UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

THE EXPERIENCES OF ZIMBABWEAN STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL.

By

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DECLARATION

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Professor V. SEWPAUL (Supervisor)

DEDICATION

First and foremost I would like to dedicate this dissertation to God who is the Alpha and Omega of my life. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my late mother Tecla Zhoya, my late Grandfather Thomas Kubvoruno and my late father Douglas Kubvoruno.

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has played an influential role in increasing the number of international students studying in foreign institutions. Internationalization and globalization has taken us by storm and are phenomena that cannot be ignored. It is cognisance of the dynamic changes engineered by internationalization and globalization, and my experience of being a foreign student in South Africa that motivated this study into the experiences of international students' particularly Zimbabwean students studying in South Africa at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The main aim of the research was to understand the experiences of Zimbabwean students studying at UKZN. The study adopted a qualitative research paradigm and was guided by structural social work theory. The sample comprised 15 Zimbabwean students studying at UKZN, Howard College campus who were interviewed using semi-structured interviews which were audio-recorded and transcribed. The data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The major findings of the study were that Zimbabwean students at UKZN had both negative and positive experiences. The negative experiences include language barrier, financial challenges, xenophobia, accommodation problems, differential treatment of students, dealing with cultural differences, pressure from sponsor and obstacles in accessing study permits. For the positive experiences the themes that emerged were prestige and status, supportive and dedicated lectures, friendship and family, new intercultural experiences and being validated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACDE   African Council for Distance Education

AU   African Union

EHEA   European Higher Education Area

PANSALB   Pan South African Language Board

SADC   Southern African Development Community

UKZN   University of KwaZulu-Natal

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Chapter One

1.1. Introduction to the study

There has been an increase in the number of international students studying abroad which has to a large extent been facilitated by the globalised world that we live in. According to Smith and Khawaja (2011) on a globalised level there were more than 3,3 million tertiary international students in 2008. Chiu (1995:1) reiterated that in recent decades the number of students travelling abroad to study in unfamiliar cultural environments has increased dramatically. Altbach and Knight (2007:291) postulate that "The international activities of universities dramatically expanded in volume, scope and complexity during the past two decades". The reality of internationalisation of students cannot be ignored and shunned and more research must be done to holistically understand the experiences of international students.

According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (cited in Harrison, 2011) 11% of the UK undergraduate student population, that is about 153 000 consisted of international undergraduates in 2008/2009. The Institute of International Education (cited in Harrison, 2011) asserted that there was a similar trend in USA with 690 923 incoming students and 260 327 outgoing students. Dreher and Poutvaara (2011) contend that the number of foreign students in the total student population is higher in Switzerland (17%), Australia (14%), Austria (12%), UK (11%) and USA (3, 5%). Although there has been a recent decline in international students studying in UK and USA because of greater national security and obstacles related to obtaining visas (Lee and Rice, 2007).

After South Africa's independence in 1994 there was a steady growth of international students attending tertiary institutions in South Africa. According to MacGregor (2011) South Africa is the most popular destination of African students on the continent. Reasons for South Africa being a country of choice include the "economic stability, low cost tuition fees and the promise of a unique academic experience" (Mudhovozi, 2011:293). MacGregor (2011) asserted that international students' numbers at South Africa's 23 public universities have quadrupled since 1994 from 12557 to 53733 in 2006. Furthermore according to Mudhovozi (2011) in 2007 there were some 60 000 international students studying at tertiary institutions in South Africa, representing almost 8 % of the total student population.

Most of the international students in South Africa emerged from the neighbouring SADC Countries. The number of Zimbabwean students studying in South Africa is higher compared to the other African countries. Kwaramba (2012:13) expounded that "overall statistical figures at national level for SADC countries supplying most students to South African Universities indicates Zimbabwe as the major source country, sending 18% of all international students". This has been necessitated by the Zimbabwe Government which sends many students through the Zimbabwe Presidential scholarship to various universities in South Africa. According to UKZN Online (2009) the government of Zimbabwe and University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) reached an agreement that 203 Zimbabwean students were to be sent for the next 5 years to this institution. The fact that Zimbabwe has the highest number of international students at South African tertiary institutions made it important to conduct research on their experiences. Only a few studies have been conducted on the experiences of African International students but a study specifically focusing on Zimbabwean students alone has not been done at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

International students in South Africa are likely to experience a wide variety of problems and challenges which might have a negative impact on their functioning and well-being. Moreover international students are an important component of many higher learning institutions and research has found that they encounter more problems than host or local students (Ward *et al.*, 2001). Thus it was vital to research the experiences of international students and in particular for the purpose of this research the experiences of Zimbabwean international students to better understand the type of stressors and adjustment difficulties they experience.

1.2. Problem statement

Internationalisation has taken the global world by storm and has seen a huge number of students travelling to other countries for the purpose of tertiary education. Most of the literature and studies on international students have been done on their experiences in other continents other than Africa. It is surprising that there have been limited studies on international students' experiences in Africa and in particular South Africa. I have not been able to identify any research specifically on Zimbabwean students studying in KwaZulu-Natal. This research fills this gap.

1.3.Aims, objectives and key research questions

The main aim of the study was to understand the experiences of Zimbabwean students studying at UKZN.

The specific objectives were to explore with Zimbabwean students:

- Their reasons for choosing to study in South Africa.

- The factors that facilitate and/or hinder their learning.

- Factors that hinder and/or facilitate adjustment to University life.

- The positive experiences of studying in South Africa.

The key research questions were

- What are the reasons for choosing to study in South Africa?

- What are the factors that facilitate and/or hinder learning amongst Zimbabwe students at UKZN?

- What are the factors that hinder and/or facilitate their adjustment to university?

- What are the positive experiences of studying at UKZN?

1.4. Rationale for the study

My own subject location constituted a major rationale for doing the research. I am an international student from Zimbabwe. Having studied at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) for the past four years I experienced various challenges such as adjustment problems, language barrier and discrimination which have had an impact on my learning. It was from such a background that I considered it important to conduct a study on the experiences of Zimbabwean international students at the UKZN.

There has been considerable research done on international students' experiences globally but there was a gap in research on the experiences of international students studying in South Africa. This is confirmed by Rajpal (2012) who asserted that there is lack of research on international students in South Africa. Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012:33) state that "empirical data on international student experiences in developing countries is almost non-existent". Dzansi (2006) observed that in the developing country context there is little to no information on the types of problems international students are likely to face. Thus it was important to conduct this study in order to fill the gap in research on international students in Africa, particularly in South Africa.

Almost all universities in South Africa have more Zimbabwean international students compared to students from other SADC countries, which makes it salient to conduct a study on their experiences. Shindondola (2002) found that most students at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) currently University of Johannesburg came from Zimbabwe in 2002 which supports the above point that students from Zimbabwe makes up the highest percentage of SADC students. UKZN Online (2013) asserts that the Zimbabwean Scholarship funds 7 000 students in South African Universities. Zimbabwean students are considerably higher in number compared to other international students at University of KwaZulu-Natal with 98 being on Zimbabwean scholarship and more than 500 who are self-funded in 2014. Understanding their experiences is important as they represent the highest percentage of international students studying at the UKZN and also in South African universities as a whole.

In addition the rationale was to understand possible concerns about xenophobia, linked to attacks on foreigners in 2008 in South Africa. According to Crush and Pendleton (2007) xenophobia is hatred or fear of foreigners and strangers which can be expressed in murder, violence, discrimination, verbal abuse and public hostility by residents towards migrants. In 2008 xenophobic violence was inflicted on African migrants in South Africa, with locals accusing them of "stealing their jobs and raising the level of crime" (Onah, 2011:8). Amongst the objects of xenophobic violence were students studying in South Africa. This has left hidden scars which have contributed to internalized fear of xenophobia by African international students in South Africa. According to Chigeza*et al*. (2013) Black African migrants who came to South Africa to find employment or to further their studies became the victims of rage and violence.

Although the major xenophobic attacks occurred in 2008 it is crucial to highlight the fact that xenophobia is still prevalent. This point was alluded to by Chigeza*et al*. (2013:501) "Today, xenophobia is still rife in some parts of South Africa and African migrants continue to be murdered and discriminated against by their fellow black South Africans". It is crucial to point out that xenophobia is not only found in the communities that we dwell in but also in universities. According to Mogekwu (2005:10) xenophobia is found "even in institution of higher learning where one expects a higher level of broadmindedness".

1.5. Underlying assumptions of the study

➢ Fear of xenophobia might constitute an obstacle to effective learning amongst Zimbabwean students at UKZN.

➢ Language barriers isolate international students from the local students at UKZN and might constitute an obstacle to effective learning.

➢ Zimbabwean students face oppression and discrimination while studying at UKZN which might hinder effective learning.

➢ Social bonds and friendships at the micro level assist in countering some of the negative experiences of Zimbabwe students at UKZN.

1.6. Research Methodology

In terms of research methodology I used qualitative method and a descriptive research design in which the sample comprised 15 Zimbabwean students studying at the UKZN Howard College.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

The field of international students has been largely neglected in social work as international students form an important component of people that are at risk of being oppressed and discriminated against just like women, children and the elderly. Social workers can play an important role in dealing with the challenges facing international students by utilising structural social work theory. This research into the experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN opens the door for the understanding of the experiences of international students.

According to Mullaly (1997) structural social work is part of a school of social theory known as critical theory. Structural social work theory is used to understand some of the forms of oppression that Zimbabwean students in South Africa encounter in their everyday lives and the negative repercussions these have on their well-being and their learning. Structural Social work views social problems as arising from particular societal backgrounds rather than the faults of individuals and its main focus is to address what it identifies as structural forms of oppression (Mullaly, 2007). This means that international students are not to blame for the structural problems they encounter but the blame lays in the structural systems that systematically oppress and discriminate against them.

Dominelli (2002) defines oppression as involving relations of domination that divide people into dominant or superior groups and subordinate or inferior ones. Zimbabwean students studying in South Africa fall under the subordinate group which can be oppressed because of nationality, race, different culture and different language. In the eyes of the locals, Zimbabwean students and other African international students are outsiders who have intruded in their country to steal their jobs and women. This leads to a series of xenophobic and discriminatory violence targeted towards them. To validate the above point Johnson (2006:16) highlights the difficulties that people encounter due to diversity and difference in " a world organized in ways that encourage people to use difference to include or exclude, reward or punish, credit or discredit, elevate or oppress, value or devalue, leave alone or harass". This point is also highlighted by Singh (2013) who states that at universities international students are classified according to race, ethnicity and religious affiliation. Structural Social Work theory is salient and important in the identification of some of the hidden structural systems that are in place that oppress and discriminate against international students.

Structural social work contributes to uncovering some of these structural oppressive systems that Zimbabweans have to negotiate in their university life to enable social work intervention in these areas. Structural social work is important because it seeks to "transform the entire constellation of oppressive rules, processes and practices (Mullaly, 1997:158). This means that it can be used as a theoretical framework that can address social practices and structures in South Africa. This is in line with one of its goals to alleviate the negative effects on people of an exploitative and

alienating social order and to transform the conditions and social structures that cause the negative effects (Mullaly, 1997).

1.8. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is divided into five chapters, in which chapter one essentially introduces the research topic and deals with the problem statement, aim and objectives of the study, research questions, rationale of the study, assumptions of the study, a brief statement of the research methods and discusses the theoretical framework that guided the study.

Chapter two presents the literature review of some of the studies that have been done on the experiences of international students and also the policies that govern international students. In addition Chapter two has the theoretical framework that essentially guides the research topic.

Chapter three of the dissertation comprises the research methodology.

Chapter four discusses the results obtained from the study.

Chapter five deals with the major conclusions drawn from the research findings and recommendations in relation to the study.

The next chapter provides an overview of the literature review in the designated area of study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter I begin with the definition of key terms after that I discuss the policies on international students and lastly I discuss literature on the experiences of international students.

2.2. Definition of terms

2.2.1. International student

UKZN (2013) defines an international student as a student who is not a national or permanent resident of the Republic of South Africa and consequently requires a permit to enrol at a South African University. For the purpose of this study this is the definition of international students that is accepted.

2.2.2. Internationalization

Internationalization is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service function of higher education (Njuguna and Itegi, 2013: 752).

2.2.3. International Office

International offices are very important to international students as they are mandated to assist students in everything they need as they study at a foreign institution. Chan (2004) sets out some functions of the international office which include:

- International student recruitment;

- First point of contact for individuals and outside organization interested in international education;

- Close monitoring of application processing (if the applications are processed outside the international office, manage and monitor minimal turn-around time; negotiation and monitoring of university-wide institutional links;

- Repository of information on the university's international activities;

- Promotion and administration support of student exchange programmes (for both incoming and outgoing students);

- International student welfare and support, including services on multi-campus universities (if these are not closely associated with the international office, students can have difficulties with accessing services and the international office loses the critical feedback mechanism gained by close interaction with the students);

- Effective referral to other student services that are not specific to International students (study skills, counseling and health);

- Management of international projects and offshore programmes (it would be expected that student support services would be established for students studying by distance); and

- Source of intelligence for international opportunities; International alumni support (in association with general alumni office); Liaison with the providers of pre-university studies.

2.2.4. International student adjustment

International student adjustment is defined as "the international students' ability to easily overcome difficulties/problems in the process of adapting to a new social and academic environment" (Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela, 2012:29).

2.2.5. Xenophobia

Xenophobia according to Crush and Pendleton (2007) is hatred or fear of foreigners and strangers which can be expressed in murder, violence, discrimination, verbal abuse and public hostility by residents towards migrants.

2.2.6. Discrimination

Discrimination is the "practice of treating of a particular group in society less fairly than others" (Hornby, 2010:416).

2.2.7. Oppression

Oppression is "the domination of subordinate groups in society by a powerful (politically, economically, socially and culturally) group" (Mullaly, 2010:38).

2.2.8. Culture 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).

2.3. Policies on International students

2.3.1. International policies

There are various international policies and regional frameworks on international students amongst them the Bologna Process. According to Hoosen*et al*. (2009) one of the most advanced processes of harmonization of university degrees is the Bologna Process, which is an attempt to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by mutual agreement. There are over 40 countries that are signatories to the Bologna Process (Hoosen*et al*., 2009). According to Knight (2013:106) the Bologna process pushed other regions around the world to look seriously at the importance of building closer alignment of their higher education systems.

The Bologna Process proposed for the:

- Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries.

- Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by receiving Universities concerned.

- Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to: students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights.

- Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

- Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research (Bologna Declaration, 1999).

In addition the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education were launched in 2005 in order to respond to the new international initiatives so as to enhance quality provision in cross-border higher education (UNESCO/OECD, 2005 cited in Hoosen *et al.*, 2009). These are some of the international processes and guidelines on international students in which countries seek to provide the platform for countries to implement policies that are consistent and offer mutual agreements amongst themselves so as to respond to the internationalization of higher education.

Other international policies for international students in the USA include the Visa requirements. According to Haddal (2006) there are three visa categories used by foreign students studying in the USA which are the F visas for academic study, M visas for vocational study and J visas for cultural exchanges. The common visa for international students studying in the USA is the F1 visa. This visa is tailored for international students pursuing a full-time academic education (Haddal, 2006). According to Haddal (2006) to obtain an F-1 visa, prospective students are required to demonstrate that:

- They must be accepted by a school that has been approved by the Attorney General.

- They must document that they have sufficient funds or have made other arrangements to cover all of their expenses for 12 months.

- They must demonstrate that they have the scholastic preparation to pursue a full course of study for the academic level to which they wish to be admitted and must have a sufficient knowledge of English (or have made arrangements with the school for special tutoring, or study in a language the student knows).

Due to the criminal, security and terrorist concerns, the consular officers who process visa applicants are required to check the National Counterterrorism Centre's (NCTC) automated lookout systems before issuing any visa, thus names of foreign students are run through various databases (Haddal, 2006). Despite the fact that the presence of international students in USA is viewed in a positive light there has been some concerns raised over their presence in USA after September 11 terrorist attacks. According to Haddal (2006) the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks are raising a series of questions about foreign students in the United States, their rights and privileges. This has to some extent made USA unpopular in attracting a huge number of international students as their policies are a bit stringent.

2.3.2. African policies

The Arusha Convention was one of the earliest policies that was enacted in 1980 to promote mutual understanding of member countries with regards to international students and lecturers. According to Hoosen*et al*. (2009:10) "the key mechanism at the continental level is the Arusha Convention which is a UNESCO initiative for promoting continental cooperation through the academic mobility of lecturers and students". The revised Arusha Convention is mandated with:

- Setting up National Quality Assurance Authority mandated to carry out a periodic evaluation of higher education institutions and programmes

- National QA Authority provides external validation for the quality of the degrees, making it easier to be recognize by other institutions

- Setting up a National Information Center that disseminate information on HEIs & programmes

- The contracting states are expected to establish a database of information on the status of recognition of their institutions & programmes (African Union Commission, 2011).

However it is worth noting that only 20 countries ratified this convention (Shabani, 2004). This may point to the fact that this convention in some way is not popular with some countries as only 20 countries out of 54 in Africa had ratified it. At the continental level there is the Association of African Universities which provides a forum for consultation, exchange of information and cooperation among HEIs in Africa (Hoosen*et al*., 2009). The African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) is interested in harmonisation efforts in open and distance education programmes in Africa. Another initiative to integrate education at the continental level was taken in 2007 through the signing of the African Union Harmonization Policy for Higher Education (Kwaramba, 2012). According to the African Union (2007) the goals of the African Union Harmonisation Policy for Higher Education are:

- To bridge the gap between disparate educational systems that exists as a result of colonial legacies.

- To promote mobility of students and academics across the continent.

- To facilitate the comparability of qualifications awarded across the continent.

- To enhance quality in African higher education.

- To contribute to the vision of the African Union in building an integrated Africa.

2.3.3. Regional policies

The SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997) Article 7 on Co-operation in Higher Education and Training is relevant to internationals students in SADC countries and it stipulates that:

(A) Access to Universities: Student and Staff Mobility

1. Member States agree to recommend to universities and other tertiary institutions in their countries to reserve at least 5% of admission, for students from SADC nations, other than their own.

2. Member States agree to work towards harmonisation, equivalence, and eventual standardisation of University entrance requirements.

3. Member States agree that in order to prevent costly repetition of courses taken at universities within the Region and in order to contribute towards the mutual recognition of qualifications throughout the Region, universities shall be encouraged to devise mechanisms to facilitate credit transfer from one University to another within the Region.

4. Member States agree that it is desirable to work towards the harmonisation of the academic years of universities in order to facilitate staff and student mobility.

5. Member States agree that within ten years from the date of entry into force of this Protocol, they shall treat students from SADC countries as home students for purposes of fees and accommodation.

6. Member States agree to facilitate movement of students and staff from the Region for purposes of study, research, teaching and any other pursuits relating to education and training.

To this end, Member States agree to work towards the gradual relaxation and eventual elimination of immigration formalities that hinder free student and staff mobility.

(B) Under-Graduate Studies

1. Member States agree that whilst education and training at under-graduate level shall continue to be largely the responsibility of each Member State, co-operation and mutual assistance is possible and shall take place in some fields of study which can be agreed to by the institutions concerned. To this end, Member States agree to recommend to their universities:

(a) to co-operate in the design of academic programmes where appropriate, in particular in programmes which are jointly taught;

(b) to establish links between themselves bilaterally and multilaterally for purposes of joint or split-site teaching, collaborative research and consultancy work, and for other academic activities where appropriate. The format, content and implementing modalities shall be worked out by the concerned universities between themselves;

(c) to collaborate in the production of teaching and learning material, such as textbooks, computer software and others in order to achieve the economies of scale and to support the move towards harmonising academic and professional programmes in the Region as necessary;

(d) to promote student and staff exchange programme negotiated on a bilateral and multilateral basis by the sending and receiving universities for educational purposes and to promote cultural ties and engender commitment to the Region;

(e) to increasingly make use of external examiners from the Region as this shall not only contribute towards the building of a regional community of scholars but shall also lead to the development of comparable standards in higher education in the Region;

(f) to encourage and support the creation of regional professional associations to enable staff to exchange views, ideas and experiences on their disciplines, and thus enable them to develop top quality programmes which are relevant to the development of the Region;

(g) to notify the sub-Sector about bilateral and multilateral cooperative arrangements agreed with other universities in the Region for purposes of sharing information and experiences.

2. Member States agree that where necessary and appropriate, but without prejudice to the normal admission requirements, socially disadvantaged groups shall be given preference in admission to fields of study where they have not featured prominently. Further, Governments shall, where necessary, provide special scholarships for students from socially disadvantaged groups.

3. Member States agree that universities shall ensure that the content, quality and relevance of their under-graduate degrees shall be acceptable to graduate schools and employers in the Region for further study and for employment.

4. Member States undertake to provide, where necessary, resources to enable their universities to develop high quality under-graduate programmes through the provision of the necessary teaching and research requisites such as qualified staff, physical infrastructures, library holdings, equipment and in particular scientific and information technology equipment.

(C) Post-Graduate Studies

Admissions

1. Member States agree that an acceptable qualification as determined by the receiving institution shall constitute a sufficient entry requirement into a post-graduate degree programme of a University in the Region.

2. Member States agree that the actual numbers admitted shall reflect a more significant mix of students from SADC countries than that provided for at under-graduate level.

3. Member States agree that where necessary and appropriate, but without prejudice to the normal admission requirements, socially disadvantaged groups shall be given preference in admission to fields of study where they have not featured prominently. Further, Governments shall, where necessary, provide special scholarships for students from socially disadvantaged groups.

4. Member States undertake to provide the necessary resources to enable their universities to develop quality post-graduate programmes through the provision of the necessary teaching and research requisites such as qualified staff, physical infrastructures, library holdings, equipment and in particular scientific and information technology equipment.

The above Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region's Protocol on Education and Training was developed to foster the harmonization of Education and Training (Hoosen*et al*., 2009). It is crucial to highlight that all the 14 countries in the SADC region have ratified the protocol (Mavimbela, 2007 cited in Hoosen, *et al*., 2009:14). There are certain agreements that the signatories of the SADC Protocol adhere to in terms of the international students studying in SADC countries other than their own. To support the above assertion Kwaramba (2012) asserts that in an effort to promote internationalization of higher education in the region, regional member countries and signatories to the protocol agreed that 5% of all available study places should be reserved to admit students of SADC member countries.

SADC Protocol also enables the provision of similar treatment for students from other SADC member countries and this has enabled the treatment of SADC international students like home students for the purposes of fees and accommodation (Kwaramba, 2012). This has seen universities in South Africa demarcating their tuition fees for foreign students into SADC and non-SADC with the fees for SADC being lower that for other non-SADC foreign students (Kwaramba, 2012). One of the Universities in South Africa that has adopted the SADC Protocol

16

is University of KwaZulu-Natal. According to Kwaramba (2012) UKZN aims at treating SADC students like home students for fees and accommodation.

The SADC technical committee on certification and accreditation (TCCA) has recently initiated the process of establishing a regional qualifications framework known as the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) (Hoosen*et al*., 2009). According to Hoosen*et al*. (2009:14) "Among the 14 SADC countries, only three countries have a national qualifications framework (Mauritius, Botswana and South Africa) while one (Lesotho) was in the process of implementing one". This alludes to the fact that almost ten SADC countries are yet to establish national qualifications which might impact on the rating of the national qualifications.

Another regional policy is that of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). According to Hoosen*et al*. (2009) the IUCEA is a regional inter-governmental organization established by Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Its aim is to facilitate contact between the universities of East Africa, providing a forum for discussion on a range of academic and other matters pertaining to higher education, and helping to maintain high and comparable academic standards (Hoosen*et al*., 2009). The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is another regional group of 15 West African countries. The mission of the ECOWAS is to promote economic integration and development and members have signed a protocol on Education and Training during the first Decade of Education for Africa (1997-2006) for cooperation in education (Hoosen*et al*., 2009).

2.3.4. South African policies

In South Africa there has not been a clear policy on international students as South Africa is still grappling with the need to define internationalization. According to Kishun (2007) the lack of a clear definition of an international student is bedevilling the development of a national policy on internationalization in South Africa. Kishun (2007:464) reiterates that "there is almost no reference to the term internationalization in the context or indexes of some of the most relevant policy documents dealing with higher education transformation". Thus there is need for South Africa to adopt a national policy for international students which will make it possible for the easy integration of internationalization into all the South African Universities.

According to Kishun (2007) there is need for a comprehensive national policy with respect to the internationalization of higher education that will integrate policy objectives and strategies in all higher education institution sectors to meet them. It is not far from the truth to reiterate that South Africa is facing developmental challenges some 20 years into democracy. Internationalisation of education in South Africa with a recognised policy for international students can go in a long way in averting some of the developmental challenges being faced by South Africa. This above point is highlighted by Kishun (2007) who asserted that if international education is to contribute to development challenges that South Africa faces, then it should ideally be considered an important part of higher education planning, implementation and evaluation with an appropriate policy framework in place.

Despite the fact that there is no overarching policy in South Africa specifically for international students there remains one important policy which affects international students which is the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002. The most relevant and important section of the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002 is section 13 which pertains to study permits. The South African Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002, section 13 stipulates that:

13. (1) A study permit may be issued to a foreigner intending to study in the Republic for longer than three months by—

(a) The Department, as prescribed, or, at the option of the applicant,

(b) The Department through the registrar's office or a designated official of an institution of learning where the foreigner intends to study, provided that such institution—

(i) Has been approved by and is in good standing with the Department;

(ii) Certifies that it has received guarantees to its satisfaction that such foreigner's tuition fees will be paid;

(iii) Has received the prescribed guarantees that such foreigner will have sufficient means to support himself or herself while in the Republic;

(iv) In the case of a minor, provides the name of a person present in South Africa who is, or has accepted to act, as such minor's guardian while in the Republic;

(v) Undertakes to provide a prescribed periodic certification that such foreigner is satisfactorily performing his or her curriculum of study; and

(vi) Undertakes to notify the Department when such foreigner has completed his or her studies, or is no longer performing them satisfactorily.

(2) When so requested by, and after consultation with, the Department of Education, the Department shall determine an ad hoc fee for the issuance of study permits in respect of institutions publicly funded or subsidised.

(3) A study permit does not entitle the holder to conduct work, provided that—

(a) A study permit holder may undertake part-time work for a period not exceeding the prescribed period, if the permit holder is attending a higher education institution;

(b) The work referred to in paragraph *(a)* may include temporary or full time work during the academic vacation periods.

(c) The Department may, in appropriate cases, authorise the holder of a study permit to conduct work as practical training in a field related to that of his or her studies.

In addition to the Immigration Act of 2002, Act No. 13 of 2002, it is crucial to highlight the fact that the South African Department of Home Affairs has published the Draft Immigration Regulations 2014. For the purpose of this study I will focus on the relevant section 12 of the Draft Immigration Regulations of 2014 which solely focus on Study Permits. This section stipulates that:

12. (1) an applicant for a study visa to study at a learning institution shall, in addition to the submitted Form 8 illustrated in Annexure A, submit-

(a) An official letter confirming provisional acceptance at the learning institution and the duration of the course;

(b) An undertaking by the Registrar of the learning institution to-

(i) Provide proof of registration as contemplated in the relevant legislation within 30 days of registration; or

(ii) In the event of failure to register by the closing date, forthwith provide the Director-General with a notification of failure to register;

(iii) Immediately notify the Director-General when the applicant is no longer registered with such institution; and

(iv) Notify the Director-General that the applicant has completed his/her studies or requires to extent such period of study.

(2) Subject to section 13(1) of the Act-

(a) Visas issued for studies at higher education and training institutions shall be issued for the duration of the course, but not exceeding four years;

(3) The holder of a study visa at a higher education learning institution learning as defined in section 1 of the Higher Education Act may conduct part-time work for a period not exceeding 20 hours per week.

(4) A study visa issued in terms of the Act shall automatically lapse if the holder thereof fails to register or de-registered with the learning institution at any time during the period for which his or her visa is issued or, if any undertakings referred to in sub regulation (1) (b) are not met.

The immigration Act of 2002 has done little to attract international students to South Africa as international students view this act as stringent and cumbersome in the application of study permits. According to Kishun (2007:461) "South Africa's Immigration Act of 2002 ushered in a new era of managing the movement of people, though it is not sufficiently flexible to attract the high level skills that the country needs." Even the 2014 Draft Immigration Amendment Act is not flexible enough to attract international students to come and study in South Africa. Muthuki (2013:115) further substantiates on the above point by pointing out that "At the state level, there has been increasing stringent immigration controls from the department of Home Affairs in terms of the following: study permits, visa acquisition and renewal and repatriation requirements".

2.3.5. University of KwaZulu-Natal policies

The University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan 2007-2016 sets out goals and strategies to promote internationalization. One of the goals of the University of KwaZulu-Natal 1.2 is that of promoting internationalization. Under this goal the University will promote the concept of internationalization at home. This will be achieved by implementing teaching strategies that draw on the experiences of incoming staff and students and incorporate African knowledge, by cultivating respect for diverse cultural experiences and perspectives through the initiation and facilitation of inter-cultural events and discussion fora that include our own students and staff and by integrating international students and staff into the local environment (University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan 2007-2016). Another important and relevant factor to the research under study that is set out in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan (2007-2016) is of social cohesion. UKZN seeks to value and promote social cohesion through understanding tolerance and respect for diversity in all its forms by adopting, implementing and monitoring policies and procedures that aims to eliminate discrimination in all its manifestations which include ethnicity, race, gender, nationality, class and disability (University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan, 2007-2016).

Another very important policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal that in a way affects international students at this university is the Language Policy accepted in 2006. The policy for the University makes clear:

- The need to preserve and promote respect for, and proficiency in, the languages referred to in the Constitution, and other languages, including the heritage languages, that facilitate potentially valuable cultural, scientific and economic ties;

- The development of an awareness of multilingualism through an acknowledgement of all the official languages of KwaZulu-Natal, namely isiZulu, English and Afrikaans;

- The need to achieve for isiZulu the institutional and academic status of English;

- The provision of facilities to enable the use of isiZulu as a language of learning, instruction and administration.

- The need to foster research in language planning and development (University of KwaZulu-Natal Language Policy, 2006).

The UKZN language policy section 2 and 3 stipulate that:

2. Principles guiding the University's language policy

2.1 The University's learning, teaching, and research must continue to be of the highest quality and to be recognised as such nationally and internationally.

2.2 The University's language policy is informed by the national and provincial policy requirements.

2.3 The language policy is in accordance with the University's vision and mission statement which includes the injunction to promote and foster tolerance and respect for diverse cultural and social values.

2.4 The University recognises the value of the English language as an international language of scholarship and the main language of administration and business at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

2.5 The University equally recognises the importance of isiZulu as a custodian of culture, heritage, and tradition and as a means of communication.

2.6 The University recognises the importance of the Afrikaans linguistic and cultural tradition and of the Afrikaans language as a means of communication.

2.7 The University recognises that the languages and traditions of the South African population of Indian origin enhance the cultural richness of the Province.

2.8 The University intends to develop the use of isiZulu as a language of instruction and communication and it is the responsibility of the Faculties, in consultation with the University Languages Board, to determine and affect the process.

2.9 The policy of multilingualism calls for the active cultivation of respect for diversity in language and culture.

2.10 University policy on language will be driven by leadership and example.

3. The development of languages of instruction of the University

3.1 The University acknowledges the position of English as the dominant language of instruction and believes it will be necessary to work with the status quo while developing isiZulu for use in all higher education functions.

3.2 The University will develop isiZulu for use in instruction as part of a medium- to long-term strategy to promote bilingualism. For this purpose the University shall draw up a language plan setting out details of implementation such as time frames and costing.

3.3 The promotion of isiZulu for use in instruction will require the development of dictionaries and other teaching and learning materials. To achieve this, the University shall work closely with PANSALB, the Ministry of Education and the Department of Arts and Culture.

3.4 The successful implementation of the language policy will depend on the injection, over a period of time, of substantial financial resources from the State, as undertaken in the Language Policy for Higher Education.

3.5 In order to ensure that language does not act as a barrier to access and success, the University shall provide language and academic literacy development programmes in English and isiZulu (UKZN Language Policy, 2006).

According to Turner (2012:30) "the UKZN has been driving an aggressive language policy which culminated in the formal launch of the UKZN Language Board on the 4th of November 2011". The UKZN Language Board was mandated to conduct and co-ordinate research on bilingualism and bilingual education, to enable the development of isiZulu and to provide the facilities that enable the use of isiZulu as a language of learning, instruction and administration (Turner, 2012). According to Mashiya (2010) UKZN adopted the Language Policy of 2006 as a medium of learning, instruction and administration which was largely influenced by the need of such a policy at the provincial level of KZN.

To support the adoption of the language policy at UKZN the University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan, (2007-2016) states that in this era of rapid globalisation and in the context of vast

and powerful forces of cultural imperialism, the local socio-cultural context requires that UKZN shoulder the responsibility of ensuring the development of large-scale intellectual enterprises relating to local languages like isiZulu. UKZN seeks to act as a protector of the indigenous languages from the scourge of globalisation which has to some extent eroded the indigenous languages. Thus UKZN will promote multilingualism in the process of curriculum review and transformation while English will be the primary academic language, the development and use of isiZulu as a medium of instruction will also be promoted with associated resources (University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan, 2007-2016).

The adoption of the Language Policy at UKZN was lauded in some sections of the media, government and the country at large as it was seen as a positive step towards the elevation of the indigenous languages into the mainstream tertiary institutions as medium of learning and administration. This point is supported by Turner (2012) who pointed out that the government language policies and intended implementation plans to rectify the serious decline in the status of African languages in South Africa to date must be lauded and acknowledged. On the other hand the adoption of the Language Policy at UKZN has been met with some criticism with various scholars criticising the timing of the adoption of such a policy. According to Turner (2012:33) "Introducing isiZulu as a compulsory language course at the level of higher education is already far too late in the learner's career". This above point might be true to international students who would have grown speaking their own home language and it is rather difficult for them to learn another language and be able to speak it fluently. Lafon cited in Turner (2012) reiterates that "children learn language naturally by being exposed to them early in a social and family environment". As such in adults it is rather hard for them to learn and master a new language that they have not been exposed to when growing up. Thus this UKZN Language Policy to a large extent negatively affects international students who will battle to learn and master isiZulu although to some extent this policy represents an opportunity for international students to learn a local language which will help them in future if they are to work in South Africa.

2.3.6. Conclusion

In conclusion the literature review in this part discussed policies that affect the international students starting from a broad international level to specifically focusing on South Africa and in particular UKZN. In South Africa there is need for the Higher Education Sector and other

relevant stakeholders to come up with a comprehensive and integrative national policy document that comprehensively seeks to provide the way forward for internationalization. The lack of a clear definition of international students in South Africa and the lack of policy impact negatively on international students. International students studying in South Africa face a great deal of challenges but for these challenges to be addressed sufficiently and adequately there is need for a clear policy on international students. I also discussed in detail the Immigration Act of 2002 and the Immigration Act of 2014 specifically focusing on the study permit application sections of these acts. I then focused on the policy document for international students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal which is found in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan 2007-2016. Lastly I turned my attention on the Language Policy of University of KwaZulu-Natal adopted in 2006 which seeks to promote isiZulu as one of the languages to be used for learning, instruction and administration. I also discussed some of the positive and negative effects of adopting the isiZulu language at University of KwaZulu-Natal towards the international students. The following section deals with the experiences of international students.

2.4. International students' experiences

2.4.1. Reasons for studying in foreign universities

There have been various studies done on the experiences of international students studying in another country. To start with it is crucial to understand the various reasons that drive international students to study in foreign countries. According to Wilkins and Huisman (2011) previous research found that the country and institution choices of international students are greatly influenced by recommendations they receive from others who have experience of undertaking higher education overseas. In this regard the international students are attracted to international universities from the recommendations from their friends or family members who would have studied at these universities. Wilkins and Huisman (2011:61) postulate that "For Western universities, it is of utmost importance to satisfy their international students, who can then encourage the next generation of international students to attend those same institutions".

Harrison (2011) states that the grown in the number of international students in Anglophone countries has been driven by the students seeking tuition in English, provision that was perceived

to be of high quality and qualifications that are globally recognized. Chimucheka (2013) agrees with Harrison (2011) by pointing out that the use of English attracts many students from other countries to study in South Africa as they will not be forced to learn other languages as is the case in some other countries. Singh (2013:90) state that "other universities attract foreign students for various reasons including location in relation to neighbouring countries, economic problems in neighbouring countries and programmes offered by the individual universities". As pointed out above some countries may be going through turmoil economically and politically and this might drive international students to study in foreign countries. A good example are the wars going on in countries such as DRC, Sudan and other African countries which makes learning and studying in these countries difficult thus driving these students to study in other countries.

In Zimbabwe over the last ten years, the economic and political challenges, hyper- inflation and human rights violations have forced students to cross the border into South Africa to seek education (Singh, 2013). This is not the only reason that drives the Zimbabwean students to come and study in South Africa, the other reason is the close proximity of South Africa to Zimbabwe as they share the same border (Chimucheka, 2013). Other reasons for choosing South Africa as the destination of study by international students are the "proven quality of the country's universities and the international standing in their academics and qualifications" (Chimucheka, 2013:92).

It is crucial to highlight that not only are students driven to various foreign universities by some of the reasons I mentioned above but the foreign universities recruit international students for various reasons. Many countries such as Australia, Canada, UK and USA recruit international students in order to earn profits by charging high fees (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Another reason for the recruitment of international students is that they "provide research and teaching services for modest compensation" (Altbach and Knight, 2007:292). Wilkins and Huisman (2011) asserts that the number of foreign students at a university can be understood as a degree of prestige in the global marketplace with these students contributing to research projects, research output and teaching. International students also spend significant amounts of money in host countries and bring in an estimated $12 billion to the US economy (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Devoid of the fee income from international students, many universities would have

money shortages, and future progression and investment would be difficult.Due to the phenomenon of globalisation various countries have been motivated to recruit international students for the sole reason of tapping into the global market.

2.4.2. Adjustment problems

It is always difficult to adjust and adapt to a new environment when coming from a different environment. The adjustment problems faced by international students studying in countries other than their own have received much attention from various literature and research studies in the most developed world. According to Shupe (2007) intercultural adjustment has captivated the interest of researchers and other scholars in a variety of fields, from communication and business to anthropology, psychology, education and social work. Many international students experience quite stressful adjustments to their new environment which might impact negatively on their academic learning. Intercultural adjustment represents a life change accompanied by misunderstandings, uncertainty and failed expectations, it is typically experienced as quite stressful (Shupe, 2007).

To add on to their adjustment problems, some universities offer no help to make the adjustment of international students smooth. According to Lee and Rice (2007) international students confront an array of cultural adjustments, although it is quite baffling that the responsibility is often left to the student to adjust or adapt to the host culture rather than for institutions to understand and try to accommodate their unique needs. This leads to isolation and alienation of international students and they will not be able to forge meaningful relationships which might make their adjustment unproblematic. The adjustment problem is further exacerbated by language barriers, discrimination, xenophobia and other problems encountered by international students.

Various studies on international students' adjustment have found that men tend to adjust much easier than women when studying at a foreign institution. Maundeni (1999) study found that female African students abroad found their adjustment more difficult than their male counterparts. The findings of Maundeni's study are consistent with Ching*et al*.'s 1998 cited in Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) findings of different stress levels for females and males Chinese international students, which makes it rather salient for the inclusion of gender in the

study of international students' adjustment. Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela's (2012) study of international students, found that international students' adjustment problems differ significantly according to country/region of origin, age and gender. Thus gender cannot be ignored as it plays an important role in the adjustment of international students as they study at a foreign institution.

2.4.3. Language

Language may pose a major problem faced by international students when they study in a foreign country. Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) expound that in the studies of international students so far have found that language has always been identified as a major problem. Although most universities use English as the medium of teaching, some students come from non-English speaking countries; also local students tend to communicate in their local language, which presents a problem for international students. According to Chen (cited in Smith and Khawaja, 2011) second language anxiety is a stressor that interacts with other stressors in both academic and socio-cultural domains. Smith and Khawaja (2011) further state that in the academic domain, language barriers can impact on assignment writing, understanding lectures, oral and written examinations and the ability to ask questions in class. Language barriers can impede international students' attempts to make friends and to interact with locals (Smith and Khawaja, 2011). Kono's (1999) study on international students from 13 different countries in America found out that language and social factors were the most problematic areas.

Local languages have also been used to discriminate international students by the local students and staff at the universities. In a research at Venda University, Singh (2013) found that language is used to socially exclude foreign students from the normal university experience. One of the respondents in Singh's (2013) research reiterated that lecturers spoke in local languages and excluded foreign students when they were aware that there are foreign students in class. Black local students used local words that were abusive and inhumane and used local languages in the presence of international students so as to exclude them.

Language is also used as a structural tool to oppress international students. According to Mullaly (2010) language does not have the properties of absolute truth but is historically, culturally, and socially contextualized and largely reflects the interests and world views of dominant groups. Language is used to discriminate and oppress international students in South Africa. In the study

of Singh (2013) at the University of Venda a significant percentage (42%) of foreign students said they were excluded from class discussions because they were conducted in a local language which they did not understand. Not only was local language used to discriminate against international students, but it was also used to pass abusive remarks towards them. One international student in Singh's (2013) study pointed out that his South African classmates showed a great dislike for his presence and that their comments and words were so abusive and inhumane that he could not write them or imagine them.

Stereotypes against international students are rampant and are used as a cultural expression of oppression. According to Mullaly (2010:110) "a stereotype is a biased, oversimplified, universal, and inflexible conception of a social group". International students just like immigrants in South Africa are stereotyped and called various inhumane and abusive names. International students and immigrants in South Africa are called "Amakwere-kwere". Singh's (2013) study found that international students are called in public "Amakwere-kwere", and one Zimbabwean student who wanted to form a study group with a female student was told that she could not befriend a kwere-kwere. For an international student to be labeled 'Amakwere-kwere' is very harmful and destructive to their well-being and might have negative repercussions. Mullaly (2010) asserts that stereotypes make prejudice, oppression and even violence at a personal level more acceptable.

To support the above Muthuki's (2013) study found the inability of international students to speak the local isiZulu language created a gap between them and the black South African students, and they always had to contend with being called names such as Makwere-kwere. This to a large extent is dehumanizing to the international students as it makes them feel like unwanted outsiders who have intruded space that they were not supposed to intrude and it makes their university experience unbearable. Name calling of international students makes them lose their self-esteem and dignity which might exacerbate the stress that they encounter in trying to adapt to university life.

2.4.4. Financial and accommodation problems

Most international students studying at a foreign institution at times face financial hardships, which to a large extent intensifies other challenges that they might be facing. According to Smith

and Khawaja (2011:704) "studies have shown that financial problems are experienced by the majority of international students". In addition Li and Kaye (1998) study found that international students in the UK report that students from Asia and other developing countries experience much greater difficulty than students from Western Europe in terms of finances and housing accommodation. There are two categories of international students – those on scholarship and those who are self-funded. Those on scholarship are financed and might not face financial difficulties, unlike those that pay their own fees. Self-funded international students are the majority compared to those on scholarship and they are the hardest hit with financial challenges. According to Altbach and Knight (2007) more than two million international students globally are self-funded which means that they pay for their own fees with the assistance of their families in some instances. Financial hardships faced by international students mostly those that are self-funded have forced most of them to work odd jobs in restaurants and hotels in order to finance their fees, accommodation and food. During the day they will be attending classes and at night working in restaurants which is very tiring and might impact negatively on their academic performance.

International students also face the challenge of accommodation when studying at a foreign institution. Many studies have shown that international students battle with acquiring residence on campus which ultimately leads to difficulties in adjusting at that particular foreign institution. Practical issues such as accommodation and transportation have also been highlighted in other qualitative studies (Bradley, 2000; Poyrazli and Grahame, 2007). In Singh's (2013) study international students raised the concern that in the formulation of policies on residence there was no consideration about allocation of rooms for international students at the beginning of the year. Most international students come to the country of study for the first time and do not know anyone. It is thus important that they be allocated residence so that they are able to adapt easily to the new environment.

Shindondola's (2002) study also found that international students faced the challenge of securing on campus residence and just like in Singh's (2013) study the international students suggested that the university should take international students into account when allocating places in residence. Accommodation problems can have a negative impact on the learning of international students as some of them will be left with no choice but to live in private accommodations which

are far from the campus. Living off campus and far from the campus will not only affect the international students academically but also they will be at risk of crime being perpetuated against them. Shindondola (2002) indicated that 18 out of the 25 respondents had been victims of crime at least once since their arrival in South Africa. The study further found out that being a foreigner made it more likely to be victims of crime and violence (Shindondola, 2002).

2.4.5. Pressure from sponsors

International students are mainly self –funded but quite a number of them are sponsored. This can put pressure on them to perform to the expectations of their families and sponsors. Smith and Khawaja (2011:703) assert that "international students may be pressured by their family and sponsoring university in their country of their origin to achieve a high level of academic performance which if not obtained can aggravate the acculturative stress experienced by the student". This might have a negative effect on the students as the pressure and high expectations exerted on them by their families will affect them and might contribute to their failure in their academic studies. Some of the sponsors put pressure on the international students by putting in place stringent requirements such as taking away the sponsorship when the student fails as such the international students will be pressurised to academically succeed which at the end of the day heighten the stress experienced by international students. This was highlighted by Mudhovozi's (2011) study which found that some students (28, 6%) were anxious about failure as they did not want to fail a single course because doing so was going to result in the withdrawal of bursaries.

2.4.6. Culture shock

The term culture shock refers to the idea that entering a new culture is potentially a confusing and disorientating experience (Furnham and Bochner, 1986: 12). International students face cultural shock in the host country as they are faced with a different culture alien to their own which might have a negative impact on their adaptation and adjustment. This point is supported by Mudhovozi (2011:293) who expounds that "presumably many students experience culture shock upon entry into a new country and culture". Mudhovozi (2011) further propounds that culture shock can be expressed through homesickness, irritability, sadness, fear and frustration.

Being exposed to an alien culture which one has never been exposed to in their lives is quite shocking and may induce feelings of loneliness and isolation exacerbated by the fact that one

will not be able to fit in that culture. Compounded by the fact that these international students will be having other challenges that they will be facing as they study in a foreign institution may unwittingly lead to high levels of stress which will at the end of the day impact negatively on their studies. Zhang's study (cited in Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela, 2012) study found out that cultural differences significantly impinged upon academic adjustment of Chinese students. Some of the cultural difference things that will be felt by international students include food and lifestyle. This was revealed in Mudhovozi's (2011) study which indicated that some of his respondents (28, 6%) did not like the food that was served at the university as the diet was different and it tasted differently to what they were used to.

2.4.7. Discrimination

International students studying in a foreign country face discrimination which at times translates into xenophobic attacks. According to Smith and Khawaja (2011) international students from Asia, Africa, India, Latin America and Middle East often report significant perceived discrimination compared to domestic students. A study done by Chimucheka (2013) on Zimbabwean students found that discrimination among students and by staff was also said to be a challenge faced by international students studying in South Africa. International students face discrimination because of their nationality, race, ethnicity and cultural difference which negatively impact on their psychological functioning and well-being. This came out from the study of Singh (2013) which found that one Zimbabwean student was denied services at a public hospital mainly because she could not speak Sepedi and another Zimbabwean Masters student was excluded from attending a conference in Eastern Cape on account of her nationality. Feelings and experiences of discrimination can impact negatively on international students' adaptation and have been linked with poor psychological well-being and depression (Smith and Khawaja, 2011).

Powerlessness on the part of international students gives rise to discrimination being perpetuated against them. Chimucheka (2013) found that discrimination towards international students by staff members and local students was a major challenge. Singh's (2013) study found that the international students experienced discrimination from staff members. Sutton (2002) conducted a study at North Carolina State University where participants admitted to experiencing or knowing of international students that had experienced discrimination in overt and covert forms. One

Zimbabwean student in Singh's (2013) study stated that his application form went missing and he was told that in the formulation of policies on residence there is no consideration of international students. Singh (2013) study also found that a significant percentage (42%) of the sample also experienced some form of discrimination in relation to the allocation of residence.

Another aspect of discrimination that emerged from Muthuki's (2013) study was that of taking away the distinction of being Africans on African international students as they are regarded only as foreigners. Muthuki (2013) study found that there was a distinction between African international students and local South African students which appeared to take a new dimension at the UKZN Human Resource department as there was a race section in the UKZN remuneration forms where a distinction was made between 'foreigner' and 'African' in the race section. The "term foreigner is used as a distinct category and serves to exclude the foreign students of African origin from identifying themselves as Africans and confines the African identity to black local South Africans" (Muthuki, 2013:115). This is discriminatory to a large extent as African international students are denied their African origin and can only be viewed as foreigners thus unfairly and unjustifiably stealing their African origin.

2.4.8. Xenophobia

According to Muthuki (2013:112) the negotiation of being a foreign African national in a South African tertiary institution is further problematized by the phenomenon of xenophobia". Xenophobia refers to the strong feeling of dislike or fear of people from other countries (Onah, 2011). Hatred of international students studying in a country other than their own by local students is rampant in universities around the world. Shindondola (2002) study found that international students experienced xenophobia. Harrison and Peacock's (2010) study in England found that home students perceive threats to their academic success and group identity from the presence of international students on campus and in the classroom. Cross and Johnson's (2008) study indicated that xenophobia has serious repercussions and it makes South Africa a very intimidating society. An excerpt from one foreign student interviewed by Cross and Johnson (2008:311) reads as: " they always feel like you are using their money to maybe develop yourself, they don't understand the concept of foreigners coming into their country and most students who are South African are still very much xenophobic".

One Zimbabwean student studying at the University of Venda cited in Singh's (2013) study said that she could not secure postgraduate accommodation because she was told that some students were not willing to stay with a Zimbabwean. Another student cited an incident involving the local police who refused to assist a group of four girls after they had indicated that they could not speak the local language (Singh, 2013). A Zimbabwean student was attacked verbally by a residence manager who shouted that this was not Mugabe's University and that the student should not bring her Zimbabwean tendencies to her office (Singh, 2013). Another foreign student at the University of Venda was told in a lecture hall to go back to his country and that Zimbabweans should be removed from activities of the international students because they were not international, based on their appearance (Singh, 2013). Muthuki's (2013) study found that foreign African students experienced xenophobia when local students and sometimes staff members speak to them in local languages. International students' experience of xenophobia takes a non-violent form "but they bear the emotional and psychological scars of xenophobic encounters" (Singh, 2013:99). There were some isolated incidents when foreign students were attacked physically as one student said that he was once stabbed mainly because he could not relate to six Shangani guys (Singh, 2013).

According to Mullaly (2010:60) "almost all oppressed groups suffer systematic violence simply because they are subordinate in the social pecking order". This violence not only includes physical attacks but include harassment, ridicule and intimidation, all of which serve the purpose of stigmatizing group members (Mullaly, 2010). Although xenophobic violence against international students might be hidden nevertheless it is happening under our noses in the universities. According to Singh (2013) "open acts of xenophobia within communities are widely reported and more visible, xenophobia amongst students is more subtle and can only be uncovered by establishing the individual experiences of students who are willing to share these experiences". Singh (2013) further pointed out that university students are not exempt from the xenophobic behavior that has been occurring in South African communities.

Muthuki (2013) further substantiate that migrants are by their very status of being foreigners vulnerable to xenophobia in South Africa. Women foreign students suffer the double tragedy of violence associated with xenophobia. Muthuki (2013:119) states that "Foreign women in South Africa face double jeopardy since they are at the intersection of the two groups that are so

vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and violence". Most of the women students interviewed in Muthuki's (2013) study expressed their vulnerability in South Africa in that they could be easily taken advantage of and even raped in comparison to their male counterparts. Violence against foreign nationals and violence against women are two forms of violence that are internationally condemned but are normalized in ways in which the South African society interacts with minority and vulnerable groups (Muthuki, 2013). International students also experience xenophobia from government officials mainly the police and immigration officials who at best must protect them from this scourge of xenophobia. This was highlighted by Shindondola's (2002)) study which found out that international students from African countries were abused by police and immigration officials.

2.4.9. Study Visa Application

There are various studies that have been done on the study permit application by international students and there are documented difficulties that they face in applying for study permits mostly in South Africa. Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela's (2012) study found that out of the six items under immigration (IMP) the problem item Friendliness Immigration officials (n=79%-87.8) emerged as the most problematic. This study showed that immigration officials working at the Home Affairs were very unfriendly and rude to international students wanting to apply for study permits. The fact that immigration officials are mean and unfriendly to international students has negative repercussions for South African Universities in their ability to attract and retain a huge number of international students. According to Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) the image created by the immigration officials who work for the Home Affairs to a larger extent affects the country's image that has the potential of catastrophically jeopardizing South African Universities chances of attracting international students.

Not only are the immigration officials at the Home Affairs cold and unfriendly to international students applying for study permits but also that there are stringent measures that have been incorporated by the Home Affairs department. Muthuki (2013) study on international students found out that these stringent processes and requirements are perceived as punitive and governed by xenophobia by most international students that she interviewed. This is in line with Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela's (2012) study which found that immigration officials are hostile towards international students. One of the respondents in Muthuki's (2013) study, Koffie from

DRC decried the bureaucratic process involved in acquiring a study permit and advocated for the International Students Office to be more proactive and supportive in assisting foreign students to renew their study permits. Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) further content that if South African Universities are going to be regarded as institutions of choice, then immigration officials need to show more friendliness otherwise they will scare away potential students.

International students seeking to study in U.S.A are also facing burdensome and stringent measures in applying for study visas. According to Altbach (2004) immigration regulations and interviews have become burdensome enough to discourage students from applying to U.S. institutions. Lee and Rice (2007) further state that those international students that persist in applying for study visas in U.S.A have encountered mounting fees and delays since 9/11 which diminish their chances of filling the university seats they were offered and visas denied entirely block some from enrollment. This has caused some international students to shun studying in U.S.A as it was cumbersome and rather difficult to obtain a study visa as the immigration laws are very stringent. According to Lee and Rice (2007:385) " words of such experiences move quickly among populations of prospective international students who weigh the time and resources spent in seeking entrance to the U.S against the less onerous regulations of other countries, such as Canada and Australia".

2.4.10. Positive experiences

Although most international students encounter negative experiences but there are some who do have positive experiences of studying in a foreign county. According to Mudhovozi (2011) some students may find living in a new country or culture exciting, fulfilling and stimulating. It is crucial to highlight the fact that international students' experiences are different as some may have positive experiences of studying abroad whilst others may have negative experiences. Chimucheka (2013) found that 80% of foreign students who participated in his study mentioned that studying in South Africa enhanced their international perspectives.

95% of his respondents mentioned that there are experts in various fields of study in South Africa and this was a benefit of studying in South Africa (Chimucheka, 2013). South Africa is viewed as a country which is the most developed in Africa which was pointed out by the 55% of the participants in Chimucheka's (2013) study. With all the participants in Chimucheka's (2013)

study indicating that studying in a foreign country allows personal development and transformation. In a country such as the melting pot or plural society of South Africa being an international student in such a country can enhance international students' understanding of cultural differences which leads to personal growth and development (Chimucheka, 2013). Other positive experiences for international students are the friendships that they form at the foreign university which helps them to cope with some of the challenges that they will be facing at the institution. These friendships can be formed with the students from their countries that they came with or with the local students in the host country. Mudhovozi (2011) study indicated that peer support was important to successful coping with adjustment at the host institution as indicated by 57, 1% of his participants.

2.4.11. Conclusion

This part of the literature review discussed studies that have been done on the experiences of international students at various tertiary institutions. I first focused on the reasons that drive international students in deciding to study at other universities in foreign countries and these reasons include pull factors such as close proximity and availability of world standard facilities. Push factors include economic meltdown in their own countries or political instability which pushes them to seek tertiary education in other countries. After reviewing literature on the reasons for international students choosing to study in a foreign country I focused my attention on the experiences of international students. For this part I discussed some of the challenges that international students face such as adjustment problems, language barriers, discrimination, and xenophobia. Last but not least I focused my attention on some of the positive experiences of the international students. These include the availability of various experts in South African universities and also personal development and transformation.

Chapter 3- Research Methodology

3. 1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the research methodology. The qualitative paradigm, which was used in this research to better understand the experiences of Zimbabwean students studying at UKZN, is described. I elucidate the use of the descriptive research design and the two sampling strategies of snowballing and purposive sampling that I used. I also detail the use of the semi-structured interview technique as a data collection strategy and the thematic content analysis that I used to analyse the data. After which I focus my attention on the trustworthiness of the study and provide insights into the important phenomenon of critical reflexivity. Lastly I outline some of the limitations of this study.

3.2. Research Methodology

I utilized the qualitative research paradigm to understand the experiences of Zimbabwean students at the UKZN. Qualitative research allows the research to elicit participant accounts of meaning, experience and perceptions (De Vos *et al*., 2002). Qualitative research seeks to explore, describe and analyse the meaning of individual lived experience on "how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it and talk about it with others" (Patton, 2002:104 cited in Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Another reason I used qualitative paradigm was that it involves an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern human behaviour (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). The fact the qualitative research aims at understanding a person's experiences in a specific context and how they manage the situation or circumstance (Willig, 2001) was another reason I utilized this technique. In addition qualitative research tends to view social worlds as holistic and complex and it enables the engagement of researchers in systematic reflection on the conduct of the research and to remain sensitive to how their own biographies shape their studies (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). These were convincing enough reasons for me to adopt this paradigm to understand the experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN.

3.3. Research Design

I made use of the descriptive research design. This enabled the description of phenomena accurately, through narrative type descriptions (Terre Blanche *et al*., 2006). The descriptive research design "accepts the value of context and setting, and that searches for a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon under study" (Marshall and Rossman, 2011:92). The descriptive design made it possible for me to understand the lived experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN. For a study such as mine which focused on understanding the lived experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN it was important to take into consideration the participants thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and assumptions. The descriptive research design allowed for a deeper understanding of their experiences and for me to represent their voices in text through rich descriptions of their accounts.

3.4. Sampling strategy

I used purposive and snowballing sampling strategies in which 15 Zimbabwean students at UKZN Howard College were chosen who fit the purpose of this study. The sample size comprised of undergraduate and post graduate students from different disciplines and there was a fair representation of both males and females. According to Terre Blanche *et al*. (2006:334) "Purposive or judgemental sampling in qualitative research the investigator or interviewer selects cases that can shed light on the object of the study". I also used snowballing sampling technique by encouraging my initial participants to link me to other participants that were willing to take part in my study. Snowballing according to De Vos *et al*. (2002) "involves approaching a single case that is involved in the phenomenon to be investigated, in order to gain information on other similar persons".

Although these two sampling strategies have limitations but the strengths and opportunities offered in using these out-weighted the limitations. The strength of the snowballing sampling strategy was that it allowed me to choose sample cases that were knowledgeable of other relevant cases and it was very advantageous and useful. Monette*et al*. (1998) asserted that snowballing technique is especially useful for sampling sub-cultures were the members interact with each other as is the case with the Zimbabwean students that interact and know each other. On the other hand purposive sampling strategy being "the most important type of non-probability

sampling" (Mitchell *et al*., 2005), allowed me the opportunity to use my judgement and prior knowledge to choose my participants who would best serve the purpose of the study (Monette*et al*., 1998).

3.5. Data collection technique

The semi-structured research interview technique was used in this research (See appendix 4). This was arrived at mainly because researchers use semi-structured interviews to gain a detailed picture of a participant's belief about, or perceptions or accounts of a particular topic (De Vos *et al*., 2002). Although the semi-structured interview technique has some limitations such as the responses may be misconstrued or untruthful and in some instances the participants may be unwilling to share and the researcher may ask questions that do not give the desired responses from the participants (De Vos *et al*., 2002). However the strengths of the semi-structured interview technique outweighed its limitations and that was the reason I employed this interview technique. Some of the strengths of the semi-structured interview technique included the fact that it allowed me and the participants much more flexibility and it also gave me the room to follow up particular interesting avenues that emerged in the interview (De Vos *et al*., 2002).

 The semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the 15 Zimbabwean students were tape recorded with permission and consent from the participants. According to De Vos *et al*. (2002) if possible and if permission is obtained from the participants, the researcher should record interviews on tape or video. Tape recording of interviews allowed for a more detailed record than notes taken during interviews and allowed me to concentrate on how the interview proceeded without any distractions. (De Vos *et al*., 2002). Although tape recording has some disadvantages which include the participants unhappiness in being tape recorded nevertheless all my participants agreed to be tape recorded.

I started my interviews on the 25th of July 2014 after the University had commenced. I interviewed one participant per day as it was difficult to interview two participants or more per day because they were attending their lectures and busy with their studies. At times I had to postpone the interviews as some participants indicated that they wanted to study for tests or had assignments that were due to be submitted. I had to find suitable times that my participants were not busy. I did most of my interviews in the Social Work department access room which was

really quiet and convenient for tape recording. I did other interviews in the participants' homes. The interviews lasted 45 minutes to one hour. I made sure that after every interview I wrote down what I vividly remembered on some of the non- verbal behaviours communicated by the participants. I finished my interviews on the 18th of August 2014 and started my data analysis.

3.6. Method of data analysis

I used the qualitative thematic content analysis to analyse the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:79) thematic data analysis is a method for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data". I started my data analysis on the 19th of August and finished it on the 30th of September.

My data analysis followed the phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) which were:

1. Familiarising myself with data

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the researcher must have some prior knowledge of the data before analysis begins. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) assert that by the time the participant has finished collecting data, his/her analysis should already have started. I made sure I immersed myself in the data to the extent that I was very familiar to the "depth and breadth of the content". (Braun and Clarke, 2006:16). Immersion usually involves "repeated reading of the data, and reading the data in an active way-searching for meanings, patterns and so on" (Braun and Clarke, 2006:16). Moreover at this phase it was ideal for me to read through the entire data set at least once before I began my coding as my ideas and the identification of possible patterns were shaped as I read through. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) during this phase it is usually advisable to begin taking notes or marking ideas for coding that I will then go back to in subsequent phases. Another important aspect to note at this phase is that coding continues to be developed and defined throughout the entire analysis. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:141) " by the time you have finished you should know your data well enough to know more or less what kind of things can be found where, as well as what sorts of interpretations are likely to be supported by the data and what not".

Another aspect which was important in familiarising myself with my data was that of transcribing my interviews. According to Riesmann (1994) the process of transcription, while it

may be seen as time-consuming, frustrating and at times boring, can be an excellent way to start familiarising yourself with the data. As I was transcribing my interviews I was able to get a sense of my data and was able to start getting familiar with some aspects of my data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:17) transcription of data "requires a rigorous and thorough 'orthographic' transcript-a 'verbatim' account of all verbal (and sometimes nonverbal [e.g., coughs]) utterances". What is of essence is that the transcript essentially retains the information that one needs from the verbal account and in a way which is true to its original nature (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

2. Generating initial codes

This phase began when I read and familiarised myself with the data and generated an initial list of ideas about what is in the data and what was interesting about them. It essentially involved the production of initial codes from the data. Marshall and Rossman (2011:212) postulated that "coding data is the formal representation of analytical thinking". Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst, and refer to "the most basic segment or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998:63). In addition Braun and Clarke (2006) alluded to the fact that the process of coding was part of analysis as one will be organising his/her data into meaningful groups. I used the manual coding, which Braun and Clarke (2006:19) stated that "if coding manually, you can code your data by writing notes on the texts you are analysing, by using highlighter or coloured pen to indicate potential patterns or by using 'post-it' notes to identify segment of data". I used highlighters to identify emerging patterns or themes.

This entailed "working systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data item and identifying interesting aspects in the data items that may form the basis of repeated patterns (themes) across the data set" (Braun and Clarke, 2006:18). I was coding sentences, lines and phrases as is supported by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:143) who asserted that "you might code a phrase, a line, a sentence, a paragraph, identifying these 'textual bits' by virtue of their containing material that pertains to the themes under consideration". In coding I was breaking down a body of data into labelled relevant pieces "with a view to later

clustering the 'bits' of coded material together under the code heading and further analysing them both as a cluster and in relation to other clusters" (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999:143).

In addition I followed the key advice given by Braun and Clarke (2006:19) which entailed that

a) Code for as many potential themes/patterns as possible as the researcher does not know what might be interesting later.

(b) Code extracts of data inclusively –i.e. keep some of the surrounding data if relevant to avoid losing the context

c) Code individual extracts of data in as many different themes as they fit into - so an extract may be uncoded, coded once, or coded as many times as relevant.

Lastly it was important in this phase to ensure that all my actual data extracts were coded and then collated together within each code (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.   Searching for themes

I began phase 3 when all data have been initially coded and collated, and I had a long list of the different codes that I had identified across my data set. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) this phase refocuses the analysis at the broader level of themes and not the codes and involves sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. At this phase I started to analyse my codes and considered how different codes combined to form an overarching theme. I utilised visual representation in the form mind-maps and tables to sort my codes into themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) reiterate that it may be helpful at this phase to use visual representations to help you sort the different codes into themes and one might use tables, mind-maps or write the name of each code and a brief description on a separate piece of paper and play around with organising them into theme-piles. Moreover according to Braun and Clarke (2006) this phase is when you start thinking about the relationship between codes, between themes, and between different levels of themes (e.g., main overarching themes and sub-themes within them). Some initial codes may go on to form main themes, whereas others may form sub-themes, and others still may be discarded. After this phase I started seeing that my themes were divided into the negative and positive experiences experienced by the participants.

4.   Reviewing themes

At this phase I had initial themes that I had searched for in the preceding phase and these themes were not the final themes. In this phase I had to review and fine tune these themes in order to verify their applicability to my research. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) Phase 4 begins when you have devised a set of candidate themes, and it involves the refinement of those themes and it will become evident that some candidate themes are not really themes while others might collapse into each other. This phase involved two levels of refinement and fine tuning my themes. The first level according to Braun and Clarke (2006) involves reviewing at the level of the coded data extracts. This meant that I needed to read all the collated extracts for each theme, and considered whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern.

In level two of this phase I considered the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set. In this level according to Braun and Clarke (2006) you re-read your entire data set for two purposes, the first was to ascertain whether the themes work in relation to the data set and the second was to code any additional data within themes that has been missed in earlier coding stages. At the end of this phase I had a pretty good idea of the various themes I had and the way they fit into each other.

5.   Defining and naming themes

In this phase I had to define and further refine or fine tune the themes that I had to present for my analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) define and refine means identifying the essence of what each theme is about and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. At this phase it was important to consider how each theme fitted into a broader overall story that one is telling about his/her data in relation to the research questions so as to ensure there was not too much overlap between themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Considering this I focused my themes in relation to my research questions so I did not lose track of what the research is about, and to ensure that I coherently linked the themes, the research questions and the main aim of the research.

At this phase of my data analysis it was very important to consider whether each broad theme that I had identified contained sub-themes as "they can be useful for giving structure to a particularly large and complex theme, and also for demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning

within the data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006:22). After this phase I had identified my themes which included language barrier, xenophobia, financial challenges, being validated, friendship and family and others I will discuss in chapter 4.

3.7. Critical Reflexivity

The fact that I am a Zimbabwean student researching the experiences of Zimbabwean students at the UKZN necessitated critical reflexivity on my part. Critical reflexivity entails " careful consideration of the phenomenon under study as well the ways a researcher's own assumption and behaviour may be impacting the inquiry" (Watt, 2007:82). Meanwhile Cunliffe (2004) defines critical reflexive practice as embracing subjective understanding of reality as a basis for thinking more critically about the impact of our assumptions, values, and actions on others. Given my subject location it was very important for me to reflect critically on my own bias on the research which might impact on the research findings.

According to Carey (2009) from a researcher's personal perspective key forms of analytical reflexivity can include:

• Questioning preconceived assumptions made regarding any research topic.

• Querying possible stereotypes or prejudices held about participants or related groups, such as those transmitted through norms, dominant values, language or through personal experiences.

• Reflecting upon the learning process and findings as they evolve throughout the research process. How has new information gathered altered your beliefs, values and possible future practice?

Thus I was able to question and reflect on some of my preconceived assumptions and beliefs I had before the research and those that developed throughout my research. First and foremost for instance I had the assumption that all Zimbabwean students studying at UKZN came here knowing about UKZN but after doing my interviews I came to realise that not all knew about UKZN. Critical reflection was an important component that made me self-introspect and self-reflect on some of my initially held assumptions of this research which were proven to be untrue. I had initially assumed that prejudice and discrimination worked one way only, from local students toward Zimbabwean students which was proved untrue, as evidenced by the attitude of

moral superiority demonstrated by some of the Zimbabwean students. For me to be able to reflect critically I used a reflexive journal to keep track of my personal narrative of my ideas, thoughts, feelings and biases. By engaging in on-going dialogue with themselves through journal writing, researchers may be able to better determine what they know and how they think they came to know (Watt, 2007). Thus I started using a reflexive journal before and after my interviews with my participants and to date I have come to realise the importance of reflecting critically as it minimised my bias and made the research trustworthy. This point was supported by Watt (2007:84) who pointed out that "An introspective record of a researcher's work potentially helps them to take stock of biases, feelings, and thoughts, so they can understand how these may be influencing the research".

3.8. Trustworthiness

Validity and rigour were achieved by looking at the research trustworthiness. I focused on four components of trustworthiness which are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.8.1. Credibility

According to Thomas and Magilvy (2011:152) "a qualitative study is considered credible when it presents an accurate description or interpretation of human experience that people who also share the same experience would immediately recognise". To ensure the credibility of my research I did member checking which comprised of returning to the participants from whom data were collected to ensure that my interpretations were recognised by the participants as accurate representations of their experiences. After I had transcribed my data I made copies and went back to my participants for them to confirm that I had transcribed what they said in the interview and I had not distorted anything they said. I also reflected on my assumptions and biases through the process of reflexivity as evidenced in this chapter.

3.8.2. Transferability

Transferability is the ability to transfer research findings or methods from one group to another (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). Transferability was achieved in my study by the provision of in-

depth descriptions of the sample studied and the demographic characteristics of the participants. The geographical boundaries of the study were described in full which made it possible for the research findings or methods used to be transferred to another setting.

3.8.3. Dependability

Dependability of the study was achieved through the description of the purpose of the study, how and why the participants were chosen for the study, how the data were collected and how long the data collection lasted and how the data were analysed. I also provided a detailed description of the research methods in this chapter 3 making my research dependable.

3.8.4. Confirmability

According to Thomas and Malgvy (2011) confirmability occurs when credibility, transferability and dependability have been established. I achieved confirmability by using the process of reflexivity in which I reflected about my own biases and assumptions. I made use of a reflexive journal in which I wrote down my personal feelings and biases which helped in making this research bias free. I also made sure that my interviews were flexible and open and I allowed my participants to talk freely about their experiences by asking open ended questions without asking leading questions.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

It is crucial to point out that in the course of this research there was bound to emerge a lot of ethical problems or issues that needed to be addressed and attended to. According to De Vos *et al*. (2002) the fact that human beings are the objects of study in the social sciences, brings unique ethical problems to the fore that would never be relevant in the pure, clinical laboratory settings of the natural sciences. Babbie (2001) point out that anyone involved in research needs to be aware of the general agreements about what is proper and improper in scientific research. Marshall and Rossman (2011) reiterate that ethical research practice was grounded in the moral principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice. I made sure that I attended to all the ethical considerations such as doing no harm, getting informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity in reporting, gatekeeper consent, audio recording with consent from participants and

ensured that data was to be stored in a locked safe place and was to be destroyed after five years. Ethical clearance was granted from the UKZN Research Office. (See appendix 1)

3.9.1. Do no harm

According to De Vos *et al.* (2002) the research participants can be harmed in a physical or emotional manner. Beneficence which addresses the central dictum, first do no harm which means that the researcher does whatever he reasonably can to ensure their participants are not harmed by participating in their study (Marshall and Rossman, 2011) was upheld. The fact that I dealt with Zimbabwean students who might have gone through traumatic experiences due to their being foreigners studying in South Africa, it was crucial that I made sure that I did not harm my research participants in any way. This point is supported by Dane (1990) who claims that an ethical obligation rests with the researcher to protect subjects against any form of discomfort that may emerge, within reasonable limits from the research project. Thus it was important to inform my research participants about the discomfort that they might experience in this study so as to get informed consent from them about their willingness to participate in the study. According to De Vos *et al.* (2002) respondents should be thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation". I assured participants that should they experience discomfort I would provide support and make referrals if necessary. The participants really felt validated and were happy about the opportunity of participating and talking about their experiences as they study at UKZN.

3.9.2. Informed consent

Getting informed consent from the research participants is very important so as to enable the participants to be knowledgeable of what they are getting themselves into. According to De Vos *et al.* (2002:65) "Emphasis must be placed on accurate and complete information so that subjects will fully comprehend the investigation and consequently be able to make a voluntary thoroughly reasoned decision about their possible participation". Thus before the commencement of this research I made sure that I got informed consent from my research participants. I informed them about the purpose and aim of the research, the procedures I was going to follow and also informed them that the research process might elicit emotional reactions. I also assured them about confidentiality and their freedom to withdraw at any time from the research. These above

points are supported by Marshall and Rossman (2011:48) who state that through the informed consent form, the researcher assures review boards that participants are fully informed about the purpose of the study, that their participation is voluntary, that they understand the extent of their commitment to the study, that their identities will be protected and that they are minimal risks associated with participating.

In addition I got informed consent from the research participants to tape record and I clearly stated this in the informed consent letters that I gave to the research participants to sign before they participated in my research (see appendix 3 for a copy of the informed consent).

3.9.3. Confidentiality

Confidentiality implies that only the researcher should be aware of the identity of participants, and that the participants should also have made a commitment with regard to confidentiality (De Vos *et al*., 2002). I made sure that I informed the participants of my research about the issue of confidentiality. Anonymity of the research participants was maintained in the reporting of the data, participants' names were kept a secret to protect their identity and reduce the chances of secondary traumatisation. Moreover respect for persons captured the notion that we do not use the people who participate in our studies as a means to an end and that we do respect their privacy, their anonymity and their right to participate or not which was freely consented to (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

3.9.4. Gatekeeper consent

I got gatekeeper's consent to conduct the study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal University Howard College from the Registrar's office. It was important for me to get permission from the gatekeeper before conducting my research and it was one of the most important aspects of the ethical requirements. According to De Vos *et al*. (2002) it was important to gain permission to enter the field that has been decided on and it was of prime importance in order to get a study started. Thus I was able to get gatekeeper's consent from the Registrar of the University of KwaZulu-Natal before commencing on my study (see appendix 2).

3.10. Limitations of the study

The findings of this study does not represent the general experiences of all international students studying in South Africa as it only reflects the experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN. As there are almost 30 or so Universities in South Africa, the study was only limited to one University which was UKZN. The ideal would have been to include the other Zimbabwean students studying at other Universities. However due to time and financial constraints it was rather impossible to include other Universities. Another limitation of the study was the position of the researcher as I am a Zimbabwean student at the UKZN and this might have impacted on the research findings. Nevertheless I employed critical reflexivity to curtail bias on the research findings as discussed in the research methodology. Another limitation of this study was that it was time consuming but I made sure that I managed the time well so as to finish this research in the stipulated time frame.

Chapter 4 Analysis and Discussion of results

4.1. Introduction

As highlighted in chapter 3 the data were analysed using the thematic content analysis and in this part of the dissertation I discuss the themes that emerged from the data analysis. I firstly present the demographic characteristics of my participants. After that I discuss my research findings in which I start with the themes related to the negative experiences of Zimbabwe students at UKZN. The themes of the positive experiences of Zimbabwean students are discussed last. I first discuss the reasons why the Zimbabwean students came and studied at UKZN. I separated the discussion of the remaining findings into two sections: 1) the negative experiences or challenges/concerns of Zimbabwean students at UKZN and the various themes that emerged in relation to this, and 2) the positive experiences of Zimbabwe students at UKZN focusing on the themes that emerged from my data analysis.

4.2 Demographic representation of participants

The demographic data show that almost all the participants were in their twenties with only two participants that were aged 31 and 32 respectively. The oldest participant was aged 32 and the youngest was aged 21. There is almost a fair representation of both males and females as there were 8 females (53%) and 7 males (47%) that participated in my study. More females where keen to participate in this study. Some males I approached to participate in the study were sceptical at first but they later agreed. Participants represented different schools and colleges and a range of degrees such as Law, Engineering, Community Development, Social Work, Geography, Social Science and Psychology. In the interests of time as there are a large number of students on the Howard College Campus at UKZN, the study was restricted to the Howard College Campus. There was a fair representation of those students on the Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship and those students that were financing their studies on their own. The number of those on scholarship was 7 and 8 for those that are self-funded. The majority, 12 of the 15 participants were Shona speaking and 3 were Ndebele speaking students. The majority 14 of the 15 (93, 3%) of participants lived off campus, only one lived on campus which represents 6, 7% of the participants. The participants' were given the pseudonyms of Tatenda, Farai,

Takudzwa, Makanaka, Tariro, Tererai, Takunda, Tinashe, Mutsawashe, Mandla, Chipo, Tonderai, Nyarai, Sipho and Thulani.

4.3. Reasons for studying at UKZN

There were varied reasons presented by the participants for choosing to come and study at UKZN. Of the 15 participants 7 cited the Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship as the main reason. In support of this Tatenda stated that "*I applied for the Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship and I got accepted so that's how I came here*". Tariro said that "*the scholarship was my only hope of going to University*". This meant that if this scholarship was not there she would not have gone to university at all. There are countries or continents that give scholarships to students to go and study in a foreign country. One programme is ERASMUS that provides members of EU university students with the opportunity to study outside their home countries (Huisman and van der Wende, 2005). The participants on the Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship mentioned that they did not have the choice to choose which university to study at but that the scholarship chose for them.

According to Zvavahera (2014) the Presidential scholarship programme was introduced by the President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe in 1995. The Presidential Scholarship is an initiative by the President through the government, to send orphaned and children from poor backgrounds, who would otherwise not be in a position to finance their tertiary studies, to study at various Universities in South Africa. Initially when the programme started it only sent students to the University of Fort Hare but the programme grew to include 15 universities in South Africa. The universities are University of Johannesburg, Monarsh University, University of Cape Town, University of Venda, Rhodes University, University of Free Sate, University of Pretoria, Walter Sisulu University, Witwatersrand University, Stellenbosch University, Durban University of Technology, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Cape Peninsula University, University of Limpopo and University of KwaZulu-Natal. This has seen many Zimbabwean students coming to study in South African Universities and this might be the reason that Zimbabwean students are many compared to other international students at UKZN and other South African universities. At least 4 000 students are sent on the scholarship programme annually and well over 30 000 students have attained first degrees, masters degrees and doctorate degrees in various fields under the Presidential Scholarship Programme (Zvavahera, 2014). However the Zimbabwe

Presidential Scholarship has recently been facing financial challenges due to the continued economic problems in Zimbabwe. This has resulted in a decreased number of students being sent to South African institutions by the scholarship. This also led to the temporary suspension of the scholarship programme for one year in 2013.

The other 8 participants cited various reasons for coming and studying at UKZN with some citing the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe as a push factor. This is pointed out by Thulani who indicated that "*the situation in Zimbabwe was very bad the economy was down and it was hard to study in Zimbabwe so I came here*". Chipo stated that "*it's like in my country Zimbabwe the economy was not well I had problems with getting funds*". These findings are consistent with the findings of Singh's (2013) study that Zimbabwean students have crossed the border into South Africa to seek education because of the economic and political challenges in Zimbabwe.

The turn of the millennium in Zimbabwe heralded unprecedented political and economic instability that had negative repercussions for the public sectors with the health and education sector being the most affected. According to Masaka (2011:8) "the first decade of the new millennium, reflects sad political and economic developments that have given rise to unprecedented economic crises". Mvutungayi (2010) indicated that Zimbabwe experienced the worst socio-economic and political challenges in its post-independence history from 2000-2009. This saw the Zimbabwean dollar losing its value with inflation levels skyrocketing at an alarming rate. The cause of all this is highly contested as pro-government ZANU PF supporters cite the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the Western countries as the cause of the political and economic collapse in Zimbabwe. On the other hand the opposition parties fronted by the MDC T blame the ZANU PF led government for implementing reforms such as the land reform program as the catalyst for the political and economic instability in Zimbabwe.

The education sector in Zimbabwe was negatively affected by the economic and political collapse and all the levels of education were grossly affected from primary and secondary schools to tertiary institutions. There was a collapse of the education system in Zimbabwe which resulted in the closure of most public schools for long periods in 2008 (Mvutungayi, 2010). This ultimately acted as a push factor for many students to consider studying in other countries, with South Africa the primary choice because of its accessibility.

For some participants there were other reasons that influenced them coming to study at UKZN as indicated by Tinashe who cited the influence of his relative: *"I have a sister who has a friend who studied at UKZN and she had some good things to say about UKZN so that's why I came here"*. This is confirmed in the findings of Wilkins and Huisman (2011) whose study found that some international students are influenced by the recommendations they receive from others who had a prior experience with the university.

Three of the participants came to study at UKZN because they believed it is one of the top universities in South Africa, as pointed out by Nyarai who said that: "I *did a little research and realized that UKZN was one of the top universities not only in South Africa but in Africa*". Another participant, Farai said that "I *felt that UKZN was good for my degree as it's more practical and I saw UKZN having good equipment and exposure*". These findings are consistent with the findings of Chimucheka's (2013) study that Zimbabwean students choose to study in South Africa because of the proven quality of the country's universities and international standing in their academic qualifications.

The findings for this part of the discussion found out that 7 (47%) of my participants came to study at UKZN mainly because they had attained the Zimbabwe Presidential Scholarship which paid all their academic expenses and without this opportunity they would not have come to study. Whilst the other 8 (53%) of the participants presented various reasons that made them come and study at UKZN and 4 of the participants cited the economic collapse of the Zimbabwean economy as the reasons that made them come and study at UKZN. The other 3 participants came to study at UKZN because it is regarded as one of the top universities in South Africa. One participant cited influence from his relative as the reason he came and studied at UKZN.

4.4. Challenges/concerns

The participants raised several concerns related to language barriers; experiences with xenophobia; challenges with cultural differences; study permits; pressure from sponsor and problems with accommodation and finances.

4.4.1. Language barriers

Language posed as major challenge for Zimbabwean students at UKZN, with 12 of the 15 participants quoting language as the biggest challenge they face. Tariro indicated that "*When I came to UKZN the issue of language was a problem as I was the only person who does not speak isiZulu in my class*". Another participant, Tonderai indicated that "*language barrier is a big problem for me*". These findings are consistent with the findings of Dzansi and Monnapula-Mapesela (2012) that international students have always identified language as a major problem they face and also with Kono's (1999) study about language being a major barrier facing international students.

The language barrier also makes it a challenge for Zimbabwean students to interact and make friends with the local South African students as highlighted by Chipo who indicated that: "*UKZN is a nice place but it was a bit hard to get involved with people because of the language*". Smith and Khawaja (2011) also found that international students fail to make friends with local students because of language barriers. Some of the respondents bemoaned the issue of language barrier as making it impossible to become friends with local students. They said that they settle for making friends with fellow Zimbabwean students or other international students, as local students tend to communicate in their vernacular languages.

Language is also used as a tool to discriminate against Zimbabwean students. Makanaka stated that "*when you are speaking with them in English they ignore you*". Another participant, Tariro said that "*All my group members knew that I do not speak isiZulu but then to my surprise during the discussion for 2 hours it was held in isiZulu and I really felt out of place*". Mutsawashe said that "*at UKZN some Zulu students prefer group work in isiZulu and they don't care whether you understand or not*". This is in line with Singh's (2013) and Muthuki's (2013) studies which found that language is used by locals to exclude and discriminate international students.

Other than language being used to exclude and discriminate foreign students, it also affected their academic progress as highlighted by Tariro who said that "*I came to a point that I was no longer attending classes because I told myself why I should attend class when I did not hear anything*". This is consistent with the literature in chapter 2 as most of the literature did highlight that foreign students are affected academically by language barriers. The impact was such that

the participant chose not to attend because the lecture for one of her module was being held in isiZulu.

There is a strong relationship between language and power with those yielding power in society using it as a tool to oppress the powerless. According to Howe (1994:522) those with power can control the language discourse and can influence how the world is to be seen and what it will mean. Language can be used by the superior group to oppress the inferior group through the use of stereotypes that largely demean and degrade them. In the South African context the locals use language as a tool to perpetuate oppression towards foreigners. The locals use derogatory stereotypes against African foreigners such as 'makwerekwere'. This indicates that language might be symptomatic of xenophobia in some instances. Language plays a dominant role in upholding ideological supremacy and we have to analyse and deconstruct language (Sewpaul, 2013).

Not all the participants in the study faced the challenge of language as 3 (20%) of the participants did not have any problem with language. This was so because these students speak Ndebele which is similar to isiZulu. As indicated by Sipho "*the thing that helped me to adjust at UKZN was that I was good in isiZulu so I didn't face any problem with language barriers*". This is confirmed by Singh's (2009) study which found that Ndebele speaking Zimbabweans were well versed in Zulu. Zimbabwean students from Bulawayo speak predominantly Ndebele which is similar to isiZulu because historically they originated from South Africa and this gives them an added advantage over the Shona speaking students from Zimbabwe who will have problems with the local isiZulu language when they study in South Africa.

4.4.2. Xenophobia

Zimbabwean students face xenophobia on and off campus which affects their functioning and well-being as they study at UKZN. All the participants indicated that before they came here they perceived South Africa as a xenophobic country. Mutsawashe stated that "*I thought in South Africa there was too much xenophobia and killing of people*". Another participant, Tererai also stated that "*I knew that there was xenophobia in South Africa mainly targeted at Zimbabweans and they don't like Zimbabweans*". Also Chipo indicated that "*I came when xenophobia was over but it seems people still have that xenophobic mind-set, it makes me feel uncomfortable*

about the xenophobic attitudes of people". This is consistent with Shindondola's (2002) study which found that international students suffer from xenophobia. The fact that Zimbabwean students' perception of xenophobia being rampant in South Africa was influenced by the 2008 xenophobic attacks on foreigners which left 60 dead in South Africa. This has induced fear in the foreigners, particularly from other African countries. Xenophobia is found on campus as highlighted by Tinashe who said that:

"*There was a time when there were some xenophobic acts. I didn't understand it, one of the shuttle drivers was really xenophobic as he would target foreign students not to get into the shuttle and one time one Zimbabwean student was removed from the line of the bus because of his physical appearance*".

Chipo also indicated that:

"*I'm having problems with tutors from South Africa. It seems as if they still have that mentality of mistreating foreigners especially black foreigners and they don't like foreigners at all, my first year tutor was not nice at all she marked me down because she saw that my name was a foreign name*".

Tariro also spoke about her experience as she said that "*the challenge or experience I had was that some of the people or lecturers they did speak in isiZulu in lectures and when you go and approach them after the lecture they would tell you that UKZN is an African university which has allowed lecturers to speak in Zulu*".

All these excerpts are consistent with Singh's (2013) and Chimucheka's (2013) studies which found that lecturers, staff and local students use language as a tool to exclude foreign students. The students in this study perceived this practice as symptomatic of xenophobia. UKZN has adopted a language Policy which makes isiZulu one of the languages of administration, learning and teaching together with English. In the illustration from the excerpt from Tariro above it reveals that international students are going to be affected negatively by this as they do not speak isiZulu and lecturers are taking advantage of this policy to teach only in isiZulu.

Zimbabwean students not only suffer the ills of xenophobia on campus only but also off campus. Tinashe indicated that "*in one incident my two friends and I we nearly got beaten because we didn't understand isiZulu on our way to Pinetown*". Mutsawashe also said that

"*As a foreigner in South Africa when you board a taxi and you talk to people in English without using their language they look at you with disgust and contempt because they will know that you are a foreigner*".

Takudzwa had a xenophobic experience in the hands of South African Police "*it was like we were in Johannesburg and you know they have a way to find out that you are foreigners especially the police so they harassed us, it made me feel angry for them to think that every foreigner is a border jumper*".

 This is confirmed by Shindondola (2002) findings that all his male participants had a bad experience with the police. The South African Police targets foreigners on the basis of skin colour, as foreigners tend to be darker in complexion compared to locals. This is in line with Singh's (2013) study that foreigners are easily identified by their visible difference which triggers xenophobia. Singh (2013) also writes of how the police refused to give assistance to four foreign girls. This is sad as the police should be the protectors of international students studying in South Africa and enforce the law to eradicate the scourge of xenophobia. However, surprising they are the ones at the forefront of practicing xenophobia.

Most of the participants who encountered xenophobia at the end of the day felt uncomfortable and the experience left a poor impression of South Africans. Tatenda indicated that

"*it lowers your self-esteem no matter how you try to put that away from you and it makes me have this impression of South Africans they are proud people that they are pompous, they think they are better off than any other race, it just makes me dislike them*".

Smith and Khawaja (2011) found that feelings and experiences of discrimination impact negatively on international students and has been linked with poor psychological well-being and depression. This is also confirmed in Singh's (2013:99) study that the foreign students, at times, may not be the victims of xenophobia physically but they carry and bear the emotional and psychological scars of xenophobic experiences.

It was surprising that Ndebele Zimbabwean students also suffer from xenophobia as their language is the same as isiZulu. However the issue of nationality makes them susceptible to xenophobia as the mere reason that they are from Zimbabwe leads to xenophobia. This was indicated by Thulani who indicated that "*I suffer from xenophobia because I'm a Zimbabwean*".

The fact that all 15 participants mentioned xenophobia as a challenge is testimony to the fact that there is hidden and overt xenophobia that permeates South African society that certainly impacts African international students. An upsurge of xenophobic violence swept South Africa in May 2008 and displaced over 10 000 foreigners (Holscher, 2014). According to Onah (2011:7) xenophobic violence began on May 11 in Alexandra Johannesburg, and quickly spread to the surrounding region including Cape Town and KwaZulu-Natal. Chigeza*et al*. (2013) assert that xenophobia attacks exploded in South Africa because of public tension triggered by poor service delivery by the government. For two weeks groups of unemployed South Africans equipped with machetes and guns descended on immigrants from other African countries whom they accused of stealing their jobs and raising the level of crime (Onah, 2011).

There are various hypotheses posited for the phenomenon of xenophobia. I will focus only on two hypotheses, the scapegoating and bio-cultural hypothesis. According to Harris (2002) the scapegoating hypothesis of xenophobia views the foreigner as a scapegoat, who is to blame for the social ills and personal frustrations faced by the locals. This hypothesis suggests that foreigners are blamed for the high unemployment rate, high crime rate and other socio-economic challenges facing mostly the black South Africans. Black South Africans divert their attention from holding the government accountable for their problems to lay the blame solely on foreign nationals for taking their jobs and other resources. On the other hand the bio-cultural hypothesis of xenophobia uncovers xenophobia at the level of observable differences in terms of physical biological factors and cultural differences (Harris, 2002). This hypothesis proposes that foreign nationals are easily identified by features such hairstyle, accents, vaccination marks, dress and physical appearance. This means that foreigners can be identified easily through these visible differences for xenophobic attacks.

4.4.3. Dealing with cultural differences

It is usually inevitable for international students to confront problems when dealing with a culture different from their own, which makes their adjustment difficult. 80% (12) of the participants had some difficultly in dealing with a culture different to theirs back in Zimbabwe whilst 20% (3) did not encounter any difficultly with cultural differences. Tariro had problems with dealing with the cultural differences as she indicated that:

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

Tonderai indicated that "*when I came here it was a bit weird on how people dressed the miniskirt, hairstyles as compared to Zimbabwe even in lectures when they are dressed like that you look at them and it disturbs you, and for the boys their hairstyle are a bit weird and when they wear hats they wear them half way and the trousers are tight and narrow and I once bought one and I didn't like it*". This is consistent with Ward *et al*. (2001) findings of the challenges international students face in dealing with an unfamiliar environment and a different culture.

The above excerpts from the participants insinuate that Zimbabwean culture is superior to the local South Africans culture. Although the participants view themselves as the inferior group because they are foreigners in South Africa but from the excerpts in this part of the discussion it indicates that they regard themselves as superior culturally to South Africans. By criticising the way that locals dress, they look down upon the culture of South Africans and categorically state that Zimbabweans do not wear such mini-skirts and tight pants because they have higher morals than South Africans. This gives rise to the discourse 'we are better than them' as Zimbabweans way of dressing and food is better than the South Africans way as indicated by the participants. The creation of 'them-us' division privileges those who are considered 'us' and deemed to 'belong' to a particular social order (Domineli, 2002). This can also be known as ethnocentricism in which "the dominant group, most often without realizing it, projects its experience and culture as representative of all humanity" (Mullaly, 1997: 149).

The Zimbabwean participants by pointing the issue of mini-skirts and tight pants being worn by locals may show their belief that South Africans have been socialised into the western culture, which values that kind of dressing and according to them they have ceased being 'us' but 'them' as they have embraced a culture that is alien to the African patriarchal culture. This indicates that Zimbabweans have been socialised by their society to dress in a manner which is acceptable to their culture and anyone who deviates from that prescribed way of dressing becomes the 'other' in their eyes. This is supported by Zimuto and Chikodza (2013) who assert that women in Zimbabwe are discouraged from exposing their body parts by the community at large. Zimbabwean political leaders have on numerous times criticised mini-skirts, see-through and tight dressing as this dressing is a taboo in the Zimbabwean culture (Zimuto and Chikodza, 2013).

This also works both ways in that South Africans may also believe that they are superior to Zimbabweans with regard to dressing and food and this can give rise to them seeing Zimbabwean students as the 'others' who are not embracing the new ways of dressing which sees nothing wrong with mini-skirts or tight pants. Normalising one's own cultural practices and seeing the limits and faults in other people's cultural practices is evidenced in this part of the discussion. It is important for the participants to forgo their stereotypical assumptions about the locals' culture and try to understand and respect the diversity of cultures, as what is applicable in one culture may not be applicable in another culture.

Mutsawashe indicated that "*the food for me that was the biggest challenge I couldn't eat at all*". Another participant indicated that "*another thing is the food as there was a big difference as the vegetables that we eat back home is not here and the quality of food here is different from that back home*". This is consistent with Mudhovozi (2011) study which revealed that some respondents (28, 6%) did not like the food that was served at the university as the diet was different and tasted differently to what they are used to.

 Some of the participants when they go home during the holidays bring from Zimbabwe food that they are used to as evidenced by Tonderai who indicated that "*for me it's hard to adjust and usually when I go back home I usually bring back peanut butter, but here peanut butter is here but due to quality I couldn't adjust*".

Not all the participants expressed difficulties in dealing with cultural differences as 3 out of 15 of the participants did not express any difficult with cultural differences. This can be that there were 3 Ndebele Zimbabwean participants in my study and these might not have any difficultly with dealing with the isiZulu culture as it is almost the same as their culture. So language seems to be a very important factor in mediating cultural differences. As a foreigner in any country being able to speak the local language has been recognised to be instrumental in adapting and mediating different cultures as it gives one a sense of belonging and being more accepted than one who does not fluently speak the local language. According to Singh (2009) the Ndebele speaking people from Zimbabwe are versed in Zulu and this makes it easier for them to socialise with Black South Africans. Mujawamariya's (2013) study found that two participants who were fluent in Zulu were treated with respect by locals.

4.4.4. Financial challenges

All the participants are faced with financial problems, which at times negatively affect their learning. This was indicated by Tinashe:

"*the requirement by the university on foreign students for fees to be paid up front, I feel they think that international students have money so they should pay all monies up front, everything is hard for everybody so I think that a great major challenge*".

This is also similar to the local students who pay upfront and in this instance what might be applicable to both foreign and local students is perceived by foreign students as discrimination on the basis of nationality. This makes this problem based more on perception than on reality.

Farai indicated that "*I am facing financial challenges to pay for my studies as initially I came here on scholarship but now that I am no longer on scholarship I have to pay my own fees that's quite a challenge for me*". Even those on the Zimbabwean scholarship face financial problems as at times the scholarship is paid late, and when it does pay the University takes quite a long time to distribute the money to the students. This is indicated by Tatenda who said that "*the other challenge we face is that at times the presidential scholarship does not pay on time*". Mutsawashe indicated that "*international office should process our stipends on time. It would be better for us as foreign students*". Tonderai indicated that:

"*another challenge is that of treatment we get at UKZN I might give you an example like when you are given money by your sponsors, it will reflect that you have been given money and for the university to approve that money it takes a long time. Maybe there is a long channel; I don't know the reason why there is always a delay and it's a big problem*". These findings are in line with Smith and Khawaja's (2011) study, which states that studies have shown that financial problems are experienced by the majority of international students.

The financial challenges facing Zimbabwean students affect the learning of some students, as evidenced by Tatenda who indicated that:

"*the economic challenges they really disturb because you can't really study on an empty stomach, you need to have you know food, stationery, and some of the time you get to an extent when you don't have even a pen to write that will make your life academically a little bit difficult*". Chipo said that "*sometimes I won't have money to buy text books*". Tererai stated that "*most of the time you have to catch up with others two weeks after lectures have started looking for money to register*" and Makanaka indicated that "*they need money for the registration fee and medicals and they won't register you if you don't pay this*". These findings confirm Veloutson*et al*. (2004) foreign students experience financial pressure as they have costs such as living expenses, textbooks and tuition fees.

Almost all the participants indicated that financial problems are at the apex of the problems they are facing at UKZN. Those that are self-funded seem to be the most financially distressed as they pay their own registration fees, tuition, medicals, accommodation and other personal expenses which need quite a huge sum of money. Thus it is not surprising that all of them cited financial difficulties as the most pressing problem they are facing. On the other hand those on the Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship are at an advantage as their scholarship covers everything from tuition, accommodation, books and stipends but the problem is that, as pointed out, by some of the participants the scholarship pays the money very late at times and also when it comes the university takes ages to distribute the money to them.

4.4.5. Problems with accommodation

Some of the participants (66, 6%) shared the concern of accommodation challenges. Fourteen of the 15 participants lived off campus having failed to get residence on campus. The participants bemoaned the challenge they are facing in securing on-campus residence. They held the view that the university should prioritise on-campus accommodation for international students. Tinashe indicated that "*I think accommodation is another challenge for foreign students, it's not so easy to get accommodation when you are a foreigner, if you don't get residence getting accommodation out there is hard*". Takunda said that "*we try a lot to find accommodation on Res but we are not getting it, staying off campus away from school is very hard*". Tonderai indicated that "*I think life is a bit challenging for me as an engineering student staying off campus, I wouldn't know others from other faculties, but I think it's challenging as well when you are a foreigner*". These findings are consistent with Bradley's (2000) and Poyrazli and Grahame's (2007) studies that practical issues such as accommodation have been highlighted in qualitative studies as challenges international students face as they study at foreign institutions.

The failure to get accommodation on campus residences by the Zimbabwean students affect their studies as indicated by Takunda who said that "*some places I used to stay were far from school I used to take two buses which made my varsity hard*". Mandla indicated that "My *learning has been greatly affected because I spoke about the designs that I do, I do 5 modules and 1 final year project which have more credits, so what it means is that I need to be on campus for the rest of my degree, I need to be staying on campus so as to research, I can't carry heavy equipment from campus to here*".

Staying off campus also puts the Zimbabwean students at risk of being victims of crime and violence as indicated by 5 of the participants. Takunda indicated that

"*Some of my friends have experienced that like one of my friends was struck with a bottle in the head and had to go to hospital, refusing to give them his bank pin number. That guy is a Zimbabwean student and he was coming from school going home at night and he ended up being attacked by these guys and they demanded the pin and he refused and they beat him up with bottle and other things*".

Tonderai said that "*living off campus I don't feel secure at all I lock my door all the time and I recheck every time and again if I have locked the door as I don't feel secure at all. At night when*

you are moving on the streets you will constantly be looking back to see if anyone is following you". Farai also indicated that "*at the place we are staying we have been robbed three times when we had gone to school*". Takudzwa said that "*because off campus you are staying in communities and there are always thugs there whilst on campus it's rather safe, so I think staying off campus your life will be at risk, I stay at a private accommodation and at times I come from school at night and I will have gadgets like computers and phones and I might get robbed*". Mutsawashe was a victim of robbery as she indicated that "*I was robbed of my iPod and phone at gunpoint*".

These findings are consistent with Shindondola's (2002) findings that 18 out of 25 respondents had been victims of crime at least once since their arrival in South Africa.

In South Africa there is a high rate of crime and violence which statistics show is on the rise. The Factsheet South Africa official crime statistics for 2012-2013 indicated that:

- Incidents of murder increased from 15 609 murders in 2011/12 to 16 259 murders in 2012/13. This means that there was an increase of 650 murder cases or a 4, 2% increase when comparing the total numbers of murders with the previous year. This works out to almost two additional murders per day on average during the 2012/13 financial year.

- Murder rate increased from a total average of 43 murders per day to 45 murders per day.

- The murder rate for 2012/13 stood at 31.3 per 100,000 population which reflects an increase of 2.8% in the rate of murders (not 0.6% as presented officially).

- South Africa's murder rate is therefore about four and a half times higher than the global average of 6.9 murders per 100 000.

- Attempted murder cases increased from 14 859 to 16 363, an increase of 10.1%

- Attempted murder rates increased by 8, 7% in the past year.

- Sexual offence cases increased from 64 514 to 66 387, an increase of 2.9%.

- Sexual offence rates increased from 125, 1 per 100000 to 127,0 per 100000 population an increase of 1.5%.

- Street or public robberies increased by 2 534 cases to a total of 60 262 incidents. This is 4.4% higher than the 57,728 incidents recorded the previous year. It means that every day on average there were 166 cases of street robbery in 2012/13.

- House robberies increased by 7.1% to 17 950 incidents representing an additional 1 184 households being attacked when compared to the previous year. On average 49 households were attacked each day in 2012/13.

- Business robberies increased by 2.7% to 16 377 incidents. This crime type has consistently increased in the past eight years so it is 345% higher than in 2004/05. There were an additional 426 armed attacks on businesses in 2012/13 as compared to the previous year.

Crime and violence affects everyone in South Africa regardless whether one is a local or foreigner. Locals are subject to crime and violence, but the problem might be accentuated for foreign nationals who feel a sense of greater vulnerability. This also translate to feelings of helplessness on foreigners and foreign students mainly those that do not get accommodation on campus as living off campus in communities put them at greater risk of being victims of crime and violence. As evidenced by some of the excerpts from the participants there is a general belief that foreign students feel safer and more secure on campus.

Getting on campus residence is a great challenge facing not only Zimbabwean students but other international students and local South African students at UKZN. To indicate that all Zimbabwean students are facing this challenge is misleading as quite a number of Zimbabwean students live on campus residence. The majority of Zimbabwean students live off campus which poses problems to them in terms of crime and learning as indicated by some of the participants. The fact that some of the respondents (33, 4%) did not raise the concern of accommodation may be that they are happy with staying off campus and they feel comfortable there. The one participant staying on campus did not face this challenge with of accommodation. Nevertheless UKZN as an institution is battling with the problem of inadequate residences which has seen students striking to put pressure on the university to provide them with accommodation.

4.4.6. Pressure from sponsor

Some of the participants on the scholarship indicated that they were pressurized by the Zimbabwe Presidential Scholarship to pass all their modules, as failure to do so results in them being permanently removed from the scholarship. This was indicated Tatenda who said that "*if one fails a module when on scholarship you will be removed from the scholarship*". Tariro indicated that "*it's really hard as I have to pass all my modules because I can be out of scholarship if I don't do so*". This finding is consistent with Mudhovozi's (2011) finding that some students (28, 6%) were anxious about failure as they did not want to fail a single course because doing so was going to result in the withdrawal of bursaries. This is also confirmed by Smith and Khawaja (2011) as highlighted in the literature review chapter. This means that all the Zimbabwean students on the Zimbabwe Presidential scholarship are pressurized into working extra hard so as not to fail any module as this will ultimately lead to their exclusion from the scholarship. This to some extent deepens the stress on the Zimbabwean students on the Zimbabwean Presidential scholarship. Nevertheless, the pressure from the sponsors to some extent might be a good thing as it motivates them to work extra hard and not only complete their degrees in time but also attain the degrees with high grades.

4.4.7. Different treatment of students

Of the 15 participants 11 (73, 3%) felt that there were treated differently compared with other international students from the first world countries, such as those from America. The other 4 (26, 7%) participants did not comment on this issue. To support this assertion Tariro indicated that:

"*basically at UKZN international students who come from African countries are treated differently to international students that come from maybe first world countries. The way we are treated is totally different, even if we go to the international office. Like I remember when we were in first year there was this white guy and then we were all there and we wanted to get help and we were there first and that white guy was served first before us so I think racism is still there even at school because the white guy was served first maybe because of skin colour*".

Nyarai indicated that "*sometimes other foreign students are given better treatment than us*". Mutsawashe said that "*the international office should treat us the same as other international students*". Farai also said that "*Normally international students are not given equal preferences*

and from what I have seen international students from other countries such as America are given good treatment". These findings are consistent with Shindondola's (2002) findings that Europeans, Chinese and Americans students are not treated like black foreign students.

The fact that the majority of the participants felt they were treated differently to other international students gives the impression that international students are being categorised according to nationality and race. This indicates that one's country of origin determines how one is treated by the International Office at UKZN. Structural social work theory that I used as my theoretical framework is important in identifying some of these oppressive and discriminatory practices that are in place.

Discrimination in South Africa is rampant with people discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability and age. Likewise foreign nationals are also discriminated against based mostly on nationality and race. This has seen foreign nationals from the western world being more accepted as they represent the white superior race and they are seen as business investors who brings in resources whilst those from Africa are seen as a drain on resources. This popular discourse is rather untrue in academia as international students across the globe have been seen as an important asset that brings huge sums of monies to foreign institutions. I have discussed this in my literature review chapter in which Altbach and Knight (2007) study in USA indicated that international students bring a lot of money into USA which accounts for the $12 billion to the USA economy and amongst these are African international students.

The same thing is also happening in South Africa with African international students coming to study in South Africa bringing lots of money which helps the tertiary institutions and the economy at large. Thus African international students studying in South Africa should not be seen as a drain on resources or liabilities but as important investors to the economy of South Africa and the day to day running of the various universities in South Africa. This means that they should not be discriminated against through the popular discourse of foreigners coming to take jobs and women of locals but they should be viewed in good light as great contributors to South African GDP. For example Zimbabwe has the highest number of international students in South Africa with the Zimbabwean scholarship sending 7 000 students to various South African universities annually (UKZN Online, 2013), and the other huge number of self-funded

Zimbabwean students unaccounted for. All this point to the high income that Zimbabwean students bring in South Africa showing that they are an asset not a liability to South Africa. Other African international students also bring a lot of income to South Africa and treating them differently to other international students from the first world countries is unfair.

4.4.8. Study permits

Another theme that came out was that of study permits application. Eight out of the 15 participants highlighted the problems they faced when applying for their study permits and 7 of the participants did not experience any challenge when applying for their study permits. One Of the 8 participants facing challenges in study permits application Tonderai indicated that "*there is another problem of study permits. That one is a challenge. I came here to study for a 4 year degree but they gave me a 3 year permit so I had to renew and the protocol for renewal trust me it's very hard as they need a lot of staff there. They need many copies of your medical, faculty letter, proof of residence and they need police clearance from Zimbabwe and South Africa*". Chipo indicated that "*the fact that they changed the place where you apply for your study permit its gona be hard for me as I'm renewing my study permit this year and it's no longer the same as what it used to be*". Sipho said that "*my friends applied for their permits in Zimbabwe and they took very long to come out and they were not able to register for this semester which means that they are going to repeat next year*". These findings are consistent with Muthuki (2013) findings that international students were upset about these stringent processes and thought that they were reflective of xenophobia. Altbach (2004) also confirms these findings in his study on international students in USA who were discouraged by the burdensome immigration requirements.

South Africa is in the process of implementing a new Immigration Act in 2014 which among other things sees extensive changes being incorporated, such as Home Affairs relinquishing their job of dealing with study permits applications to a private company. This has complicated the already intricate process of applying for study permits for international students studying in South Africa. There are also changes in the place were applications used to be submitted as it is no longer the Home Affairs offices in Umgeni road but now in Musgrave. The fee has also increased from R425 with the private company adding its own R1300 administrative fee. All

these changes add to the stringent processes that some of the participants in the study highlighted.

As highlighted above only 8 participants mentioned the challenge of study permits applications whilst 7 of the participants did not have any challenge. The reason for this is that the Zimbabwe students that are on the Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship are helped with the whole process of applying for their permits so they do not go through the cumbersome process of applying for permits like what the self-funded students do.

4.5. Positive experiences

4.5.1. Prestige and status

All the participants were really proud to be studying at UKZN and they reckoned that UKZN is one of the best universities in South Africa and Africa as a whole. This was evidenced by Tariro who indicated that:

"*another positive experience is that UKZN has been ranked one of the best universities in the world and even when I'm in Zimbabwe if people ask me were I'm studying and when I tell them that I'm studying at UKZN they will be like: wow you are studying at UKZN which is ranked as one of the top universities in the world; I think it's one of those positive experience as that you have that keeps me motivated as I'm not learning at just an ordinary university*".

Another participant Takunda said that "*what I can say is that in terms of engineering UKZN is one of the most competitive universities that offer engineering*". Farai also indicated that "*I think for me the positive experience of studying at UKZN is that this university is recognized and attaining a degree from such an institution adds value to myself*". These findings are consistent with Chimucheka's (2013) findings that international students perceive South African qualifications to be of a higher quality and respected in many African countries.

UKZN is ranked in the top 3 of the South African universities, and according to the Academic Rankings of World Universities, one of the top 500 universities globally, which makes it inevitable that studying at such an institution makes students proud to be associated with such an institution. Employment opportunities and jobs have become scarce in the globalized world

which means that studying at one of the top ranked universities gives one an advantage in acquiring a job in the global market as companies tend to employs those from top universities.

4.5.2. Supportive and dedicated lecturers

Almost all the participants reckoned that the lecturers at UKZN are very dedicated and supported them academically and socially. Thirteen of the 15 participants talked about how the lecturers were good and supportive to them whilst 13, 3% (2) of the participants did not hold this view. Makanaka indicated that "*it's really stressing and the majority of people will not know what we are going through but to some extent the lecturers told us that if you have any problem come to us so that they can help, like our lecturer he is accommodative and supportive*".

Tonderai indicated that "*The lecturers are very good they give you the freedom to ask and consult them and every time you need help with design they can help you at any time*". Thulani said that "*I think the lecturers at UKZN are very dedicated they mark your work and they are very fair*". These findings are consistent with Mudhovozi (2011) findings in which some respondents (42, 9%) reported that they were very happy with their academic progress and they found their lecturers to be approachable, supportive and encouraging.

The two participants who were not complementary about lecturers were the ones who experienced exclusion in classes on the basis of language. As highlighted in the findings of this study the Zimbabwean students are facing quite a number of challenges which can have a negative effect on their studies but the fact that the lecturers at UKZN are helpful and supportive to them gives them the impetus to cope with some of the challenges they are facing.

4.5.3. Friendships and family

Almost all the participants pointed out that they were able to make friends at UKZN which helped them in their adjustment. Eight of the participants were able to make friends with the local South Africans. Tariro indicated that:

"*some of the things that made my adjustment easier was that when I was doing my first year I was in Criminology department I was looking for a timetable and I saw this South African girl and I approached her. She was also doing Criminology and she accepted to help me with the*

timetable and to look for the venue and up to now she has always been there for me academically and socially and I think she is a friend and she is one of the reasons that made me adapt."

Tatenda indicated that "*I came with friends from Zimbabwe and others from South Africa I met at UKZN, some are Indians some are Whites and some Zulu speaking*". Takunda indicated that "*the most contributing thing in adjusting is friends I made friends with the people I came with and the ones that were already here some South Africans, those people who were already here they taught me about things such as school work and other things*". It would appear that meeting fellow Zimbabweans, already living in South Africa was an important element in helping students in their adjustment. These findings are consistent with Mudhovozi's (2011) study that 57, 1% of his participants reported that peer support was very salient in coping with adjustment at the host university. Smith and Khawaja (2011) contented that language barriers can impede international students' attempts to make friends and interact with locals. However language in itself does not preclude the development of friendship between Zimbabwean and South African students.

All the participants in the study highlighted the importance of keeping contacts with their families back home in Zimbabwe as it helped them to cope with some of the challenges they face at UKZN such as financial problems. Mutsawashe indicated that "*usually my family sends me money*". Takunda said that "*I communicate with my family I call them and they call me and my parents they call me once per week and I usually call them when I need something like money*". Mandla indicated that "*when you get in touch with people back home you can tell them about the problems . . . . they can help you with the problems you are facing and my parents send me money and advice*". Mudhovozi (2011) found that 28, 6% of his participants indicated that families formed the biggest support system of students studying at a foreign institution. Families back in Zimbabwe play a very important role in helping the students cope with some of the challenges that they face as they study at UKZN. Keeping contacts with family members back home for international students was very important for all the 15 participants in this study. According to Maundeni (2001) family members help students to reduce stress and facilitate their adjustment, though most families will be in their countries of origin.

4.5.4. New intercultural experiences

Another positive experience that some of the respondents (40%) indicated was the fact that they were able to experience and learn diversified cultures which made them understand, respect and value other people from different cultural backgrounds. This is indicated by Tonderai: "*Learning with people from different races, Coloureds, Indians, Whites it's really a good exposure so as to get to know each other and when we are doing some designs and we are put in groups of Whites and Indians makes us get used to each other and is good for everyone and at the end of the day we will be reducing racism*".

Tinashe indicated that *"the school promotes diversity and humanity. The fact that there are a lot of people from different backgrounds I have improved my social network skills. My relationship with people has improved both on a social and academic level*". Tatenda said that "*now I'm comfortable with mingling and connecting with people from different races*". Nyarai indicated that "*I met a lot of different people and learnt a lot from them as a result I also got to know myself bette*r". These findings are consistent with Chimucheka's (2013) study were 80% of his respondents mentioned that studying in South Africa enhanced their international experience and increased their understanding of cultural differences. Sewpaul (2003) wrote about the vast potential that international exposure has for students to broaden horizons and re-frame taken for granted epistemologies. The UKZN Strategic Plan (2007-2016) which seeks to value and promote social cohesion through understanding tolerance and respect for diversity in all its forms.

The other 60% of the participants were silent on the importance of learning a new culture. This might have been influenced by some of the difficulties they have been facing such as language barriers and xenophobia, which might have made it difficult to embrace and learn new cultures. This is consistent with Muthuki (2013) study which found that those international students who did not speak the local isiZulu language created a wall between them and black South African students. This means that inter-cultural friendship is curtailed and difficult to establish. Another reason may be that for most of the Zimbabwean students they might not have been exposed to a multi-racial environment such as UKZN in which one can learn with Whites and Indians. Thus, they may feel intimidated or afraid to befriend them or come into close proximity with them. This was indicated by Makanaka who said that "*it was my first time to be taught by a White*

lecturer" and Tonderai indicated that *" another thing since back home in Zimbabwe over 90% are black people, here I can say that there are many people than we have in Zimbabwe of different races*". Some students might be afraid to come out of their comfort zones and open themselves to new experiences, which is unfortunate as South Africa offers a rich range of multi-cultural experiences. It is possible that xenophobic attitudes and practices detract from the benefits of its multi-cultural context.

4.5.5. Being validated

Some of the participants indicated that UKZN validated them by providing them with the opportunity to become tutors and also making it possible for them to attain scholarship for getting an average of 80% in your module per year. Nyarai indicated that "*I got financial support from the school for a scholarship which made my financial life a lot easier and better*". Takunda revealed that "*I want to appreciate also the fact that foreigners are given jobs as demonstrators or facilitators which is a good thing*". Farai indicated that "*I have managed to secure funds from the university*". These findings are inconsistent with the literature that I consulted which delved more on the financial challenges that international students' face, without acknowledging that some universities provide scholarships and temporary employment opportunities for international students. These findings indicate that for some of the international students who get the opportunity to be temporarily employed by the university, and those that receive the scholarships may be able to avert some of the financial problems that they face. The fact that only those with an 80% average annually are awarded the scholarship, and for one to become a tutor or demonstrator one needs to be a postgraduate or final year student means that only few international students benefit from this. The Zimbabwean students need to have the same results and meet the same criteria as local students to get the scholarship and / or serve as tutors and demonstrators.

4.6. Conclusion

I first looked on the reasons that influenced the participants to come and study at UKZN and the 7 participants on scholarship indicated that getting the Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship was the reason that they came to study at UKZN. Whilst the other 8 participants gave different reason that influenced them to come and study at UKZN with some indicating the political and

74

economic turmoil in Zimbabwe, whilst others mentioned that UKZN is a top university and one was influenced by her sister to come and study at UKZN. This was confirmed in chapter 2 of the literature review pertaining to international students' reasons for studying at a foreign institution.

As evidenced from the thick descriptions of the participants there are negative experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN. These negative experiences translate into the challenges that Zimbabwean students face at UKZN. The challenges that came out from the study include the issue of language barrier with 13 out of the 15 participants facing this challenge whilst 2 of the participants did not face this challenge due to the fact that they speak Ndebele language which is similar to isiZulu. Another challenge that they indicated was that of xenophobia in which all the participants indicated that they faced xenophobia both on campus and off campus.

Dealing with cultural difference was another theme that came out with 80% (12) of the participants indicating that they had difficulties in dealing with a different culture in terms of food and lifestyle whilst 20% (3) did not face any problems with cultural difference due to the fact that they spoke Ndebele which has the same culture as the Zulu students. All the participants faced financial difficulties which affected some of the students' academic learning as some of them battled to raise the registration fee, medical aid fee, tuition fees and accommodation money. The most affected students from the study are the self-funded Zimbabwe students whilst those on scholarship have an advantage over the self-funded as the scholarship pays for all their expenses but the only problem they raised was that at times the scholarship paid late and when it paid the university also took a long time to give them their stipends. Another challenge raised by some of the participants was that of the pressure from the sponsor. Of the 7 participants on Zimbabwe Presidential Scholarship some of them indicated that they are pressured into working hard in order for them not to fail any module as this will lead to the termination of the scholarship.

 Another theme on challenges facing Zimbabwean students was that of accommodation with 66, 6% of the participants indicating the challenge they are facing with acquiring on campus residence at UKZN with 14 of the participants living off campus. With 33, 4% of the participants' silent on the accommodation problem which might indicate that they are happy with staying off campus and only one who stays on campus had nothing to complain about. Different treatment of international students was raised by 11 (73, 3%) of the participants as they indicated

that they felt that international students from Africa were treated differently from international students from USA and other first world countries. Another challenge that emerged from the findings was that of study permits problems faced by Zimbabwean students when they apply for study visas. This was indicated by 8 out of the 15 participants as they bemoaned the complicated and cumbersome bureaucracy involved and the stringent requirements that required in applying for the study permit. Those on scholarship did not face this challenge due to the fact they are assisted in the application of the study permits by the scholarship.

There were also positive experiences that the Zimbabwean students experience at UKZN which was indicated in the excerpts of the participants and these include prestige and status of studying at an institution such as UKZN. All the participants indicated that studying at UKZN was a positive experience as UKZN was regarded as one of the top universities in South Africa and Africa as a whole and studying at such an institution was great for the recognition of their degrees t in the globalized world. Another positive experience that came out of the study was that of supportive and dedicated lectures at UKZN with 86, 7% of the participants indicating that there are dedicated and supportive lectures at UKZN whilst 13, 3% of the participants did not mention this aspect maybe due to that they faced problems with their lectures as indicated underneath the theme of language barrier when some lecturers used isiZulu to teach when they knew that there were students who did not hear isiZulu.

Friendship and family was another theme that came out on the positive experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN. All the participants indicating that they were able to make friends with Zimbabwean and South African students which helped them in adjusting to UKZN. Whilst all the participants also indicated that they kept contact with their family members which helped them to cope with some of the problems they are facing at UKZN. Another theme that came out was the new intercultural experiences with 40% of the participants indicating that were able to learn and understand cultures that were different from theirs at UKZN which helped them with respecting diversity. The theme of being validated also came out from the findings in which 5 of the participants indicated that the university validates them by giving them the opportunity to be tutors or demonstrators and also gives them funds through scholarships for international students performing exceedingly.

In summary in this chapter I discussed the findings of the study based on interviews with 15 Zimbabwean students at UKZN Howard College Campus. I presented the data utilising the themes that emerged from the data analysis starting with the reasons that made the respondents come and study at UKZN. After that I discussed the negative and the positive experiences of the participants and the several themes linked to these broad aspects. The next chapter contains a summary of the findings in relation to the overarching major conclusions to the study, recommendations and areas for further research.

Chapter 5

Major Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

Thepreceding chapter outlined a detailed discussion of the findings of this study and the key themes were identified and discussed. As this chapter is the concluding chapter it is important to return to the initial aims and objectives and research questions of the study in order to assess whether these were successfully met.

5.2. Summary of the study

The overall aim of the study was to understand the experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN. The objectives of this study were:

- Their reasons for choosing to study in South Africa.

- The factors that facilitate and/or hinder their learning.

- Factors that hinder and/or facilitate adjustment to University life.

- The positive experiences of studying in South Africa.

The key questions of the study were:

- What are the reasons for choosing to study in South Africa?

- What are the factors that facilitate and/or hinder learning amongst Zimbabwe students at UKZN?

- What are the factors that hinder and/or facilitate their adjustment to university?

- What are the positive experiences of studying at UKZN?

Assumptions of the study were:

- Fear of xenophobia might constitute an obstacle to effective learning amongst Zimbabwean students at UKZN.

- Language barriers isolate international students from the local students at UKZN and might constitute an obstacle to effective learning.

- Zimbabwean students face oppression and discrimination while studying at UKZN which might hinder effective learning.

- Social bonds and friendships at the micro level assist in countering some of the negative experiences of Zimbabwe students at UKZN.

Methodology

I used a qualitative paradigm to understand the experiences of Zimbabwean students studying at UKZN with the descriptive research design guiding the research process. Purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used with 15 Zimbabwean students studying at UKZN Howard College Campus. A semi-structured interview technique was used to collect the data with consent from the participants to tape record the interviews. The data was processed utilizing the thematic content analysis. Structural social work theory was used as the theoretical framework that governed this study and it was useful in understanding the experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN and also in identifying the structural problems they face.

5.3. Conclusions

As mentioned above the purpose of the study was to understand the experiences of Zimbabwe students at UKZN. A sample of 15 Zimbabwean students studying at UKZN Howard College Campus was used in this study. Based on this, the following section seeks to highlight whether the questions from the objectives set out in chapter 1 were answered.

What are the reasons for choosing to study in South Africa?

The findings indicate that there are different reasons that influence the Zimbabwean students to come and study at UKZN. Almost half of the participants, 7 in total cite the Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship as the reason that made them come and study at UKZN. The Zimbabwe Presidential Scholarship gave them a full scholarship to come and study at UKZN; it paid all their academic expenses and their basic necessities. It is important to highlight that those on the scholarship do not have the power to choose a university of their choice because only the

scholarship had the authority tochoose for them which university to go to. The findings further reveal that some of the participants come to study in South Africa specifically at UKZN because of the economic meltdown of Zimbabwe which has impacted heavily on the education sector in Zimbabwe as the standards of the Zimbabwean Universities drastically dropped. The economic collapse in Zimbabwe acted as a push factor that pushes them to come and study at UKZN. Influence from relatives who had studied at UKZN before and also the fact that UKZN is rated as one of the top universities in South Africa and Africa are some of the reasons that were cited by other participants as their reasons for choosing to come and study at UKZN.

What are the factors that facilitate and/hinder learning amongst Zimbabwe students at UKZN?

The findings reveal that the factors that facilitated their learning at UKZN include the availability of supportive and dedicated lecturers at UKZN as indicated by most of the participants. Most participants indicate that the lecturers at UKZN give them academic and social support which at the end of the day facilitates their learning. The participants also mention the availability of facilities such as computer labs, library and others as factors that facilitate their learning at UKZN.

On the factors that hinder their learning the findings reveal that most participants cite the accommodation challenge as a factor that is hindering their learning as they live far from the campus and at times take two buses to the campus. Participants doing engineering were the most affected with living off campus as they revealed that they needed access to the internet and equipment that they use on campus. Language barrier was another factor that was hindering their learning as one participant revealed that some lecturers used isiZulu to teach them in class knowing that there are some students who do not understand the language. The participant was forced not to attend some of these classes which largely hindered the participant's learning.

All the participants agree that financial challenges are hindering their learning at UKZN in which 8 of the participants who are self-funded bemoaned the financial challenges they are facing in paying their tuition fees, accommodation, medical aid, registration fees and other expenses. On the other hand 8 participants on the Zimbabwe Presidential Scholarship cite the late payment of their monies by the scholarship and the late disbursement of these monies to them by the

university affecting their learning. Most of the participants reveal that they register late every time after the lectures have commenced which affects their learning.

What are the factors that facilitate or/hinder their adjustment to university life?

The findings reveal that development of friendship with Zimbabwean students already at UKZN or those that they came with is one factor that facilitates their adjustment to university life. The study reveals that the participants are assisted with their adjustment in terms of their academic and social life. A few of the participants also befriend the local South African students who also help them in adjusting at UKZN.

On the other hand the findings indicate that factors such as cultural differences make the participants adjustment at university life difficult in regard to different food which some participants indicate is different to what they are used to back in Zimbabwe. The findings also reveal that failure to acquire on campus accommodation hinders the participants' adjustment to university life. Most of the participants agree that accommodation is a big problem that makes their adjustment difficult at UKZN as they will be coming to this place for the first time and they will not know anyone at all. Language barrier also hinder their adjustment to university life as revealed by most of the participants as they will not be in a position to make friends with the local South African students and this will make them feel isolated and out of place.

What are the positive experiences of studying at UKZN?

The findings reveal that most of the participants had some positive experiences of studying at UKZN. The positive experiences from the findings include the prestige and status of studying at one of the top universities in South Africa and Africa which according to some of the participants enhanced their global perspective. They also reveal that attaining degrees from such a respectable institution such as UKZN ensure that their degrees were recognized globally. Some of the participants reveal that the availability of supportive and dedicated lecturers at UKZN is another positive experience they have come across at UKZN. The findings also indicate that studying at UKZN makes it possible for inter-cultural experience which will give them the platform to understand and respect other different cultures from themselves as UKZN is made up of people from different races and culture.

5.4. Major conclusions

Xenophobia is one of the major challenges facing Zimbabwean students in which all the participants indicated that they faced it on campus and also off campus. In South Africa xenophobia is rampant targeting mostly African foreigners who are blamed for taking jobs and women of locals. The foreigners are either physically attacked or verbally abused mostly by black South Africans. The recent documented spat of xenophobic attacks on foreigners occurred in May 2008, in which 60 foreigners were killed and droves of them were displaced. This does not mean that xenophobia in South Africa is now extinct as it is still happening at an unprecedented rate but just that it has not been documented like in 2008. Xenophobia is a social ill which excludes and discriminates foreigners because of nationality, skin colour, language, culture and other distinct differences. The experience of xenophobia in South Africa by foreigners is in sharp contrast to some of the provisions in the South African Constitution, chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights mainly section 9 and 10. Section 9 of the Bill of Rights stipulates that:

(1) Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

(2) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed Chapter 2: Bill of Rights 6 to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.

(3) The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

Section 9 of the constitution categorically states that everyone is equal before the law which means that equality is a fundamental human right of everyone and it should not include others whilst at the same time excluding others. However foreigners are not at all treated equal to South Africans as they are discriminated against and face xenophobia. Another constitutional human right that is taken away from foreigners in South Africa is that of human dignity, as they are viewed as inhumane. Section 10 states that:

Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. Their human dignity is taken away from them through verbal attacks and name calling and they are called derogatory names such as 'makwerekwere'. It is also surprising to note that the state through its machineries mainly the enforcers and protectors of the law, that is the South African Police Services are at the forefront in perpetrating xenophobia towards foreign nationals in South Africa. This was indicated by one participant in the study who was harassed by Police and this was also confirmed in Singh's (2013) study.

Foreigners' human dignity should be respected and upheld and social work promotes this essential value. Worth and dignity of people is one of the values of social work. According to Potgieter (1998:40) "Social work believes in the dignity and worth of all people and that they should be treated with respect and understanding, regardless of their individual or collective characteristics or status".

As I have discussed in chapter 4 the participants indicated that they faced various challenges which they attributed to their foreign status. Some of the challenges that they mentioned are also the same challenges that local students face. These challenges include accommodation and financial problems but due to the reason that the participants are foreigners they perceived these challenges as governed by their foreign status. This is important to highlight because this will make it easier for both international and local students to come together around common concerns and work in solidarity as students of UKZN to enable the university to attend to their challenges. Rather than for Zimbabwean students to work in isolation as collaboration with locals will give them the power to make UKZN attend to their problems.

The UKZN strategic plan speaks of 'African led globalization' yet African foreign nationals are treated poorly compared with students from more developed worlds. This shows the difference between the rhetoric and reality as what UKZN is stating on paper in the UKZN Strategic plan is different to what is happening on the ground. This was indicated by most of the participants in chapter 4 who highlighted that they were treated differently to first world countries students by the International Office at UKZN. This reflects broader societal discourses in respect of the tendencies to validate that which is Western and denigrate what is African. People from the developed countries are seen as assets whilst those from the African continent are seen as liabilities and looters of the resources.

Zimbabwean students at UKZN experience a great deal of difficulties but despite this they function well and pass their exams. Although they face these challenges but the truth is that they are motivated and they persevere against these adversities to attain their degrees. This might reflect the strengths and resilience of the students as despite the odds they work extremely hard, function well and succeed. Various reasons make them cope well and at the forefront of this is the realization that they only came to South Africa and particularly at UKZN for one reason which is to attain their degrees and go back home. Those on the Zimbabwean Presidential scholarship are taught a motto before they come here which is 'why am I here'? This motto is recited by everyone who is on the scholarship before they come to campus so that they will not forget the only sole reason that they came here for. This motto is a powerful tool that they use to resist and take the challenges they face as part of life which, which encourages them to be strong in a harsh world.

Not only are those on the Zimbabwean Presidential Scholarship required to recite the motto I mentioned above but they are also compelled to pass all their modules. Failure to do so results in their expulsion from the scholarship permanently or temporarily. Even though the participants mentioned the challenges they faced as they study at UKZN, their main worry and concern was to pass all their modules so as to remain on the scholarship and be able to get their degrees. Another factor is that the participants do not want to disappoint their parents or caregivers by failing to attain their degrees as their parents have invested so much into their education and they want to pay them back by getting their degrees. Some of the participants also mentioned that they are the first ones in their families to go to university that in itself is a motivation for them to continue striving even when they are facing challenges. This to some extent makes them cope with the challenges they will be facing as they will be for a short time whilst their degree will be for a lifetime. This was indicated by Tariro who said that:

'My father always tell me that no matter the challenges I face I must not lose hope and he always tell me that as the first one to be at a university he is proud of me and there is no day that passes without my father telling me I'm proud of you my princess and this motivates me to keep going". This excerpt also shows the great role that parents play in making the participants cope with the challenges they face. I discussed this under the theme of family and friendship.

Another coping mechanism for the participants is making friends with other Zimbabwean students and for some with South Africans. As I discussed in chapter 4 most of the participants befriend their fellow Zimbabwean students who they came with or those that are already at UKZN. These friendships are very crucial in alleviating some of the challenges they face at UKZN. Most of the participants mentioned that Zimbabwean students living off campus live at one place where they may feel at home away from home. Living as Zimbabweans binds them together as one and gives them the room to share their problems and help each other.

However it is important to point that the Zimbabwean students are somewhat divided along tribal lines as Shona speaking Zimbabwean students only befriend other Shona students and Ndebele speaking Zimbabwean students likewise befriend other Ndebele students. Even in Zimbabwe there is always covert tension between the Shona and Ndebele people. One participant indicated that Ndebele students tend to isolate themselves from the Shona students the moment they arrive in South Africa and try as much as possible to be close to the Zulu students. This may be that Ndebele students speak almost the same language as Zulu and they originated here in South Africa as such maybe they feel in some way more South African than Zimbabwean.

It is important to acknowledge the possibility of sample bias as this study only sampled those students that are currently studying at Howard College campus at UKZN. This may reflect that those Zimbabwean students that have been affected by these major challenges and felt traumatized and not cope well to the extent of them failing to attain their degrees might have left the university.

Some of the participants indicated that Zimbabwean food and way of dressing is better than the local South African way. This shows a tendency to normalize one's own culture and to judge others not only as different but as inferior and this was clear from the participants injunctions that food and the dressing of people in South Africa was not just different but inferior. While Zimbabwean students believed that they were always 'the other' because of their foreign status they also unknowingly engaged the process of 'othering'.

There is also power of international experiences in broadening students' horizons, providing the contexts to think out of the box and to learn in a new environment (Sewpaul, 2003). This was one of the positive experiences mentioned by some of the participants in which they indicated

that learning at UKZN has largely enhanced their global outlook and an appreciation of diversified cultures. Although for some this might have been thwarted on account of fear and real problems with finances, accommodation and language problems.

Based on these findings the next section presents recommendations.

5.5. Recommendations

5.5.1. Social Work

- The findings from this study mandates Social Workers to be at the forefront in dealing with the challenges facing international students in South Africa and globally. Not only are women, children and the elderly at risk of being discriminated and oppressed but also international students as indicated in this study as they are discriminated against in terms of nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, language, skin colour. This means that social workers should not ignore the plight of international students but should utilize the structural theory utilized in this study to identify the structural problems facing international students and intervene accordingly.

- Social workers have a responsibility to promote social justice. As such I recommend that they challenge negative discrimination on foreign nationals in South Africa.

- Social workers should also play an important role in the formulation of an international student's policy in South Africa, as there is no clear-cut policy for international students in South Africa. Social workers should advocate on behalf of international students for the formulation of this policy as international students generally feel powerless and voiceless to speak out on the problems they are facing.

- Social workers should also play an important role in raising awareness on xenophobia at a micro, mezzo and macro level.

- There is not much research that has been done in Social work on the experiences of international students, thus I propose that more research should be done on this phenomenon so as to better understand their challenges and intervene holistically.

5.5.2. AU and SADC

Bearing in mind the various challenges that the participants in this study indicated I recommend that the African Union and Southern African Development Community intervene in alleviating some of the major challenges by:

- Putting xenophobia on the agenda of their meeting as xenophobia is a vice in our African continent which must be extinguished to make our world a better place for humanity.

- Playing an important role in assisting member countries to formulate policies that specifically focuses on African international students' challenges to address these challenges. This is because some of the countries such as South Africa are still battling with the need to formulate policy on international students.

- Discussing the possibility of relaxing some of the requirements of the study permits application, as they are rather stringent. They also need to discuss and work toward making the process less rigorous and cumbersome as there is so much bureaucracy involved in the application of study permits.

5.5.3. South Africa

- The South Africa government together with relevant stakeholders and Universities should formulate an international student's policy together which addresses the challenges that international students face in South Africa. Without a recognized policy in South Africa for international students it will be hard to solve the challenges that international students studying in South Africa face.

- Study permits were an issue that was raised by some of the respondents in which they bemoaned the stringent bureaucracy and the long time it takes for a study permit to come out which affects their registration. With this in mind I recommend that the South African government through the Ministry of Home Affairs look into this and relax some of the stringent requirements and also process the study permits fast so that international students register on time.

- The South African government should raise awareness on xenophobia on a national level utilizing the print media, television and social networks so as to educate people on xenophobia to eliminate it. This was also recommended by some of the respondents in my study.

- The South African Police Services should desist from being the agents of xenophobia but being the agents of anti-xenophobia as they should act as the protectors of international students studying in South Africa. I recommend that they should be trained to deal with international students facing xenophobia.

5.5.4. UKZN

5.5.4.1. Accommodation

- Accommodation was one major problem that is facing Zimbabwean students studying at UKZN as indicated in Chapter 4 of the discussion of findings. As local students face the same problem international and local students should work together in solidarity enable UKZN to attend to this issue as a matter of priority.

- I also recommend that UKZN should build more residences to cater for students at UKZN as there seems to be a shortage of residences at UKZN.

5.5.4.2. International office

- The international office at UKZN attends to the needs of all international students and as such it should not treat international students differently as indicated in this study. I recommend further training of international office personnel to treat all international students equally without discriminating others because of nationality and skin colour.

- The international office should also play an important role in assisting international students to get on campus residences and should not leave this burden on international students who will be facing adjustment challenges.

- The Zimbabwean students on the Zimbabwe Presidential Scholarship complained of the late disbursement of their monies every time their scholarship sends money. I recommend that the international office should make sure that they timeously distribute monies to the

Zimbabwean students on scholarship as they might be facing financial challenges which will have detrimental effects on their academic studies.

- International students face challenges when applying for their study permits, I recommend that the international office should assist international students when applying for study permits and help them with availing some of the required documents to them. I also recommend that the international office should have ties with the Home Affairs Department which will enable them to apply for study permits on behalf of international students.

- The international office should be at the forefront in raising awareness on xenophobia at UKZN in all the campuses through monthly cultural awareness programs to educate students about xenophobia and its effects. This will go a long way in eliminating xenophobia at UKZN.

5.5.4.3. UKZN Language Policy

The UKZN Language policy is a progressive policy that seeks to recognize the importance of the local isiZulu language by making it a medium of administration and teaching. Despite this it is important that the UKZN Language policy does not exclude foreign students as language can be used as a tool of oppression for either local and foreign students. With that in mind I recommend that UKZN:

- Provide facilities for simultaneous translations.

- Provide facilities for some modules in isiZulu and in English that offers student's choice.

- Importantly makes sure that this policy does not oppress or exclude foreign students.

5.5.4.4. Students Representative Council

- The Student Representative Council (SRC) which a representative of all students should also play a crucial role in addressing the challenges of international students at UKZN. As such I recommend that the SRC at UKZN should engage the relevant management at UKZN to address the challenges facing Zimbabwean and other international students studying at UKZN.

- I also recommend that SRC should make sure that international students are represented in the SRC with someone that best understands their challenges and needs preferably an international student.

5.6. Consciousness-raising among students

Zimbabwean students need to be aware that they also engage in the processing of 'othering' in which they see their culture as superior to the South African way with regards to food and dressing.

- I recommend consciousness-raising using Freirian strategies of praxis (Freire, 1970; 1973) and Giroux's conceptualization of multiculturalism so that Zimbabwean students do not only see themselves as victims but to get to understand how they possibly reproduce discourses and practices of superiority and inferiority. Reflection is one Freirian strategy in which the Zimbabwean students can use it to become aware of their cultural superiority giving them the mandate to confront this cultural hegemony and will lead to an understanding and respect of other cultures.

- Multiculturalism seeks to understand how culture and ethnicity can be rewritten to enable dominant groups to examine, acknowledge and unlearn their own privilege (Giroux, 1993). This means that multiculturalism enables the Zimbabwean students to examine their cultural superiority over local South Africans and be able to acknowledge that they engage in the process of 'othering' which will lead to unlearning this mindset making them respect diversity in cultures.

- Similar strategies need to be used with local students so that they get to understand the normalization of their cultures as superior to those of foreign nationals. The process of othering works both ways, and all students can benefit from such exercises.

- The office of the Dean of Student Services, Student Counselling, the SRC and the International Office should collaborate to put in place strategies for such consciousness raising programmes.

5.7. International students

- I recommend that international students take the initiative and come together and form an international students association which specifically deals with the challenges facing all international students studying at UKZN. This association should be representative of all international students' countries and each country should have one representative in this association.

5.8. Further Research

- This research only focused on the experiences of Zimbabwean students at UKZN as such I recommend further research on Zimbabwean students studying at other universities in South Africa as this will give a holistic outlook on the experiences of Zimbabwean students studying in South Africa.

- The fact that this research only focused on Zimbabwean students at UKZN there is need for further research on the experiences of all international students at UKZN.

- It will be interesting to identify those students who have dropped out of UKZN to understand the factors that might have contributed to this.

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APPENDIX 1

23 June 2014

Mr Thomas Gumbo 210549952
School of Applied Human Sciences – Social Work
Howard College Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0607/014M
Project title: The experiences of Zimbabwean students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Dear Mr Gumbo

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 12 June 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Professor V Sewpaul
cc Academic Leader Research:
cc School Administrator: Ms Ausie Luthuli

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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APPENDIX 2

13 May 2014

Mr Thomas Gumbo
College of Humanities
Howard College Campus
UKZN
Email: 210549952@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Dear Ms Mhatha

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

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

"The experiences of Zimbabwean students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by interviewing Zimbabwean students on the Howard College campus.

Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

MR MC BALOYI
REGISTRAR

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APPENDIX 3

Informed Consent Letter

Topic:The experiences of Zimbabwean students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Dear Participant

My name is Thomas Gumbo and I am conducting a research as part of my Social Work Master's degree. The research is to understand the experiences of Zimbabwean students studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

This study is important because many studies have been done on the experiences of international students internationally but there has been little research on the experiences of international students studying in South Africa in particular Zimbabwean students.

The interview will take 1.5 hours and with your informed permission I would like to audio record the interview. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you agree to participate, you are allowed to withdraw from the study at any given time. Refusal to participate in the study or withdrawal will involve no penalty whatsoever. I want to assure you that all information you provide will be kept confidential and that you will remain anonymous. All collected data will be stored in my hard drive and hard disc for a period of five years after which it will be destroyed but a hard copy of the final research will be available in the UKZN library and School website. No monetary or material compensation will be provided to the participants. Should participants display emotional reactions, I will provide support and make referrals when necessary to UKZN Counseling services on Howard Campus. Should you require feedback on the research outcomes a hard copy or an electronic copy will be made available to you.

For any further information please feel free to contact me or my research supervisor Professor Vishanthie Sewpaul. If you have any queries with regards to the rights of the research participants please contact Ms. P Ximba from the Research Ethics Offices.

Contact Details

Thomas Gumbo   Prof. Vishanthie Sewpaul

Tel: 0734740956   Supervisor

Email: 210549952@stu.ukzn.ac.za   Email: SEWPAUL@.ukzn.ac.za

Ms. PhumeleleXimba

Ethics Officer

Tel: 031-26035870

Declaration of Informed Consent

I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: The experiences of Zimbabwean students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent to take part in the study.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative consequences and that the information I provide will be anonymous and confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

Participant signature:

Date:

APPENDIX 4

Semi-structured Interview guide (conversational style interview in a relaxed environment with the interview guide used with flexibility)

Questions to be explored

1. What were the reasons that made you come to study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal? When did you come to SA?

2. What were your perceptions of South Africa before you came here?

3. How did you feel about leaving your home country to come and study in South Africa?

4. Tell me something about your initial experiences: a) in SA; and b) at UKZN

5. What are some of your current experiences as a foreigner in a) SA; and b) at UKZN?

6. What are the things that helped you with your adjustment to the University of KwaZulu-Natal?

7. What do you think would have made your adjustment easier at University of KwaZulu-Natal?

8. What are some of the challenges you faced in studying at University of KwaZulu-Natal?

9. How have you been coping with these challenges?

10. How have these challenges affected hindered your learning?

11. What kinds of contacts/relationships do you maintain with family/friends in Zimbabwe?

12. Do you feel any different when you are on the University campus compared when you off campus?

13. What are some of your positive experiences of studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?

14. What would you recommend that might make the experiences of international students at UKZN more positive?

Demographic data

1. Age

2. Gender

3. Current year of study

4. Degree registered for

5. Campus

6. Religious affiliation

7. Marital status

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8. Living on or off campus

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9. Financing of studies

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