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2017
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UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
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Migration: Exploring the experiences of international students studying in South African universities, a case study of University of the Witwatersrand

The Department of Social Work

School of Human and Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Bachelor of Social Work

By

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November 2017

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my own work and that I have given full acknowledgement to the sources used.

Gift Khumalo: 

Date: 11 December 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

To God, thank you for giving me the strength and courage to complete this research report.

I would like to pass my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Mr Mthobisi Ndaba who provided me with guidance throughout the course of completing my research paper. I really appreciate his patience and academic insights that he shared with me.

In addition, I would like to attend my gratitude to my family; my mother, Felistous Khumalo and my siblings for believing in me and their support through the course of my studies.

I would also like to thank my friends (Bafana Madida, Lehlogonolo Mogale, Moeketsi Koahela, Noma Bore, Sphamandla Nkambule, Thato Mokoena, Tshepo Radebe, Tumelo Moloi) for greatly supporting me and helping me throughout the research study. Their emotional and physical support does not go unnoticed and I am grateful to have them in my life.

Finally, I would like to thank all those that participated in the research study. I appreciate their efforts in making time for the interviews.

ABSTRACT:

International students found in South African universities are diverse and due to well-structured tertiary education, they are increasingly enrolling in the country every year. South Africa is amongst the many other countries in the world that are gradually increasing their efforts to attract international students (Verbik and Lasinowski, 2007) as cited in (Lee, 2010). This paper discusses the experiences of international students studying at the University of the Witwatersrand. In addition, an exploration of their challenges is made. Issues faced by international students in South Africa have been the subject of few South African studies with majority of studies done in the Western and Eastern countries. The approach utilised is the qualitative research approach and data was collected from 8 international students currently registered at the University of the Witwatersrand. The culture learning theory and ecological approach were used to understand the experiences the international students and the challenges associated with being a foreign national in South Africa. Interviews with participants were held and the data was analysed through thematic data analysis. Through the use of this data analysis, various themes were constructed from the data which include financial difficulties, experiences of social isolation, acculturalization, discrimination and many other themes. Moreover, the research study suggests that international students are faced with great difficulties in adjusting to the South African environment and the cultures. It also suggests that interpersonal relationships are essential for a successful integration and for a good health of the international students.

Keywords: *international students, adaptation processes, student experiences, cultural shock, discrimination*

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CHAPTER 1
THE INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Universities are increasingly required to educate a new generation of internationally competitive students, to create an environment where innovation, adaptability, and change are encouraged, to encourage students to engage in lifelong learning, to make connections between global and local demands, and to maintain their cultural identities (Chan & Drover, 1997; Gopinathan, 1997) as cited in McClure (2003). It is also reported that countries are gradually growing their efforts to attract students from other countries (Verbik and Lasinowski, 2007) as cited in (Lee, 2010). International students are freely welcomed into South Africa to take up tertiary courses. While in the country, they are faced with different experiences that either make their study stay pleasant or challenging. Therefore, this chapter introduces the problem statement and also highlights the rationale of the research study, its aims and objectives of the study and the research question.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The number of international students studying in South Africa has increased in the past years as South Africa has developed to be one of the few African countries where education is attainable and where tertiary institutions have been ranked amongst prominent international universities (Dominguez-Whitehead & Sing, 2015). It is reported that South Africa only constitute a fraction of international students enrolled in the United States and in the United Kingdom which is 764 495 and 480 755, respectively (Institute of International Education, 2012). The trend for students studying abroad is not a new one. Countries like the US and the United Kingdom are known to be the largest hosts of international students globally (IIE, 2012 as cited in Dominguez-Whitehead & Sing, 2015). "Developing countries host a significant number of international students. These countries seek to attract foreign students to their universities to improve the quality and cultural composition of the student body, gain prestige and earn income" (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 294).

It has been recorded that there has been an increase in the enrolment of international students in South African between the years of 1996 and 2006, in which the increase was by 54.55 percent (Du Plessis and Fourie 2011). Most students are recorded to be coming from different African regions in countries such as Botswana, Zambia, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and Congo. Even though it’s been reported that there has been a growth in the numbers of international students, there is little information shared about the experiences of international students in South Africa;

this includes the challenges that they are faced with, how the current issues such as xenophobia affect them and how the South African economy and socio-political issues affect them. Literature that has been written seems to be more about the experiences and challenges of South African students at the university. The literature does not pay attention to the experiences of international students alone in which Rosenthal, Russel, and Thomson (2008) state that international students have different experiences and challenges compared to local students as they are new to the country's university environment. They may, however, encounter similar challenges as local students which may be associated with social connections, relationships, intimacy or adapting to the teaching methods (Rosenthal, Russel and Thomson, 2008). The literature on South African students also explores the impact of race and previous inequalities of black students (Sennett, et al, 2003, Boughey, 2002) highlight the adjustment and adaptation issues that black students experience in historically white South African universities. Sennett et al (2003) discovered that black students struggled more and white students would score higher socially, academically, emotionally and on the institutional attachment of university adjustment. Exploring experience of international students will bring to light the adjustment issues that non-South Africans have, both white and black students. Given the increase in international students' intake, it is appropriate to engage on the impact that studying in South Africa has had on the international students.

Mori (2000) states that international students are a population that is different and very diverse. Mori argues that their unique concerns, fears and anxieties are conventionally overlooked. "The experience of international study can actually be harrowing for some students who experience social exclusion, linguistic and cultural barriers, a lack of understanding, racism, and other problems such as homesickness" (Mark, Thomas & Chui, 2009, p. 35). Therefore, it is essential that international students be afforded with effective social, cultural or economic support. Mark, Thomas and Chui (2009) state that effective support prevents the exploitation and social exclusion of international students. Based on published literature, it is evident that there is little said about experiences of international students in South African universities. Most literature published highlight experiences of international students studying outside Africa, not in Africa. It does not explore the experiences of overseas students and African students studying in other African countries. Therefore, the research study can possibly add to the body of knowledge and information in this field given that little literature is available on this topic.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the research study is to explore the experiences if international students studying at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The *objectives* of the study are as follows;

1. To establish international students positive experiences, if any, at the University of the Witwatersrand.
2. To establish international students' negative experiences, if any, at the University of the Witwatersrand.
3. To determine the way in which international students deal with the negative experiences.
4. To develop an understanding of international students experiences of South Africa as a host country.
5. To explore how the international students have adapted to the environment of the University of the Witwatersrand.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the experiences of international students studying at the University of the Witwatersrand?

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research study will adopt a qualitative research method, which involved exploring experiences of participants while studying at the University of the Witwatersrand. The study utilised the exploratory case study research design. 8 participants were used for the study. These participants were foreign nationals and came from various African countries, both undergraduates and postgraduate students at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The data collection tool used is semi-structured interviews in which the interview lasted no longer than 45 minutes per interview. The data received from the research study was analysed through thematic data analysis by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

To ensure a thorough understanding of the topic and to identify similar work that has been down within the areas of international students experiences, the research saw the importance of studying existing literature on experiences of international students. The impact of this was that the research gained an understanding of some of the experiences and challenges that come with being an international student in a foreign country, gained an understanding of the contributing factors that continue making international students' adaptation in the host country difficult and an understanding of how the students cope and some of their highlights about being international students. This chapter engages the literature on experiences of international students highlighting on the definition of international students, South African education for international students, migration, academic challenges, interpersonal challenges, financial challenges, health and well-being and culture shock. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the theoretical framework.

2.2 DEFINITION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

There is a growing number of international students enrolling in different universities across the globe mainly in industrialized countries in the US, the UK and France (IIE, 2012 as cited in Dominguez-Whitehead & Sing, 2015). Kelo et al (2006, p 210) highlight that international students are students who have at least a certain unit of a study program or a period time in a country in which they moved. All-Quhen (2012), as cited in Amaechi et al (2013, p. 1), defines international students "as students that are enrolled in an institution of higher education in a country where they are neither citizens nor refugees nor immigrants". This means that international students hold some form of documentation that is different from other foreign nationals such as asylums, refugee or citizen documentation. They may use what Africa Film Drama Art terms as a study permit which is used in South Africa.

2.3 SOUTH AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

South Africa as a developing country is known to be one of the few countries that cater to international students and that has a lot of international students. Access to the country's universities has increased over the years. However, there seems to not be consistency between the intake of international students and the foreign programs offered in South Africa. Altbach and Knight (2007), state that there has been a decrease in the country's foreign programs due

to the new government policies that African National Congress has put in place and the accreditation processes. These policies seem to be strict. Altbach and Knight (2007) report on the foreign institutions that have established themselves in South Africa; this includes Australia's Bond and Monash University and from the UK is De Montfort and the famous Netherlands Business School. Due to the 2007 reviews of all MBA programs, there has been a number of foreign institutions that have left the country (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

South Africa seems to have put emphasis on prioritizing diversity within the tertiary institutions of the country. Higher Education South Africa noted that "diversity and difference, whether social, geographic, national, cultural or linguistic in nature, are powerful well-springs of institutional vitality and personal, intellectual and institutional development" (2011, p. 6). Diversity within divisions of higher education is an important and essential disorder for human education. It develops the student's educational experiences; students learn from one another's experiences, principles, and views that may differ from their own. The quality of education decays in the absences of diversity, learning opportunities are restricted and inadequate without this phenomenon of diversity, and at most cases, this compromises the universities' ability to uphold its own missions and goals. New opportunities are introduced to students when they meet in the name of diversity.

2.4 MIGRATION

According to Rutha and Shaw (2007), as cited in Nunez (2009), South to South migration is prevalent in Africa with a total estimate of 14.5 million migrant originating in the sub-Saharan Africa, within that estimate, about 10 million of those migrants moved within the region. There has been a significant number of people moving from South African Developing Countries (SADC) to South Africa, from approximately 550 000 to 4 million between 1990 to 2000. What Nunez (2009) stresses is that the migrants found in South Africa reside in the country for a certain number of years and then go back to their national countries. It seems that the migrants still regard South Africa as a home away from home and they eventually return back to their birth countries.

International students are reported to face academic challenges, adaptation difficulties, interpersonal relations, and failure to interact with the local people and understand their cultures (Yeoh, Le & Doan, 2012). International students may encounter similar challenges as the local students which may be linked to social connections, networks, friendships, relationships and intimacy (Rosenthal, Russel &Thomson, 2008). How does one get to form relationships with new people they just come into contact with, who speak different languages

and have different beliefs and cultures amongst many other differences, of course not dismissing the similarities amongst them? This is one of the questions that, through this research, a deeper understanding can be obtained regarding the difficulties that international students face with social interactions and intimacy. Integrating into a new community is another aspect that has been explored in many research done (Andrade, 2006; Hsieh, 2007; Trice, 2003; Ninnes, Aitchison, & Kalos, 1999) and often is the important aspect as it is believed that an individual exists within the community and should not be seen separate from.

2.5 ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

According to Gebhard (2012), international students are faced with challenges of adapting the university life and one of the most deliberated difficulties in research are with the academic or educational language. International students often have troubles understanding the professors and their expectations and the grading systems they use. Huang and Klinger (2006) piloted a study with Chinese Graduate scholars at North American universities exploring their challenges. The results found that the students indeed had challenges academically and with the university medium language of instruction. Academic challenges noted include taking notes and articulation of their knowledge in academic essays and reading textbooks, giving verbal presentations in lectures, asking the lecturers questions and engaging with them, and interacting in seminar discussions (Huang & Klinger, 2006). The failure to participate in seminar discussions according to Han (2007) is due to the anxiety and having insufficient content knowledge. Academic challenges may be linked to language barriers. Zhai (2002) states that one of the hardest challenges that international students face during their adjustment period in United States universities is language and communication-related complications Communicating with lecturers and students, and between the students themselves is different. A lot of international students have language difficulties even though they are clever, it appears that a considerable difficulty they have is writing in English. That is an effort they have to go through, on top of everything else (Trice, 2003). The barriers to communication impact on their engagement with the course or academic work.

2.6 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

Interpersonal relationship challenges that international students face are closely accompanied by the feeling of loneliness and isolation. Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, and Ramia (2008) discovered that Australian international students experience loneliness and isolation. Sawir, et al, state that "Loneliness is experienced by all human beings at some time in life. It

is more likely to occur under circumstances such as prolonged absence from home or the loss of a significant other" (2008, p.151). This often occurs during their early months in the host country and university. They note that the usual cause for this is the loss of networks. When international students cross national borders, they leave their families and social networks and citizenship rights in the country origin (Sawir, et al, 2008). It had been discovered in the literature that international students find themselves socially isolated and Sawir states that they need to adjust to the new physical and social environment, the new cultural customs and norms. It is significant to highlight that there are diverse kinds of loneliness. Weiss (1973) notes that there is emotional loneliness and social loneliness and social networks. Humans experience either or both types of loneliness at some point in their lifetime and international students are no different. The consequences of emotional loneliness are either the loss of or lack of truly intimate ties (Weiss, 1973). This may compress of ties with parents or intimate partners. Social loneliness and social networks compromises of lack of social interactions with peers who share or partly share one's concerns or view of the world. According to Weiss (1973), it is characterized by boredom and feelings of explains and isolation. Both emotional and social loneliness and social exclusion make it hard for the international student to copy in the host environment. It is important to unpack the causes of loneliness amongst the international student population. In common situations, loneliness is caused by the death or separation of the person and their partners, friends or parents. Sawir et al (2008) state that relocation also causes loneliness highlighting that it may be caused by the separation not only from close relationships but also from the social connections that international students have and the support systems consequentially resulting in what is known as relational deficit (Rokach, 1989) as cited in (Sawir et al, 2008). Personality traits may also be another contributing factor to loneliness or rather it may be a way to explain why some international students experience loneliness. International students with high self-esteem are prone to build significant relationships in the new environment than those who have low self-esteem as they are usually reserved individuals who keep to self. Sawir et al (2008) explain that "personal characteristic can contribute to loneliness by reducing the desire for relationships, by triggering behaviours that result in unsatisfactory social interactions, and by leading the person to change his or her social relations. The experience of loneliness can trigger a withdrawal from social relations in an effort to contain the pain, reinforcing social isolation" (Peplau & Perlman, 1982) as cited in (Sawir et al, 2008, p. 153-154).

In a study conducted in one of the Thai universities (Lakey & Hill, 1988), it was stated that international students' are faced with difficulties in their personal relationships and the

communication with other local members belonging to the host countries. It was found that there is a link or relationship between communication difficulties and the level to which the Thai students adapted to the local culture. International students have great difficulties in engaging and interacting with other individuals in the host country. In the western countries, Sandhu (1991) highlights those language difficulties are towards speaking and writing in English. Sandhu (1991) highlights that these communication difficulties were caused by different pronunciation, enunciation, jargon, and use of special English words. In some universities in America, social interaction is limited to international students due to English proficiency, they find it hard to make friends and build social networks with the national students (Constantine, et al, 2005).

It seems that 'birds of the same feathers fly together' as literature points out that international students have a tendency of associating with one another. Zhai (2002) directed a study on international students in Thailand and the results showed that international students usually consulted with their other fellow international students on personal issues as they shared similar adjustment issues and seem to have understood one others struggles.

Loneliness cannot be only explained by the social relationships and interactions that international students have. Sawir et al., (2008) state that there are institutional sites of loneliness concluding that international students are also affected by institutional connections. In the study that was conducted with Australian international students, it was found that international students have challenges with forming institutional connections, these "include the exchange in classrooms, student-teacher relations, relations with university administrations, relations with government and other authorities" (Sawir et al, 2008, p. 157). International students are faced with difficulties in interacting in the host institutional settings and this hinders their success of trying to fit in.

Hendrickson, Rosen, and Aune (2011) state that research has demonstrated that international students have more friendships with people from their home country. In contradiction, research has demonstrated that form friendships with the host country students is more satisfactory, decreases homesickness and loneliness and increases social connectedness. Pangle (2002) as cited in Hendrickson, Rosen, and Aune (2011) argue that happy man will need friends. Friendships are regarded as important components in individual lives as they satisfy deep personal and emotional needs. They also help to reduce the feeling of loneliness and social exclusion. Friendship component forms part of Maslow's hierarchy of needs at the 3rd level. The level engages in the need for belonging and love (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006).

Bochner, Hutnik and Furnham (1985), Kudo and Simkin (2003) and Ying (2002) explain that one of the essential factors of acculturation, satisfaction, social support and success for international students studying in foreign countries in friendship formations. Based on some of the results of a research conducted with international students, Hendrickson et al (2011) discovered that international student friendships are with co-nationals and that international students highlighted language being a barrier for their social interactions. Many international students have a poor grasp and understanding of the local language and Hendrickson et al (2011) proclaim this as a difficult and affects the development of intercultural friendship.

2.7 FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

International students also face financial crisis or challenges (Zhai, 2002; Rosenthal et al, 2008; Harman, 2003; Liu & Wang, 2009). According to Harman (2003), financial difficulties continue being a worry for international students in Australia universities. This is towards their academic year and the University often fails to assist international students regarding this matter. In 2007, it was estimated that there were about 2 million international students across the globe and most of them were reported to be self-funding (Altbach, & Knight, 2007). This means that they and their families or parents would pay academic fees and living expenses from their individual pockets. This claim of financial challenges may be supported by a study project that was done with international students and concerns that were highlighted by the international students during this project were about costs of living and accommodation expenses (Amaechi, Bennett, Gunyu, Kayit, Okeke & Paciente 2013),

This supports the concern that Harman (2003) noted. International students form part of the whole university and cannot be seen outside it. Harman (2003) notes that this makes the university capital. They are reported to be the largest source of international learning; not the government, learning institutions or philanthropists (Altbach, & Knight, 2007). Financial issues affect the international students' health and wellbeing (Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2011).

2.8 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The ability for students to study and learn is affected by their health and wellbeing. According to Rosenthal, Russel, and Thomson (2008), health and wellbeing are the feelings of being happy, confident, being part of the community and being physically fit. The students' health and wellbeing are affected by what is happening in and around their lives. Some of these aspects are the social circumstances, the level of community and social engagement, living and financial conditions and employment. It is noted that the success of the international student in

the host country is dependent on how healthy they are (Rosenthal et al, 2008). The treatment that international students receive from host country students is not always pleasant. This type of treatment according to Rosenthal et al (2008) impacts on their health and wellbeing. Racism, harassment, and exclusions are indicated to be some of the experiences that international students noted in a student conducted by Rosenthal et al (2008). In South Africa, we have discrimination based on the country the international student is from. African students fall victim of the discriminatory treatment from host South African students. According to Rosenthal et al (2008) in a study that was conducted, 50 % of the students reported that they have experienced racism before and that they had concerns about their safety while studying at the University. What seems to be prevalent in the South African communities is the phenomenon of xenophobia which studies show that the impact has been severe on international students, particularly those from African countries.

It has become difficult to define xenophobia, particularly when looking at what has been happening in South Africa. The recent attacks on foreign national led to the conversation of whether these attacks can be referred to as xenophobic attacks or hatred towards other Africans. Some authors have gone as far as to refer to these attacks as Afrophobia (Masenya, 2017). Wimmer (2007, p 66), as cited in Monkhe (2012), defines xenophobia as "irrational fear and dislike of foreigners or strangers". Xenophobia is more complex and deeper than this definition. It is not an easy concept to define. This is evident in the actions of South Africans. The foreign nationals that are attacked during these xenophobia attacks are majority fellow African brothers and sisters, not those individuals from Western or Asian countries. According to Creswell (2006), Xenophobia refers to the extreme hate or fear of strangers or individuals from other countries. In South Africa, the fear has displayed itself through violence and tension toward foreign nationals by South Africans. Based on the definitions that have been provided by various authors (Masenya, 2017, Wimmer, 2007, Creswell, 2006), this paper chooses to define xenophobia as either a strong fear or dislike of foreign nations. Foreign nationals in South Africa have fallen victims of the brutal violence of xenophobia at the hands of South Africans nations as Carrim and Wangenge-Ouma (2012, p. 13) state that “the experiences, then, of non-South African Africans in South African universities, both at the levels of staff and students, cannot be assumed to be positive”. Misego et al (2009) report that xenophobia and its hostility is common in the region of Africa and in some countries in the region, foreign nationals are physically attacked. South Africans are infamously known for the attitude they have toward foreign nationals (Misego et al, 2009). Monkhe (2015) proposed that the country’s long history of segregation was a contributing factor to negative behaviour of citizens towards foreign

nationals. Xenophobia also owes its rise to the socio-economic and political conditions which can be argued to be caused by injustices of the past (Misego et al, 2009).

Misago et al., (2009) mention that according to the South African Migration Project (SAMP), born citizens of Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa are intolerant of foreign nationals, particularly African foreign nationals. Xenophobia has manifested itself in a lot of South African communities; such as townships and towns. This has allowed the exclusion of foreign nationals from services such as health and education to employment and local conversations.

Education plays a significant part in the discussing issues related to xenophobia or unfair treatment of foreign nationals in the country. International students are also affected by these attacks. The movement of the international students has been limited as they fear not knowing what might happen to them (Dominguez-Whitehead & Sing, 2015). According to Chimucheka (2012), there are still activities that still can't be done by international students alone, suggesting that the movement of international students is limited due to the perceived discrimination by South Africans to foreign nationals. In particular, evidence exists that international students refrain from travelling for leisure purposes (Dominguez-Whitehead & Sing, 2015).

Lee and Rice (2007) report that international students experience discrimination on the national level. This discrimination is observed in many current contexts; such as fingerprinting and profiling procedures, the long processes that international students have to go through to get their study permits or visas approved (Lee &Rice, 2007).

2.9 CULTURE SHOCK

Migration to another country for tertiary education means that the international student will be exposed to an environment that may be alien to them. This may include being exposed to different weather patterns, language, foods, water, people, norms, rules amongst many other factors. Many researchers (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2010, McLachlan & Justice, 2009,) state that those students that are new to the university normally experience what is known as homesickness. This is reported to be part of the main difficulties that international students face. The concept of homesickness may be defined as a "psychological reaction to the absence of significant others and familiar surroundings (Archer, Ireland, Amos, Broad, & Currid, 1998) as cited in Poyrazlie and Lopez (2010, p. 263). This psychological reaction is associated with the feelings of loneliness, isolation, unhappiness and adjustment complications in the university environment. Oberg defines “culture shock as anxiety that results from losing all of our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (1960, p. 177) as cited in (McLachlan &

Justice, 2009). Other authors have argued against the concept of culture shock, rather calling it transaction shock. Transaction shock refers to the encounters that individuals have when they are placed or move in an environment with a different culture (Bennett, 1998). Bennett (1998) defined the concept of transaction shock as a reaction to loss/damage and incomprehension caused by an alteration in one's accustomed environment that entails adjustment. In this paper, cultural shock and transaction shock are viewed as one. Therefore, the author uses cultural shock instead of transaction shock. Cultural shock and homesickness possibly lead to many other challenges international students experience. "These problems could be manifested as social withdrawal, inability to sleep well, sadness and depression, academic problems, and loss of self-esteem" (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992, p. 152).

2.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The culture learning theory guides the theoretical framework of this research study. The culture learning theory argues that the absence social skills may possibly result in cross-cultural difficulties for international students (Zhou, et al, 2008). Authored by Argyle and Kendon in 1967, the theory is a social psychology theory and it puts forward that international students are like strangers in the host university as they are not conscious of the norms and rules that regulate interpersonal conduct in the new culture, if they are aware, they unable or less inclined to put up with them (Bochner 1982; Furnham & Bochner 1982, Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Klineberg & Hull 1979) as cited in (Lakey & Hill, 1988). Culture learning focuses primarily on behavioural aspects of intercultural contact and regarding social interaction as a skilled and mutually organized performance (Argyle 1969). Using this theory, the shock will be understood as a stimulus for the acquisition of cultural-specific skills that are required to engage in new interactions. Argyle and Kendon (1967) highlight that the procedure of adaption is affected by a number of variables which include; universal knowledge and facts about culture, language competence, cultural distance and many other factors.

Culture learning takes into consideration the behavioural component associated with moving into a new space or area, the stress and coping mechanisms that international students apply and how the migration affects their well-being (Zhou, et al, 2008). This theoretical framework will be applicable as it will provide assistance with understanding the impact that migration has on the international students and help understand their adjustment issues and successes.

Another framework that will guide this research study is the ecological approach. This approach according to Pardeck (1988) informs that the primary premise for explaining human problems is derived from the complex interaction and interplays of psychological, social,

economic, political and physical forces. Basically highlighting that human individual problems stem from the environment in which they are placed in. The framework recognises the interactional relationship between the environmental conditions and the human conditions. An ecological approach is concerned with how persons interact with their environment. Furthermore, the framework is advantageous for establishing a holistic view of person-in-environment. This improves the understanding of relations between micro-meso-macro levels of an organization and it also improves contextual understanding of international students' behaviour.

2.11 CONCLUSION

The chapter highlighted the literature concerned with the experiences of international students. The literature was not only limited to South African writings but also expanded into the global scale with the aim of exploring how international students cope with being in a foreign country away from their families and their familiar environment and exploring also their experiences. Drawing from the literature noted in this chapter, it is clear that there is limited literature in the South African context of this topic. The next chapter engages the research design and methodology applied in this research study.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology used in the research study which is the qualitative approach. In addition, the chapter will engage in the research design used which is a case study, the population of international students used in the study, the non-probability purposive sampling procedure utilized, the research instrument and the data collection method., the chapter will explain the data analysis method used in the research study and further illustrate the ethical principles considered to guide the research study which includes obtaining informed consent, avoiding deceptive practices, preventing harm to the participants, protecting anonymity and confidentiality, providing the right to withdraw and competence of the researcher.

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The utilized approach in this research study is a qualitative approach. This approach was suitable for the research study as it encourages participants to expand on their responses allowing the research to receive rich in-depth data. Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (1998) state that qualitative research method attempts to deepen our understanding of how things occur in the social world. This approach is important in questions involving exploring how people experience something or what their views are (Hancock, et al, 1998), therefore, the research will be able to receive the experiences of international students. It was essential to use this approach for the research as Hancock, et al (1998) highlight that qualitative research approach tends to focus on how individuals or a group of individuals can have different various ways of looking at realities they face.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The design applied is the case study design. A case study design is the in-depth examination of an individual/ groups and a social phenomenon (Babbie, 2008). Using the case study allow for exploration and understanding of complex issues in the research study. Case study ensured that the experiences of international students were not explored and investigated only through one lens, but rather a diverse lens which allows for several surfaces (Baxter, & Jack, 2008). This was an exploratory case study, which Babbie states that “is the attempt to develop an initial, rough understanding of some phenomenon” (2008, p. 126). Zainal (2007) states that it sets to explore any situation or circumstances in the data which serves as a point of interest to the

researcher. Based on the information from Babbie (2008) and Zainal (2007), the exploratory case study was able to explore the population in an attempt to form an understanding of their experiences while studying at Wits University. The explanatory case study was essential in exploring international students' experiences which can assist the university to understand their experiences and assist develop strategies which will respond to the struggles that they experience.

The University of the Witwatersrand known to be "a remarkable university that is internationally distinguished for its excellent research, high academic standards and commitment to social justice" (University of the Witwatersrand, 2017). It is located in the Gauteng province in Johannesburg. The origins of the university date back to 1896 where it was located in Kimberley as South African School of Mines. It went through numerous changes during 1896 to 1922 where it was granted full university status. The university has produced the likes of Nelson Mandela, Sydney Brenner, Patrice Motsepe, Mamokgethi Setati, Thabo Makgoba and many more. The university is internationally recognised and has in the past years ranked in the top five of South African universities and also ranked amongst some of the best universities in the world. "Wits University has been ranked as the top university in South Africa for the fourth year in a row in the 2017 Center for World University Rankings (CWUR)" (Staff Writer, 2017). The university has also been ranked in the Times Higher Education 2017 rankings (Gumede, 2017).

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The sample was drawn from the international students' population studying at the University of the Witwatersrand. The sample was of 8 participants comprising of 4 males and 4 females. The age of the population varied between 18 and 30, in both undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

A non-probability purposive sampling procedure was utilised and McNeill (1990) defines it as a procedure where the sampling elements are selected using something other than a mathematically random process. The non-probability sampling that will be used is the purposive sampling. The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is defined as the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). These qualities include being an international student at the University of the Witwatersrand, able to speak English and registered for either undergraduate or postgraduate study. In simple terms, the research decided on what information needs to be known and then investigate the sample and finds individuals that can participate and are willing

to share information by virtue of knowledge or experience This sampling technique saves time, money and effort. The researcher already has knowledge about the population and it will be easy to get a sample of international students with specific characteristics. There will be a representation of international students from different countries studying at the University of the Witwatersrand. The researcher will approach the known international students, inform them about the research study and ask them to participate. Due to students being currently busy with exams and some having left to go home, it was a challenge to access international students. However, this did not discourage the research as potential participants were called in the interviews. In addition, the research had to travel to different university campuses to reach the participants.

3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The research instrument that employed in this research study is semi-structured interview schedule. This research instrument is referred to as a verbal interchange where the interviewer attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions (Longhurst, 2003). A list of predetermined questions was asked by the researcher. Through the use of semi-structured research instrument, the researcher was able to ask questions in details. All participants in the research study were asked the matching questions to ensure that the data collected be much more focused. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to use the skill of asking open-ended questions to probe in detail on the given questions. To confirm that the questions were easy to understand, the research study was piloted.

Pilot study/ "pretesting is generally defined as the testing of a set of questions or a questionnaire on subjects from the target population" (Voicu, Babonea & Dumitru, 2011, p. 8). Faux (2010) states pre-testing is important as attention is made to design and format of questions, and is particularly important to ensure that questions are easy to understand for the participants. The pre-test was done with one male and one female international student. The researcher was able to test the time it takes for a participant to complete questions or interview, assessed how the ability for individuals to understand and respond to the questions. The pre-test indicated that participants can answer the questions in less than 45 minutes. The interview questions were responded to with less difficulty.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

Data was being received through one-on-one in-depth interviews. The in-depth interview "takes an unstructured, qualitative approach. The questions asked will be mostly open-ended

and overall the degree of control over both the order and content of the interview is less than in a structured interview" (Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2007, p. 27). The use of open-ended questions allowed the participants the opportunity to easily respond to the questions posed to them and in whichever way they want (Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2007). The use of in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to prompt if they are looking for more information or seek clarity. This method will also give the researcher the freedom to probe the participants to elaborate or ask follow-up questions.

. The researcher explained the participant information sheet (Appendix A) and received consent from the participants (Appendix B). This action was done to inform participants about the aims and objectives of the research study and for them to give participation consent knowing why the study is being conducted. In addition, the interviews were tape-recorded and the interview was conducted in English. The interviews were conducted within the university premises. They were given an opportunity to ask for clarity if they didn't understand the question and the researcher was able to probe for more details about the responses. The interviews lasted for less than 45 minutes.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis refers to the collection and organization of data so that the researcher can come to a conclusion about the research study. This research applied the qualitative analysis which Babbie (2008) explains as methods for examining social research data without converting them to the numerical format. Through the use of qualitative data analysis, thematic analysis was used to conclude on the findings of the research. Thematic analysis refers to a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 79). The process of thematic analysis begins with data collection when the researcher looks for patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data. The end process speaks to reporting on the content and meaning of patterns in the data. These patterns may be referred to as themes. Information shared by participates was categorized into different themes. According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), themes capture something important about the data being received in relation to the research questions and they signify some level of patterned response and meaning within the data set.

The researcher follows the 6 steps of thematic analysis mentioned by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006, p. 87).

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:

This step is achieved through transcribing data, reading and re-reading it and noting down initial ideas.

2. Generating initial codes:

Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, organising data relevant to each code.

3. Searching for themes:

Organising codes into potential themes and gathering all collected data relevant to each of the potential theme.

4. Reviewing themes:

Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.

5. Defining and naming themes:

The coding systems that have been established are refined to allow it to incorporate the overall story the analysis tells, therefore, producing flawless meaning and names of each noted theme.

6. Producing the report:

This is the final opportunity for analysis. Selection of intense, bring together extract examples, the final analysis of particular extracts, relating back to the analysis of the research question and literature and constructing a flawless scholarly report of the analysis.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Obtaining informed consent

This process involved getting consent from the participants to participate in the research study. Participants were informed about the procedures, benefits, the risks of taking in the study. Prior the interview commencing, the participants were given the information sheet to read through. The information sheet was also explained to them. In addition, they were given the consent form to read and sign on to give permission to be asked questions and to be tape recorded. Trochim (2006) argues that the participants must give full, voluntary and conscious consent to be interviewed and they must either sign a consent form or give verbal consent that is recorded. In response to Trochin's argument, the participants in this research voluntary consented to partake in the research study.

Avoiding deceptive practices

This ethical consideration was achieved through the process of receiving informed consent. The participants were not deceived into taking part in the research study. The research informed

the participants that taking part in the study has no material benefits. They were informed that they would not be compensated.

Preventing harm to the participants

The researcher ensured that the participants felt protected during the interviews. The participates were explained to that should any harm transpire; physical, psychological or social harm, the research would assess and determine whether it is safe or appropriate to continue with the study. The researcher would provide the participants with information on counselling services available within the university premises. Participates would be referred to Wits CCDU should they be emotionally affected by the interview.

Protecting anonymity and confidentiality

Protecting the anonymity and confidentiality of the participant is at the heart of this research study because it is understood that not every participant would want to openly disclose their information (Trochim, 2006). To ensure anonymity, the researcher uses pseudonyms to transcribe data collected. Participates were informed of this and confidentiality. In addition, information about the supervisor having access to the information collected during the interview. To respond to confidentiality, the data collected will be stored in a computer with a password to ensure that only the supervisor and the researcher have access to it.

Providing the right to withdraw

Trochim (2006) states that if the participant decides to withdraw from the research study, they should not be persuaded or pressured to remain in the study the participant has right to refuse to participate, or withdraw from the study at any stage and for any reason. This was important in this research study as the researcher does not wish to subject the participants to something they do not want to partake in. It would be unethical for the research to do so.

Competency of the researcher

"Empathy involves responding to another's emotion by acquiring a similar emotion, and focuses on the "feeling another's emotion" aspect of empathy" (Oxley, 2011, p. 22). In simple terms, empathy involves putting oneself in another person's shoes. Our ability to empathize is key to our success as researchers. To understand the human conditions, social relations, cultural meanings we must first understand and only after that to engage in the conversations. Therefore, the researcher used the skills of empathy.

3.9 LIMITATIONS

The research tool used of interviews can be a limitation observed in this research study. This is with regards to the time constraints and having to document all the experiences of the

participants with the aim of ensuring that they are heard. Some interviews took time to complete due to the participants having a lot to share. This limitation is supported by Opdenakker (2006) who highlights that interviews are time-consuming and emphasises that preparation for the interviews also takes time. Another limitation that is worth mention is access to the participants. The interviews were conducted during a busy time of the year, exams times and most international students were not on campus. Therefore, this limited access to them.

3.10 CONCLUSION

In summary, this chapter has engaged on the methodology used in this research study. Topics that were discussed in the chapter include the research design, the population of the study, sampling method and the procedure used, research instrument and method of data collection. Data analysis utilized in the research study was also used and last, the chapter addressed ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS/ FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Data analysis refers to the collection and organization of data so that the researcher can come to a conclusion about the research study. This research applied the thematic data analysis process which according to Braun and Clarke (2006) discusses the method of classifying, analysing and reporting on themes within data. The use of thematic analysis allowed for the information or data collected to be group into categories or theme making it easy to analyse it. According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), themes highlight something significant about the data being received relative to the research question and they signify some level of patterned response and meaning within the data set.

This chapter presents the findings of the research study. The research study focused on exploring the experiences of international students while studying in South African universities; a case study of the University of the Witwatersrand. The objectives of the research study presented in this chapter are guided by the questions posed to the participants and their responses. In total, there were 5 objectives which introduced different themes.

4.2 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the research study different range of degrees, this included, social work, clinical psychology, general psychology, information systems and applied mathematics. The years of study was different in that the participants would either be in undergraduate studies or postgraduate studies.

Table 4.2.1 Profile of participants (N=8)

Demographic	Sub-category	Number
Gender	Male	4
	Female	4
Age	18 – 30 year	8
Educational level	Undergraduate studies	5
	Postgraduate studies	8
Country of origin	Zimbabwe	5
	Cameroon	1
	Nigeria	1
	Tanzania/ Swaziland	1

Objective 1

4.3 To establish international students positive experiences, if any, at the University of the Witwatersrand.

This was an exploration of the positive experiences that the international students have had since the beginning of their study period at the university. Most participants reported that their study period has been worth enjoying. An exploration of their academic and social experiences was made in which most participants responded on their academic performances and their interactions with other people in the university.

4.3.1 Academic excellence

"The attainment of optimal academic performance requires more than high-quality instruction and requisite mental ability on the part of students: it requires personal initiative, diligence, and self-directive skills" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 85). Most participants reported that their positive academic experiences were related to adapting to the teaching methods and the structure. Adapting seemed important as some participants reflected that they have been able to achieve good marks. It is important for any university student to have a strong grounding in the critical and conceptual theories of their chosen field. Stoynoff (1997) states that language proficiency and selected learning and studying strategies correlate with students' academic performances. Therefore, international students through the use of diverse learning and studying approaches found it easy to adapt to the academic expectations.

One participant said that, *"My study and computer skills have improved, including my social skills. I have learnt how to be accommodative and how to deal with people".*

Other participants stated that, *"Everything has been good. I have not experienced anything bad" "It's a new environment for international students, so you get more exposure about the African continent in general as opposed to just knowing your own country. Academically it has exposed me to a lot of theories and theorists and academics from other countries as well".*

"Academically it's been a good experience as I have been receiving certificates from the university since my first year for getting A's"

It appears that the participants have unique academic experiences. While other appreciate the type of information that they learn within their unique degrees, other appreciate their personal growth and personal academic achievements. Langston (1994) argues that positive experiences that people have impacts on their cognitive processes. The experiences also impact on how they perceive their learning environment. Positive experiences may be perceived and appraised as opportunities in which Ramsay, Barker and Jones (1999) argue that individuals can utilise

and capitalise on such opportunities in a way that enhances their learning and development. Receiving A's or good marks is one of the drivers to positively experiencing academic life for one of the participants. The participants are unique in their academic positive experiences.

4.3.2 Forming Relationship/ Interactions

Amongst other changes, adjusting to a new environment means learning to form social interaction with new people that one comes across. This theme describes the type of positive experiences that the participants have had while studying at the university. Furthermore, the theme looks at the types of relationships that participants have managed to form.

Most participants indicated that they don't struggle forming relationships with the national students. They didn't neglect their individual difficulties of trying to find their own place to fit in the university and finding people that they will befriend. They indicated that it was a challenge to form friendships in the first months. The participated noted that their national peers were welcoming and friendly towards them.

One participant, a Zimbabwe national indicated that, *"It has been easy for me to form friends. The friends I have are mostly South African and a few Zimbabwean".*

Another participant, a Zimbabwe national indicated that, *"My first days here in South Africa were challenging as I did not have any friends and didn't know the language. However, I have a lot of South African friends now"*

Another participant, a Nigeria national indicated that, *"My social experiences have been remarkable especially with regards to the friendships I have made since I got here"*

It does appear that forming friendship is one of the important experiences that the participants have regarding their social positive experiences. Buote et al (2007) argue that it is essential to create friendship relationships as friends provide numerous benefits and fulfil various functions in a person's life. Tokuno (1986) as cited in Buote et al (2007) states that these functions include this following; being a role model, a listener, a person who understand, a critic and an adviser, and most important, a companion.

Through the friendships and peer relationships formed, international students feel a sense of fitting in the new environment as they are provided with guidance on how the university structure work, the cultures in place, and most importantly they are accepted for who they are. In addition, their peers teach them local languages. This is evident as one of the participants stated that, *"People are friendly this side. If you want to talk to some of the locals they are more welcoming, and for the first days during my 1st year of study, some of my friends had been*

isiZulu speaking locals; and they challenged me to learn isiZulu; because most of the time they communicated in IsiZulu. Also socially I have made a lot of friends with the local people"

Objective 2

4.4 To establish international students' challenges, if any, at the University of the Witwatersrand.

International students are faced with various challenges while studying at the university. These challenges range from adapting to the new environment, forming relationships with people, adapting to the South African culture, language difficulties, financial and academic challenges. One challenge leads to another and impacts on their academic performance and their well-being while in the country. The themes that arose from exploring their challenges capture the following; language barriers in social interactions, interactions with lectures

4.4.1 Language barriers in social interactions

The University of the Witwatersrand caters for many South African coming from different backgrounds, provinces and who speak different languages. One can easily get overwhelmed with all the 11 official spoken languages, especially when they are new to the environment and trying to adjust to it. This is the case with international students.

Academic (English)

Gebhard (2012) states that international students are faced with challenges of adapting the university lifestyle and amongst many difficulties, the most discussed difficulties in research are with the academic language. Some participants indicated that they had fewer challenges academically and with the university medium language of instruction. English as the medium of instruction was noted not to be a challenge by the participants. When exploring if there were any academic challenges that participants have experienced, the following responses were recorded.

One participant said that, *"No, because of my background. I am Tanzanian and my first language is English. Therefore, I didn't experience any language difficulties. However, there was that aspect of the challenge. This was related to the structure of my course. It is reading intensive. I was explored to reading journals with high levels of English and that was a challenge for me".*

Another participant mentioned that, "*Not really. I come from a French-speaking country and they prepared us well with English so I don't struggle. I have never been really blocked from my learning because of anything".*

The ability for the participants to easy understand English can be explained from a globalization point of view. Held et al (2000) state that globalisation refers to the worldwide convergence in the education and other sectors. Globalisation is changing the way in which English is taught and learnt as a foreign language or second language. Most of the countries that the participants come from (Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Nigeria, Swaziland), English is mostly taught as a first language and as a second language. The advantages of this are that they are able to communicate in the English language with little difficulties if not any.

One of the participants mentioned that her academic challenges were related to field work or what is known as practicals in her course. She said that, *"I had a lot of negative experiences regarding placements. For instance, during my 2nd year of study, I was placed in KwaThembu* where I was tasked to conduct a Ke-Moja project aimed at creating drug awareness among young people. Language became a barrier between me and the most of the local school kids given they have no masterly in English".* The school learners spoke in local languages which was a challenge for the participant considering that she did not have much knowledge about any local languages.

Academic (Lecturers)

Other worth discussing issues were raised which provided insight into the interactions that international students have with their lecturers. The issue raised an area of cultural conflict and mutual misunderstanding which is related to the approaching tutors and lecturers with academic difficulties.

One participate indicated that, "*It is not easy approaching the different lecturers as I don't think they understand me".*

Another participant noted that, *"I don't consult often. I would rather ask my friends for help than my lecturers".*

One of the participants gave a rather intriguing response about lecturers and their attitudes to her. She said, *"The first assumption is that you're Zimbabwean and you're smart which is not the case always. This makes it difficult for me to consult with them because I feel like they already have an expectation about us. They expect us to perform better than others"*

Based on participants' responses, there is sometimes unclear conflict between them and the lecturers. This limits them successfully approaching their lecturers for help. It seems that the participants don't feel comfortable approaching local lecturers.

4.4.2 Social challenges

The participants of the research study indicated that they have social experiences. These experiences differed with each participant recalling their personal experiences. Xiang (2017) states that international students interactions with other people form part of their social life, therefore forming their social experiences. Their interactions form an integral part of their university experiences. This is an exploration of the social challenges that the participants face when leaving their birth countries in pursuit of studying in South Africa.

One participant said that, *"I can say personally I have been very scared to go to Johannesburg Central all by myself, due to the negative connotation of criminal activities. And in terms of friendship, there has not been any negative experiences"*

Another participant stated that, *"For me, for example during the xenophobic attack I was very scared because I had to walk across the city central to get to university campus; but however it never happened to me personally, I got to witness fellow non-citizens victimized as I walk past the street".*

4.4.3 Financial challenges

International students are required to pay an upfront fee soon after registering with the university. This seems to have been one of the financial challenges that participants have as they stated that they had difficulties paying the university fees. This included both accommodation fees and tuition fees.

One of the participant noted that, "Firstly, the 75% that we international students must pay on registration period is very challenging, because in terms of accommodation I cannot stay at the university residence because my parents since am self-funded, cannot afford to make the 75% payment towards the academic fees and University Residence accommodation. In terms of tuition fees also, the 75% is a challenge, because I end up leaving other majors module out in order to keep the tuition fees for that particular year at a minimum".

Another participant said that, "We are expected to pay 75% upfront fee for everything including tuition and residence, the R5000 for the international levy. The problem is with international students is that not all of us can easily get the money. If you don't have that money for can't register. The university gives until end of March to pay. In my previous university, UKZN, international students and national students are given the same deadline to pay the fees and they require you to pay the 75%".

Another participant shared the same sediments as most of the participants as she said, "This year was particularly had. As a Zimbabwean, I couldn't get my money from home because they had frozen access to it here in South Africa. I had to find other ways of accessing it. The international office wasn't much help".

Participant perceive paying the upfront fee payments to be a challenge paying. Hence they all reported that they struggle to pay it. Most of the participants indicated that they are self-funding with their parents paying for them. This supports Harman (2003) argument that international student have financial difficulties and it remains a concern for most of them. The university makes its capital from international student intake and Altbach and Knight (2007) reported that the largest source of funding comes from international students, not the government or philanthropists. It is no surprise that the university requires participants to pay an upfront fee of 75 %.

The process of getting money to pay the upfront fee is one of the challenges that participants made mention of. This was reported to be caused by issues within their born countries and they bank withdrawal daily limits. One of the participants expressed her emotional well-being as she struggled to get the money that the university required. She said,

"I really struggled during registration. When you get here you need to have all the money and it's really hard and I appreciate that Wits says being in 75% but it's hard. I had a daily limit so I had to withdraw R4000.00 every day". I remember I was at the international office, I said to this guy that I was going to sit on the floor and cry now because they were not saying to me that I need to go back to Swaziland and withdraw the money. It was really frustrating". According to Forbe-Mewett and Sawyer (2011), financial difficulties affect international students' health and well-being. For this one participant, the frustrations that came with organising the money affected her emotions to an extent where she had to cry out her feelings.

Objective 3

4.5 To determine the ways in which international students deal with the challenges they face.

Individuals deal with their circumstances differently depending on which strategy works for them. The participants indicated that they have academic, social and financial difficulties. An exploration on how they deal with those challenges was made and most indicated that they

consult their friends as they are the close social support systems that they have. In addition, the participants reported on the family support they receive.

4.5.1 Dealing with the challenges

It is important to explore the interpersonal and intrapersonal factors related to how the participants deal with the challenges and difficulties they face, social, academics or financial. People are different and they cope with challenges and difficulties they face differently. This was evident in the research study as the different participants reported on their coping strategies and commented on the extent that the strategies have worked on them. These are some of the responses given by the participants

"I try by all means to be that person that avoids challenging situations; for example the xenophobic attacks taking place, I try not to go out frequently and avoid public space",

"First, overcoming my fears about the City Central, I use to travel with a friend most of the time during my first year level of study. However, this year I was placed in the City Central; that challenged me to face my fears and start walking all by myself in the city because I have to for supervisions",

"I just learn to adapt; be more open to new cultures and new trends" and "I approach my friends sometimes, though I have learnt to deal with my issues on my own".

Being accepted at university is one of the biggest achievement worth celebrating for most high school learners. It is a forever lasting excitement. The beginning of the academic year for international students at university is one that brings much enthusiasm and energy to them, however, it is also one that is filled with uncertainty and sadness. This is due to migration from the original born country to South Africa. International students go through a series of stages before adjusting and adapting to the new environment and new country. This possibly takes about a few months depending on the type of person. Participants explained how they individually deal with challenges they are faced with.

4.5.2 Social support system

Research indicates that the loss of support has a great impact on the psychological well-being of the international students. The results of this research indicate that participants seek and find support from those that they are close to, either be classmates or friends. It also indicates that the participants try to reach other to their families back home but it is difficult as there are international call rates and the distance puts a strain on their relationships with family members. Even after they have found social support from friends and peers, (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992) states that it is very challenging for international students to establish similar and

comparable social support systems with the locals. This social support was explained to be emotional, financial and academically. In addition, the friends of the participants were noted to be both international and national students.

One participant noted that, *"My friends support me morally sometimes"*

Another participant said that, *"I have supportive friends and we normally study together"*

In contrast to the above participant responses, one of the participants (7) reported that she did not have much social support stating that *"People at the university don't care... in terms of family, I don't have a close relationship with my dad and my mom passed on. So, I don't have any support and that contributes to feelings of loneliness"*

"In order to understand how international students relate to others in an unfamiliar cultural environment, it is also important to understand their sense of social connectedness in addition to their satisfaction with their social support systems" (Yeh & Inose, 2003, p. 17). Participant (7) seems more of a reversed person and therefore is bound to experience loneliness and finds herself with little or no friends at all. Social connectedness is important to mention as the concept refers to the aspect of self that manifests the subjective recognition of being in close relationship with the social world (Lee and Robbins, 1995, 1998) as cited in (Yeh & Inose, 2003). It measures how people come together and interact. Social connectedness then guides how individuals portray their thoughts, feelings and behaviour in social situations. It may be assumed that Participant (7) has a low sense of connectedness and she seemed to view the university life more negatively from the university residences, the students and the other university structures.

4.5.3 Use of university resources

The university has vast resources that are accessible to almost all the registered students. These range from libraries, computer labs, counselling units, Wi-Fi, international office, museums, bus services, heritage sites and many other resources. Most of these resources are in place to assist students with their academic work and ensure that they achieve their greatest potential while at the university. The participants made many references to the international office in which they either criticised it for failing to assist them or they gave minimum positive comments about it.

One of the participants, a Zimbabwean commented on the ineffectiveness of the international office. In her comment, she also took into consideration how the office has been helpful. She said that *"I don't understand what the international office does throughout the year. They don't help us in any way. We don't get communication from them. Recently they have been helpful*

as they allow us to call home to check how things are in the current situations. They don't try to make the broad university aware of where we are coming from especially with the money issue. The international office knows of the factors affecting Zimbabwean students while they are here but they do nothing about it"

Another participant mentioned that she was currently using the university counselling services. She said *"The resource I use is CCDU [also known as Careers Counselling Development Unity]. It has been good going there. I go there because I am distressed about things currently happening in my life"*

Only one participant mentioned that they use the counselling services at the university. This does not come as a shock as the participants seem to have unique seeking patterns and have their own preferences. One of the participants highlighted that he deals with his challenges and difficulties alone, while others indicated that they approach friends or just keep it to themselves with the hope that the challenge will eventually go away. Another factor that could possibly be less influencing the participants to utilize the counselling services offered to them by the university is the stigma that this attached to seeing psychologists, therapist or social work counsellors. To further explain the less usage of counselling services, one of the participants commented during the interview saying that because she is Zimbabwean, the lecturers think that she is smart. This speaks to the already thought of assumptions about international students that the academic staff members have.

The most mentioned resource the participants reported on was the library, university Wi-Fi and the computer labs. Some participants even went as far to mention the bus services. This indicated that international students make use of the university resources. This is was recorded to be academically based on all participants.

Objective 4

4.6 To develop an understanding of international students experiences of South Africa as a host country

The participants in this research study reported that they had experiences beyond the university premises meaning that they have had positive and negative experiences outside the university and campus life. These experiences were mostly related to the university surrounding which is Johannesburg central. The participant commented on the structure and resources of the country in comparison to their born countries.

4.6.1 Comparisons between South Africa and their birth countries

Responses given by participants was positive in that they indicated that South Africa has better access to resources and opportunities.

South African is reported to be part of the developing countries and "for people in less developed countries [or developing countries], limited access to education in their own countries led to a significant rise in the number of international students studying overseas" (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 82). This explains why one of the participants, a Zimbabwean said that, *"I do think there is a huge difference. South Africa is more developed compared to my home country Zimbabwe economically. In terms of higher education, South Africa has more to offer to its students, when it comes to basic education Zimbabwe has more to offer on that side; hence why I decided to come to South Africa for my Higher Education. Looking at the university rankings, South Africa is always number one in Africa"*

Other participants made mention of the freedom of association and freedom of speech. This seems to excite participants as they noted that in their countries freedom of expression is limited or censored.

Another participant reported that, *"the freedom that we have here is not the freedom that we have back home. There is freedom of speech and freedom of interaction. We don't have that at home"*. In addition, another participated noted that, *"With regards to Cameron; the difference in with the culture. South Africa keeps its culture and language. People are close to their families here. In Cameron, it's different and we are taught in French and English even when you're with family you speak those languages. South Africa is different as people speak their languages"*.

These responses highlight that the push and pull factors that affect students in continuing their studies outside their country of origins. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) highlight that there is lack of access to quality higher education in most African countries. This may be one of the possible push factors and seems to be the key driver or influencer to student immigration to South Africa. In the world rankings, South African universities are rank amongst the top 5, this includes the University of the Witwatersrand. Other factors that seem to be evidently influencing participants in studying in the country include the language commonalties and geographical proximately. An example can be Zimbabwe and Swaziland. Both countries are on the borders of South Africa and languages spoken there are similar to South African languages.

4.6.2 Discrimination

It is important to acknowledge that there is a difference between xenophobia and discrimination. Xenophobia is a form of discrimination in which Wimmer (2007, p 66), as cited in Monkhe (2012), defines as "irrational fear and dislike of foreigners or strangers". While discrimination is showing favour, prejudice or bias for or against a person because of various reasons such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender, age, status, social origins or language and birth.

One participant said that, *"*

Oh no, in terms of xenophobia not really directly; and in terms of discrimination I can also say no, I have not experienced any form of discrimination that I am aware of"

"No, I haven't. I wouldn't put myself in a situation where I will be discriminated by someone else or go around telling people where I am from. I understand why people commit xenophobia, there are no jobs in South Africa".

"No, discrimination is a broad term and it's very invasive. Normally, it's just been the comments here and there. But in terms of accessibility to resources, no I haven't. I hear comments like the foreigners should leave campus because they are just here to use our resources. Even with some of the services providers here. When you greet them they don't respond or they made comments" the participant continued to say "you know when something becomes recurring, it does start to bother you. It does sound like face value comments but when you bring in everything together that I am away from home, its school pressure, I have to travel far to get to campus and I have to deal with his".

Participants seem to understand xenophobia from the violent attacks on foreign nationals. Most indicated that they have not experienced discrimination yet in their responses they make comments about the unfair treatment and unjust comments they receive from the local students. The treatment that international students receive from the locals is not always positive or pleasant. Rosenthal (2008) states that this type of treatment affects their health and well-being. In addition, the participants' movement has been limited because of the hostility of many South African. To support this Dominguez-White and Sing (2015) urge that international student refrain from travelling for leisure purposes and their movements are limited as they fear what might happen to them.

<u>Objective 5</u>

4.7 To explore how the international students have adapted to the environment of the University of the Witwatersrand.

From the interview and analysis of the data collected it was clear that most of the participant found it hard to adapt to the university environment. In their process of trying to adapt, they were met with many challenges that hindered their successful interaction with the environment and the local people within the university. It was evident from their responses that the university structures was also failing to meet their needs and effectively respond to their challenges.

4.7.1 South African environment and culture

Given that the participants are new to the environment and South Africa being a country with vast cultures, they encounter cultures that are different from theirs. Some participants' cultures are similar to those of South Africans and they still noted that they struggle. The South African environment does not give space for foreign nationals to easily adapt to it because of its high numbers of people who speak different languages, from different tribes and backgrounds, who have different beliefs and endure have different cultures. Culture refers to the social behaviours and norms found in communities and societies. Swartz states that it "includes beliefs, tradition, values, and language; it also mediates practices by connecting individuals and groups to institutionalised hierarchies" (2012, p. 1). Most participants indicated that it was difficult adapting to the South Africa environment.

One participant said that, *"At first it was difficult simply because you in a new country you do not know anyone, and also you struggle to find your way around the university"*

Another participant noted that, *"It was difficult to adapt in the first year, it got better as the years went by".*

Participants found that it was a difficult process to adapt to the South African environment and most made references to the university environment. This is not surprising as most of the participants have been only explored for the university environment. Essadoh (1995) and Mori (2000) highlight that being an international student involves adapting to new education and new social environments and this can be stressful to them. In most cases, the difficulty in adapting to a new environment for international students results in loneliness. According to Sawir (2008) explains that the loss of close relationships such as friends, family, siblings, children and neighbours affects international students to varying degrees. While others may seek to engage more with the new environment, others struggle. Other participants reported that it was less of a challenge for them adapting to the South African environment making reference to the university.

One participant mentioned that, *"I found it quite easy. At the beginning, it was a bit hard, especially in the first year. You just need a group to study with to make things easier and that's how I have got by. In essence, you can't do it by yourself. You need a group".*

Another participated indicated that, *"I am able to quickly adapt but it was difficult. In my first year I was a loner and as time went by people opened up and they taught me some things about South Africa".*

"No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe" - this quotes highlights the importance of forming relationships in order to feel a sense of belonging in society. An individual does not exist in isolation to others. Weiss (1973), as cited in Sawir (2008) notes that the feeling of loneliness is this absence of necessary relationships. In this case, participants that experiences loneliness don't have the necessary relationships during their stay in the country. Some participants provided ways of adapting to the environment noting the importance of having of having groups that would assist you in what you need and forming relationships with the local. Should international students fail to satisfy their need to belong, negative feelings are generated, which include stress and loneliness.

4.7.2 Acculturalisation

When exploring how the participants are adapting to the local cultures, most of them indicated that they had not been exposed to the South African cultures. This may be because the participants spend most of their time on the university premises. However, this is not to say that within the university, the South African cultures don't play out as there are local people from with different cultures. It seems like on campus, it is minimum and because of the structure of the university, western structure, local people don't actively showcase their cultures. Therefore, it seems that the participants had little experiences of the South African cultures.

One participant stated that, *"I haven't been fully exposed to the South African culture".*

Another participant noted that, *"I can't really say I have any experience with the South African cultures".*

Other participants shared shares stories about their experiences on what they regard as the South African culture. These stories shed light on what is known as acculturalization. Acculturalisation "refers to a person's ongoing experiences in a different cultural setting to make that setting liveable through incorporating the existing self with the host culture's demands" (Ozbay, 1993, p. 4).

One participant said that, *"In terms of the South African Culture, I have not really been exposed to that side. But however, at the university level, it's a fusion of diverse cultural groups and practice. As for me, I got to learn isiZulu out of all other South African languages because of my close friends who are isiZulu speaking"*

Another reported that, *"It wasn't that easy. The English language was difficult to adapt to considering that I have even been explored to the coloured people's English. The taxi culture made it more challenging at first. You get into a taxi and don't know what to do with the money and people talking in their unique languages. It took me more than a year to learn what a normal South African would do in a normal situation. Especially in the social environments and learning how to behave".*

These responses are a clear indication that being exposed to a new environment with different cultures can take its toll on oneself. The participants had to learn how things are done culturally differently in South Africa with the aims of adapting to the South African environment. Learning the local language seems to be an important aspect in adapting and makes a considerable difference. This is to bridge the gap in communication between themselves and the local people. Language is noted to interrelate with other factors considered in the process of adaptation (Ozbay, 1993). It allows for communication and building relationships in given circumstances.

4.7.3 Social isolation in interactions

Participants highlighted that their interactions with the local people have been good. Their responses seem to have been based on their positive relationships that they have formed with them. Most participants indicated that the local people that they have interacted with have been welcoming towards them.

One participant said that, *"My interactions with South Africans is okay because most of my South African friends we have similar interest and personality, making our interactions and association very easy and harmonious"*

Another participant stated that, *"I feel like most South African here at Wits University, they are very supportive and welcoming. For example, during the xenophobic actions 2015, fellow South African students didn't take part in such and never attacked us as international students".*

This suggest that even though adapting to the South African environment and having difficulties with languages and culture, the participants have positive social interactions with the locals. Their social interactions are understood to be with the locals that they are close with and is not limited. Most of them were socially active. However, it should not be neglected that

they also encounter social isolation. This is greatly due to language barriers and not sharing the common interest and knowledge that South African have amongst themselves.

One participant said that, *"I have felt left out in interactions many time. Most of the times it's related to academic experiences. There are times were you can relate to some of the discussions such as history or South African background because you don't have knowledge of it"*

Another participant reported that, *"I do have such [social isolation] experiences. I'm from Nigeria and that isn't really something positive in South African people's eyes. This obviously influences how people interact with you".*

Another participant said that*, "there are those days where you feel lonely and isolated, usually it's in group discussions and language barrier plays a role".*

"I have gotten used to it and have grown to understand that there will be times where I am left out because people have their own languages. It is more about adapting to their environment as a foreigner, less about them trying to accommodate you"

According to Andrade (2006), the more interactions international students have with the local students, the greater their adjustment. This suggests that positive adjustments depend on how well the participants interact with the local students. In addition to language barriers, attention should be given to the cross-cultural differences in social interaction. These difference hinder successful interactions between the participants and the local students and possibly results in the participants feeling left out or isolated. Some participants mentioned that they feel left out in discussions about the South African background and history. Culture is built on history and the country's background, if participants don't have an idea on these topics, it seems like they are automatically feeling left out.

4.7.4 International student presentation of in student governing bodies

Upon the interview, some participants mentioned that the university structure was not doing much to respond to their needs. This was mentioned particularly in relation to the international students' office. It was then worth exploring how student governing bodies such as the Student Representative Council (SRC), the Students Councils and the Club and Societies represent their needs, if they do. The participants indicated that they receive little representation from the student governing bodies, some went as far as to state that the main concern that the SRC has is the issues of local students. The SRC and Student Council have the responsibility to cater to all students' needs, including international students. While the Clubs and Societies have vast role and responsibilities.

One participant said that, *"I do not think that we are well represented in the Students Governing bodies, for example during the Fees Must Fall protest; if fees were to fall it would benefit only South African students and yet we International Students we have to pay 75% of the academic fees during the registration period. Such issue is not taken seriously and addressed by the SRC, however, the SRC does represent everyone"*

Another participant stated that, *"I don't think we are. I feel like when they get into office, they only care about South Africans because they are the majority".*

Another participant said that, *"I do not think that we are well represented as International students, because there have been persisting issues such as of registration fees, and accommodation; that we wish they could be addressed by the SRC".*

These responses clearly indicate that the participant felt misrepresented by the student governing bodies. This is a reality with SRC as they seem to reach out to the majority of the students which are local students. This is done with the hope to receive more votes for the students. One of the participants felt that the SRC does to some extent represent them as he gave rather a positive response:

"I am not close to politics. Though I have realised that they try to incorporate us into their goals. Like last year with Fees Must Fall, they helped us with our visas and other documents".

Another participant, who was not aware that there's an organisation like SRC stated that, *"I haven't been really involved with the SRC since I have been here. I would really like to know more about it so that I can channel my academic and social grievances to the right people. I think that these organisations must reach out to international students".*

With regards to clubs and societies, participants from other countries except Zimbabwe reported that they did not know of any organisation that represents them as international students. While Zimbabwean students mentioned the Zimbabwean Society also known as Zim-Soc.

One participant, from Zimbabwe, said that, *"The Zimbabwe Society Club is more like a social club aimed at socializing fellow Zimbabwean; hence am not a member and am not going to be a member simply because it adds no value to improving our academic experience".*

Other participants said, *"No, I don't. The society is just about parties. I don't see the point of it as Zimbabwe doesn't really have a culture"* and *"Zim-Soc only arranges parties".*

Such organisation such as Zim-Soc is supposedly meant to unite Zimbabwean students studying at the university. They are meant for Zimbabwean students to be familiar with each other and not feel alone during their study in South Africa. Only one student Zimbabwe provided positive reviews about the organisation as she has been part of it in the past. She said,

"Zim-Soc is very effective when it comes to bringing all the Zimbabwean students together, and they do arrange support groups to assist each other with academic work".

5.2 CONCLUSION

In summary, this chapter discussed the finding received from the interview with international students from diverse countries. The chapter was able to highlight the different initial objectives. In addressing these objectives, different themes were used. It is evident that international students have difficulties in adjusting to the South African environment and most of them indicated having challenges with their academic, social and finances. Integrating into a new different environment comes with challenges that required the participants to learn the ways things are done in South African, to learn some of the spoken languages and some cultures.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS/ FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter dwells on the findings of this research study which explored the experiences of international students studying at the University of the Witwatersrand. A presentation of the conclusion will be described and recommendations will be made on how to better assist international students with their challenges and difficulties while studying at the university.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 To establish international students positive experience, if any, at the University of the Witwatersrand.

It was discovered that most of the participants had positive experiences. These experiences were related to their academic and social lifestyle. What was evident is that they all had unique different experiences as they individually communicated on their personal academic achievement and their successful interactions with the locals together with some of the friendships they have made.

5.2.2 To establish international students challenges, if any, at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The research study discovered that international students have negative experiences that go beyond trying to adapt to the university environment and forming relationships. Academically, there seems to be a barrier that hinders international students from successfully interacting with their lecturers outside classroom periods. Most of the participants indicated that they find it difficult to approach lecturers. This can be explained by expectations that lectures seem to have of international students. It appears that because they come from countries where basic high school education is well structured, they expect them to be academically strong. Interactions form an integral part of the participants' university experience. Due to the past continuous xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals, the research study discovered that the participants hardly leave the university premises in fears of being attacked and for their lives.

5.2.3 To determine the ways in which international students deal with the challenges they faced with.

It seems that dealing with the challenges and difficulties faced really takes its toll on the participants. The study revealed that they use different coping mechanisms. While others

become in denial about their difficulties and not deal with them in hope that they go away, other approach friends to assist and other make use of student support structures provided by the university. In addition, participants receive minimum support from their families. This is partly due to the distance and inabilities to communicate with them on daily basis. University resources such as libraries, computer labs and Wi-Fi were discovered to be regularly used by the participants. The university CCDU was used minimum by one participant. The university international office was found to be less useful by the participants as they were not helped in many cases and the participants' issues and challenges were not addressed with importance.

5.2.4 To develop an understanding of international students experiences of South Africa as a country.

The research study discovered that the participants appreciated studying in South Africa because of its better access to resources and opportunities. It was evident that South Africa was economically better than their born countries. Though, with the gratitude, comes with negative experiences brought by South Africans attitude towards foreign nationals. Most participants encountered xenophobia and discrimination indirectly. This was reported to be mostly through comments about foreign nationals.

5.2.5 To explore hot the international students have adapted to the environment of the University of the Witwatersrand.

The research study found that participants experienced struggled with adapting to the South African environment due to its diverse multi-cultural and lingual environment. For those who come from neighbouring countries of Zimbabwe and Swaziland, it was not hard adapting as they have similar cultures to those found in South Africa. However, it was extremely challenging for those who come from other far countries. The study demonstrated that most participants had not been exposed to the South Africa cultures. Their interactions with South Africans, outside the university, has been good as it was found that they are welcoming. It was evident from the responses that participants have experienced social isolation in their interactions. This seemed to be due to language difference and not having knowledge about some of the local news or histories. The study revealed that the participants felt less represented by the students governing bodies, namely, the SRC, student councils and the Clubs and Societies.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In summary, the study has highlighted international students have both positive and negative experiences while studying at the University of the Witwatersrand. It was evident that the international students appreciated being given an opportunity to further their studies in South Africa. The study indicated that international students through international students strongly achieve academically and have national friends, they struggled and some continue struggling with adjusting and adapting to the South African and university environment. International students receive minimal support from their families and their greatest source of the support system are they friends. Furthermore, there are incongruences between the international students, the academic staff members, the university international students' office and the student governance bodies. Most international students who participated in this study indicated that they have negative experiences with the above-mentioned constituencies. International students are faced with language and cultural challenges as in most cases they are isolated from conversations and social interactions. It was clearly indicated that international students have to go extra miles to ensure their health is well and that they integrate into society with the local people and the local cultures. There were no university structures that were indicated to assist international students to settle in and adjust to the new environment.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the research study, the following recommendations are made:

- It is recommended that international students should be given free language classes. The language should be one of the dominant South African official languages. This will enable them to communicate to some of the local people without any difficulties.
- It is recommended that the Career and Counselling Development Unit should arrange support groups for international students with the aim of understanding some of their challenges and assisting them to adjust to the new environment.
- It is recommended that the university and the international students' office should support and empower international students. The international office should be easily approachable and should deploy measure to assist international students to adjust. In addition, classes about South African history should be compulsorily given to international students.
- International students’ university fees (upfront payment) should be revised as most students struggle to arrange for the 75 % upfront fees.

- Lecturers should be educated to how to work with international students as it seems like they are struggling. A programme to educate them to be more accommodative should be deployed.

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APPENDIX A

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4472 • Fax: 011 717 4473 • E-mail: socialwork.SHCD@wits.ac.za

PARTICIPATION INFROMATION SHEET

Migration: Exploring the experiences of international students studying in South African universities, a case study of the University of the Witwatersrand.

My name is Gift Khumalo and I am currently in my final year of studying Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research regarding the experiences of international students while studying at the University. It is hoped that the information gathered from the research could assist in identifying some of the challenges that the international students are faced with. The outcome of the research study will contribute to the literature on the topic and inform the University of what international students are struggling and possibly provide future recommendations.

As an international student at University of the Witwatersrand, you are ideally to contribute to my research. I therefore wish to invite you to participate in my study. If you accept my invitation, your participation would be entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. There are no consequences or personal benefits of participating in this research study. If you agree to participate, I would arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The interview will last between 45 minutes to 1 hour. You may withdraw for the research study at any point and you may not answer questions that you are not comfortable with answering. If you decide to participate, I will ask for your permission to tape-record the interview. No-one other than the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes will be kept in a locked cabinet to two years following any publications or for six months if no publications emanate from the study. A copy of your interview transcript will be stored permanently without any identifying information in a cupboard and may be used for future research.

Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report. The results of the research may also be used

for academic purposes (including books, journals and conference proceedings) and a summary of findings will be made available to participants on request.

Please contact me on 0785415692, or my supervisor Mthobisi Ndaba on sompisikandaba@gmail.com if you have any questions regarding my study. We shall answer them to the best of our ability. If you have any concerns and complaints about the study, please contact Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) Contact Details: Chairperson: Jasper.Knight@wits.ac.za or the administrator; Mrs Lucille Mooragan Tel 011 717 1408 or Lucille.Mooragan@wits.ac.za.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study

Yours sincerely,

Gift Khumalo

APPENDIX B



CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Migration: Exploring the experiences of international students studying in South African universities, a case study of the University of the Witwatersrand.

I hereby consent to participate in the research study. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me.

I understand that:

- My participation in the study is voluntary and I may withdraw from the study without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I may choose not to answer any specific questions asked if I do not wish to do so.
- There are no foreseeable benefits or particular risks associated with participation in this study.
- My identity will be kept strictly confidential, and any information that may identify me, will be removed from the interview transcript.
- A copy of my interview transcript without any identifying information will be stored permanently in a locked cupboard and may be used for future research.
- I understand that my responses will be used to write up an honours project and may also be presented in conferences, book chapters and journal articles or books.

Name of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX C



CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-TAPING OF THE INTERVIEW

Migration: Exploring the experiences of international students studying in South African universities, a case study of the University of the Witwatersrand.

I hereby consent to consent to tape recording of the interview. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me.

I understand that:

- The recording will be stored in a secure location (a locked cupboard or password protected computer) with restricted access to the researcher and the research supervisor.
- The recording will be transcribed and any information that could identify me will be removed.
- When the data analysis and write-up of the research study is complete, the audio-recording of the interview will be kept for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study.
- The transcript with all identifying information directly linked to me removed, will be stored permanently and may be for future research.
- Direct quotes from my interview, without any information that could identify me may be cited in the research report or other write-ups of the research.

Name of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX D

Interview schedule:

1. What are some of the positive experiences you have had while studying at the university?
    a. Academic positive experiences.
    b. Social positive experiences.
2. What are some of the negative experiences you have had while studying at the university?
    a. Academic experiences.
    b. Social experiences.
    c. Financial experiences.
3. Dealing with those negative experiences.
    a. How have you dealt with the experiences?
    b. Do you have any support; family and friends?
    c. Do you receive any support from your lecturers and how often do you use university resources?
4. Experiences of South Africa as a host country.
    a. Do you think that the South African environment is different to that of your born country? Please elaborate.
    b. What are some of your experiences of South Africa?
    c. Have you experienced any xenophobia or discrimination because of your national status?
5. Adaptation to the university environment.
    a. How easy has it been to adapt to South Africa environment and cultures?
    b. How have your social interactions been with South Africans?
    c. Do you experience any isolation in your interactions?
    d. Do you think that you are well represented in the student governing bodies such as the SRC, Student Councils, Clubs and Societies?

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask of me?

APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY REGISTRAR

31 October 2017

Mr Gift Khumalo
Student number 863467
School of Human and Community Development

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

"Exploring the experiences of international students studying in South African universities, a case study of University of the Witwatersrand."

This letter serves to confirm that the above project has received permission to be conducted on University premises, and/or involving staff and/or students of the University as research participants. In undertaking this research, you agree to abide by all University regulations for conducting research on campus and to respect participants' rights to withdraw from participation at any time.

If you are conducting research on certain student cohorts, year groups or courses within specific Schools and within the teaching term, permission must be sought from Heads of School or individual academics.

No research can commence before ethical clearance has been obtained. Kindly forward a copy of the clearance certificate to this office.

Nicoleen Potgieter
University Deputy Registrar

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050, South Africa | T +27 11 717 1204/8 | F +27 86 553 2271 | www.wits.ac.za

APPENDIX F

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

DEPARTMENTAL HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SOCIAL WORK) CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: SW1/17/09/07

PROJECT TITLE: The experiences of international students studying at South African universities.

RESEARCHER/S: Khumalo, Gift (863467)

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT: SHCD Social Work

DATE CONSIDERED: 24 October 2017

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE: Approved

EXPIRY DATE: 26 October 2019

DATE: 25 October 2017

CHAIRPERSON: Dr. F. Masson

Cc: Supervisor: Mr. M. Ndaba

DECLARATION OF RESEARCHER(S)

To be completed in **DUPLICATE** and **ONE COPY** returned to the Administrative Assistant, Room **8**, Department of Social Work, Umthombo Building Basement.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorised to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the committee. **For Masters and PhD an annual progress report is required.**

SIGNATURE

15/11/2017
DATE

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES