of International Students on the Challenges of Diversity Management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

The aim of this study is to:

- Identify what major challenges regarding diversity international students have experienced while studying at UKZN.
- Assess the perceptions of international students regarding these challenges
- Examine the relationship between the demographical variables and challenges

Through your participation I hope to understand the perceptions of international students regarding diversity challenges at UKZN. The results of this survey are intended to contribute in improving diversity and contribute to the body of knowledge held by the University management.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the School of Management, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above. It should take you about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. I hope you will take the time to complete the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Investigator's signature : P. Maharaj_____ Date : 20 July 2010

OFFICIAL USE ONLY: Respondent Code:_____

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management

M Comm Research Project

Researcher: Preesha Maharaj (083 248 0162)

Supervisor: Prof. Sadhasivan Perumal (031- 260 7554)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (031-260 3587)

CONSENT

I_____ (*Name of participant: Optional)* hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

❖ Please complete the following questions:

1. Age

17-19 ☐
20- 25 ☐
26- 30 ☐
31- 35 ☐
>35 ☐

2. Gender

Male ☐
Female ☐

3. Race

African ☐
Indian/Asian ☐
White ☐
Other ☐

4. Year of Study

1 ☐
2 ☐
3 ☐
4 ☐
>5 ☐

5. Level of Study

Undergraduate ☐
Honours ☐
Master ☐
Doctorate ☐
Post-doctorate ☐

6. Is English your native language?

Yes ☐
No ☐

7. Where do you currently reside?

Campus residence ☐
Off-campus residence ☐
Private residence ☐
With family ☐
Other: please specify _____

8. At which campus are you based?

Edgewood Campus ☐
Howard College Campus ☐
Westville Campus ☐
Medical School Campus ☐
Pietermaritzburg Campus ☐

9. Did you live in South Africa before you started studying at UKZN?

Yes ☐

No ☐

10. Please state your country of origin:

_____

11. How many years of work experience do you have?

None ☐

Less than 1 year ☐

1-2 years ☐

2-4 years ☐

4-5 years ☐

More than 5 years ☐

12. Which faculty do you study within?

Faculty of Science and Agriculture ☐

Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences ☐

Faculty of Health Science ☐

Faculty of Law ☐

Faculty of Engineering ☐

Faculty of Management Studies ☐

Nelson. R. Mandela School of Medicine ☐

SECTION B: PERCEPTIONS

- Questions with a scale, please tick/cross the relevant number
- Open-ended questions please fill in your answer in the space provided
- The following statements will analyse how you perceive diversity at UKZN:

1. Lecturers use unfamiliar language and concepts which I find difficult to understand.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. There are insufficient language courses available to accommodate international students.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. As an international student at UKZN, do you feel that language/ communication in the classroom may present a barrier to your performance? If so, please provide reasons

_____

_____

_____

4. As an international student, I feel a cultural distance at UKZN which affects my confidence and performance.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. As an international student, do you feel that UKZN adequately accommodates international students from different cultures?

_____

_____

_____

6. In comparison to universities in my home country, UKZN has a less diverse group of staff members.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. As an international student, do you feel that you have not been well-received by any group of people at UKZN?

_____

_____

_____

8. The racial composition at UKZN does not assist me in developing cross-racial friendships.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. Have you experienced/ know of an international student who has experienced any form of discrimination at UKZN?

_____

_____

_____

10. In comparison to universities in my home country, the life-style at UKZN is less manageable.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. International students are not accommodated with regards to examination methods at UKZN

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. The assessment methods at UKZN are unsuitable for international students.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. UKZN does not incorporate diversity in the production of teaching and learning materials which international students can relate to.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

14. In comparison to my home country, I find there to be a mismatch between teaching & learning styles.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

15. Do you believe that lecturers at UKZN provide good teaching methods for international students?

_____

_____

_____

16. As an international student, I have experienced inter-racial conflict/ tension during social/ classroom activities at UKZN.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

17. In class, there are insufficient opportunities for international students to achieve intergroup dialogue.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

18. As an international student, I find it difficult to partake in group-work during classroom discussions.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

19. In comparison to my home country, the class sizes at UKZN are too large for me to perform well.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

20. As an international student at UKZN, financial aid is not easily accessible.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

21. In comparison to my home country, the fees at UKZN are less affordable/ suitable to my budget.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

22. International students do not have sufficient opportunities to obtain part-time/casual jobs.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

23. Hosts are inadequately provided for international students during orientation programmes.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

24. As an international student, I do not feel safe in my transactions/interactions with the staff at UKZN.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

25. As an International student, do you feel the staff at UKZN is inadequately qualified to accommodate a diverse group of students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

26. The diversity of the curriculum at UKZN has inadequately prepared me for the global workplace.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

27. The curriculum at UKZN inadequately incorporates international systems.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

28. There are inadequate ethnic studies courses included in the curriculum for international students.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

29. International students are limited in researching international contexts and issues at UKZN.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

30. UKZN inadequately provides counseling services and orientation programmes to assist international students.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

31. UKZN provides insufficient accommodation for international students.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

32. In comparison to my home country, UKZN residence does not foster a conducive learning environment.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

33. Transferring course credits to UKZN is an inefficient and lengthy process for international students.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

34. As an international student, I have not found it enjoyable participating in extracurricular activities at UKZN.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

35. As an international student, I found the student enrolment process to be an inefficient experience.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

36. International students are provided with inadequate security at UKZN.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

37. Computer laboratories are inadequately provided/ accessible for international students at UKZN.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

38. Do you feel that any service at UKZN inadequately supports and accommodates international students?

_____

_____

_____

39. In comparison to my home country, there is a higher level of competition between races at UKZN.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

40. As an international student, there are limited opportunities at UKZN for interracial campus involvements.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

41. UKZN is not run according to good values and philosophies which respect international students.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The questions in this survey may have not afforded you the opportunity to say certain things. Please make any additional comments in the space provided:

_____

_____

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THE END...THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

26 March 2010

Ms Preesha Maharaj
191 Cato Road
/ Kingsdowne
Greenwood
Durban
4001

Dear Ms Maharaj,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards your Masters qualification for the following project:

1) Perceptions of international students on the challenges of diversity management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

I trust the data collected will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely,

Prof J Moyerowitz
REGISTRAR

Office of the Registrar
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8006/7708 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Research Office
Govan Mbeki Centre
Westville Campus
University Road
Chiltern Hills
Westville
3629
South Africa
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587
Fax No: +27 31 260 2384
E-mail : naidoos4@ukzn.ac.za

10 August 2010

Miss P Maharaj
191 Cato Road
7 Kingsdowne
GLENWOOD
4001

Dear Miss Maharaj

PROTOCOL: Perceptions of international students on the challenges of diversity management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0880/2010 M: Faculty of Management Studies

In response to your application dated 04 August 2010, Student Number: **205510894** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL.**

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

SC/sn

cc: Prof. S Perumal (Supervisor)
cc: Mrs C Haddon

Postal Address:

Telephone: **Facsimile:** **Email:** **Website:** www.ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville