



**BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE STUDY OF REFUGEE STUDENTS' LIVED
EXPERIENCES AT A SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION

Under the supervision of Professor Felix Maringe, I, Otilia Fortunate Chiramba, hereby declare that this research is my own original work and that all sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged. It is submitted to the Faculty of Humanities for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This thesis has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted to any other university for any degree or examination in the interest of any academic qualification.

Signature: 

Otilia Fortunate Chiramba

Date: 10 July 2020

ABSTRACT

Refugee studies is an area that has begun to gain prominence in Higher Education Studies because of an ever-increasing number of forced migrations, in all age groups. A significant number of these refugees aspire to pursue tertiary education. Existing studies have shown that refugee students form an invisible group within higher education spaces. Universities have failed to distinguish them from international students. Because of the concealment, refugee students face formidable challenges in navigating higher education due to lack of specific support meant to address their unique needs as refugees.

Despite the growing body of scholarship, the field still lacks a comprehensive understanding of refugee students in at least two ways. Firstly, although the field has developed important insights into post-migration experiences of refugee students, very little is known about their pre-migratory experiences and intentions of future progression. Secondly, the literature focuses significantly on refugee students' barriers to success, but has to a very large extent overlooked enablers that inform their success, despite the odds. This study has argued that creating sufficient value for refugee students in higher education requires a holistic understanding of their lived experiences across the three phases: pre-migration, post-migration and intentions of future progression.

The study used an eclectic theoretical framework of push-pull, social justice and resilience theories, sequenced in a special way that served as a lens in the three phases of refugee students' experiences.

Based on a qualitative narrative inquiry which espoused the biographical narrative, four refugee students at a selected university in South Africa participated in the research involving cascading narrative interviews. These began with an unstructured interview and moved on to several follow-up semi-structured interviews. Data analysis deployed two techniques, starting with a narrative analysis, which helped to understand the unique experiences of each individual, ending with the thematic analysis which helped to understand the commonalities and differences that cut across the four individual biographies.

Findings confirmed that the four refugee students did not only face structural and systemic challenges but they also exhibited internal and recurrent experiences of fear, dreams and

resilience throughout the three phases. The study proposed a model: exogenous and endogenous dimensions: an integrated model of the lived experiences of refugees in higher education, as a basis for developing strategies for reforming policy for refugee students in higher education. Secondly, this model may help universities and host nations gain a comprehensive understanding of refugees in order to come up with useful and meaningful interventions. The analytical model developed can be a useful starting point to engage in further research studies for refugee students in higher education.

Keywords: higher education, refugees in higher education, resilience, value creation, biographical narratives, lived experiences

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS EMANATING FROM THIS RESEARCH

Maringe, F., Ojo, E., & Chiramba, O. (2017) Traumatized home and away: Toward a framework for interrogating policy-practice disjunctures for refugee students in higher education, *European Education*, 49(4), 210-230.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my children, Rumbidzaishe and Tatenda. To Rumbi, all the best in completing your social work undergraduate studies! To Tatenda, all the best in completing high school! The sky should be the limit for you guys.

GLOSSARY

ACMS	African Centre for Migration Studies
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
DAFI	Deutsche Akademische Flüchtling Initiative or Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
HE	Higher Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ISO	International Students Office
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SUCCESS	Study Success and Study Opportunity for refugees
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
WSoE	Wits School of Education

Contents

COPYRIGHT NOTICE	iii
DECLARATION	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS EMANATING FROM THIS RESEARCH.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
DEDICATION	ix
GLOSSARY	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xix
LIST OF TABLES	xx
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Context of the study: a personal perspective.....	3
1.3 Context of the study: a general background to the study	5
1.3.1 The global picture of refugees	6
1.3.2 Refugees on the African continent.....	7
1.3.3 Higher education for refugees in Africa	7
1.3.4 Creating value for refugees in higher education	8
1.3.5 Regional and South African picture of refugees.....	9
1.3.6 The refugees' legal framework	9
1.3.7 Why does higher education matter for refugees?	11
1.3.8 Challenges of refugee students in higher education	13
1.3.9 Refugees at a selected university	13
1.4 Statement of the problem	15
1.5 Definitions of operational terms.....	16
1.6 Overview of the theoretical framework	18
1.7 The aim of the research	18

1.7.1	Research questions.....	18
1.7.2	Aims and objectives.....	19
1.7.3	Objectives	19
1.8	Overview of the methodological approach	19
1.9	Preliminary conceptualisation of the study	20
1.10	Significance of the study	23
1.11	Justification.....	24
1.12	Overview of the rest of the thesis	24
1.13	Summary.....	26
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL DIMENSIONS OF REFUGEE STUDIES		
.....		27
2.1	Introduction	27
2.2	Discussion of key related concepts	28
2.2.1	Refugee	28
2.2.2	Asylum-seeker	31
2.2.3	International migrant.....	32
2.2.4	International student.....	32
2.2.5	Exploring the policy and demographics of refugees, international students and asylum-seekers at a South African University.....	34
2.2.6	Emotions and feelings: beyond refugee students' visible experiences.....	34
2.3	Empirical discussions: Global and South African studies on refugees and refugee students	35
2.4	Quantitative research on refugees: Strengths and limitations	36
2.4.1	Qualitative studies: Towards an in-depth understanding of refugee students' lived experiences.....	37
2.5	Existing research: Debates and gaps in the literature.....	40
2.6	Refugees and hidden identities.....	41
2.7	Challenges of refugees and refugee students	42

2.8	Looking beyond barriers and challenges.....	43
2.9	Resilience: Crafting a future in memory of an unsettled past and unsettling present 44	
2.10	Strategies universities should deploy	45
2.11	Conclusion.....	46
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS: TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY		48
3.1	Introduction	48
3.2	Discussion of theories in the field.....	49
3.2.1	Acculturation.....	49
3.2.2	Incorporation theory.....	51
3.2.3	Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural reproduction.....	52
3.2.4	Self -efficacy theory.....	54
3.2.5	Push-pull theory.....	55
3.2.6	Social justice	56
3.2.7	Resilience theory.....	59
3.3	A theoretical framework for this study	65
3.4	Summary	67
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH APPROACH.....		68
4.1	Introduction	68
4.2	Nature of the research: Broad paradigmatic considerations.....	69
4.3	Interpretivist paradigm	69
4.4	Qualitative approach	70
4.5	Sample and sampling procedure	73
4.6	Narrative interviews as data collection tools.....	75
4.6.1	Unstructured interviews	75
4.6.2	Semi-structured interviews	76
4.7	Introduction to narrative inquiry as a data analysis tool	76

4.7.1	Re-storied/biographical narratives	77
4.8	Data analysis for the current study	77
4.9	Credibility and trustworthiness	81
4.10	Methodological challenges associated with researching refugee students	81
4.11	Ethical considerations	83
4.12	Summary	85
CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS: EMBRACING THE INDIVIDUAL AS A UNIQUE AND COMPLEX CASE		86
5.1	Introduction	86
5.3	Olivier's story	87
5.3.1	The biographical information	87
5.4	Pre-migration	88
5.4.1	Push factors: why did Olivier leave his country for South Africa?	88
5.4.2	Pull factors	93
5.4.3	Experiences and challenges faced by Olivier in planning and en-route South Africa	94
5.5	Post-migration	95
5.5.1	Experiences and challenges of accommodation	96
5.5.2	Life at a mission station	96
5.5.3	Life at Educare University	97
5.5.4	Experiences of the hidden identities and strategies universities might deploy..	98
5.5.5	Accommodation and xenophobia	99
5.5.6	Challenges in securing a job and the issue of documentation	99
5.6	Future progression intentions	101
5.7	Chapter overview	102
5.7.1	How has the past impacted on Olivier's present educational experiences?.....	104
CHAPTER 6: DOMINIQUE'S STORY		106
6.1	Introduction	106

6.2	Biographical profile.....	106
6.3	Pre-migration: Why did Dominique leave his country for South Africa?	107
6.3.1	Push factors.....	108
6.3.2	Pull factors	109
6.3.3	Experiences and challenges faced by Dominique in planning and en-route South Africa	110
6.4	Post-migration	111
6.4.1	Dominique's experiences in South Africa in general	111
6.4.2	Documentation.....	111
6.4.3	Accommodation, crime and xenophobia	112
6.4.4	Issues of language	113
6.5	Institutional experiences in South Africa	114
6.5.1	Life at one institution in South Africa	114
6.5.2	Life at Educare university	115
6.5.3	Funding	118
6.5.4	Discrimination.....	119
6.6	Future progression intentions	120
6.7	Chapter overview	121
6.7.1	How has the past impacted on Dominique's present educational experiences?	122
CHAPTER 7: TANYA'S STORY.....		124
7.1	Introduction	124
7.2	Biographical profile.....	124
7.3	Pre-migration experiences: Why did Tanya leave her country?	126
7.3.1	Push factors.....	126
7.3.2	Pull factors	128
7.4	Post-migration	130
7.4.1	Securing a job in South Africa.....	130

7.4.1	Comparison of her home country university education and South African university education system.....	131
7.4.2	Life at the first institution	132
7.4.3	Life at Educare University	135
7.4.4	Securing funding and accommodation in the host nation.....	137
7.4.5	Gender-based challenges	140
7.5	Future progression.....	140
7.6	How have the pre-migratory and the post-migratory experiences and future intentions impacted on Tanya's present educational experiences?.....	144
CHAPTER 8: JUDITH'S STORY.....		145
8.1	Introduction	145
8.2	Biographical data.....	145
8.3	Pre-migratory experiences: Why did Judith leave her country?	146
8.3.1	Push factors	146
8.3.2	Pull factors	148
8.4	Post-migration: Life in the host nation.....	149
8.4.1	Accommodation.....	151
8.4.1	Securing a job in South Africa.....	152
8.4.2	Life at Educare University	153
8.4.3	How should University intervene?.....	155
8.5	Future intentions.....	156
8.6	Chapter overview	157
8.6.1	How have the pre-migratory and post-migration experiences and future intentions impacted on Judith's present educational experiences?	159
CHAPTER 9: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS: MOVING TOWARDS AN EMERGING ANALYTICAL MODEL OF REFUGEE STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION.		161
9.1	Introduction	161

9.2	Emerging general themes	161
9.2.1	Pre-migration - Fear at home	163
9.3	Push factors	164
9.3.1	Political instability and violence	164
9.3.2	Disrupted education system	165
9.3.3	Dysfunctional economy	166
9.3.4	Desperate and dangerous journeys to South Africa	167
9.4	Pull factors.....	168
9.4.1	Why did the refugee students choose to come to South Africa?	168
9.5	Post-migration: Fear away	169
9.6	Country and institutional level experiences	170
9.6.1	Documentation: State of in-betweenness.....	170
9.6.2	Accommodation: Living on the margins of society.....	172
9.6.3	Policy-practice disjunctures: misrecognition of refugee students	173
9.6.4	Xenophobia and discrimination	174
9.7	Institutional level challenges	176
9.7.1	Language proficiency.....	176
9.7.2	Academic writing and learning styles.....	177
9.7.3	Computer literacy.....	178
9.7.4	Funding	178
9.8	Future progression intensions: Aspirations beyond the hurdles	179
9.8.1	Career advancement and job creation	179
9.8.2	Meaningful research and rebuilding nations.....	179
9.9	Recurring themes across the three categories: Emerging framework	180
9.9.1	Fear: Finite disappointments.....	180
9.9.2	Dreams: Infinite hopes	181
9.9.3	Resilience: Survivors not victims	182

9.10	Perceptions about what universities and governments should do to improve their experiences and ensure their future intentions.....	184
CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH		186
10.1	Introduction	186
10.2	Addressing the research questions.....	188
10.3	Reflective summary	194
10.4	Contribution of the study	195
10.4.1	Empirical contribution	195
10.4.2	Contribution to theory.....	196
10.4.3	Contribution to practice	196
10.4.4	Contribution to policy	197
10.5	Implications and recommendations of the study	197
10.5.1	The implication for policy and practice	197
10.5.2	Implications for creating value for refugees within higher education spaces..	199
10.5.3	Implications for ethical issues.....	199
10.6	Limitations and implications for further research	200
10.7	Conclusion	201
References.....		203
APPENDICES		226
APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION LETTER		226
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT FORM.....		227
APPENDIX C: NARRATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....		228
APPENDIX D: LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH.....		229
APPENDIX E: ETHICS LETTER		230

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Preliminary conceptualisation of the study	21
Figure 2 - Pool of theories and the theoretical framework	49
Figure 3 - Conceptualising the social justice theory (Fraser, 2009)	57
Figure 4 - The three resilience dimensions (Jeans et al., 2017 p. 1).....	62
Figure 5 - Resilience as a four-dimensional theory (Bahadur et al., 2015)	64
Figure 6 - Theoretical framework for this study	66
Figure 7 - Summary on data analysis for the study	81
Figure 8 - Structure for the four re-storied narratives.....	87
Figure 9 - Emerging themes.....	162
Figure 10 - Recurrent triadic experiences of refugee students	180
Figure 11 - Exogenous and endogenous dimensions: An integrated model in understanding refugee students' experiences in higher education	187

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Describing different dimensions of migration status.....	33
Table 2 – Dimensions of acculturation	50
Table 3 – Cultural Reproduction (Source: Bourdieu, 1977).....	53
Table 4 - Demographic profiles of the participants of the study	74
Table 5 - Data capture and preliminary analysis in the MaxQDA	80
Table 6 – Summary of Olivier’s experiences	104
Table 7 – Summary of Dominique’s experiences.....	122
Table 8 – Summary of Tanya’s experiences.....	143
Table 9 – Summary of Judith’s experiences	158

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

An [international student] leaves his homeland to find greener grass. A refugee [student] leaves his homeland because the grass is burning under his feet. Barbara Law

1.1 Introduction

In this study, I explored the stories of refugee students at a South African university through narrative inquiry. I was particularly interested in how they perceived their past which has brought them to the present time and their current situation. I also paid attention to their reflections on the possibilities of a future as both academics and refugees.

The above expression by Barbara Law summarises the difference between a refugee student and an international student. Despite the noted difference in experiences of these two groups of students, it is well established in literature that universities rarely distinguish refugee students from international students in their demographic data and even less so in their programmes of support and integration (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013; Maringe, et al., 2017). This practice has completely obliterated the identity of refugees in higher education, yet it is a unique group with unique experiences which need unique interventions. Refugee students, despite the policies in place, have failed to receive sufficient support from their universities and host nations in general. Because the group is made invisible, universities have failed to draw up policies concerning refugee students (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017).

Universities have failed to create value for refugee students. As argued by Dryden-Peterson, (2015), I agree that this is also due to their partial understanding of refugee students' lived experiences. Firstly, the partial knowledge emanates from the fact that whilst refugee students' hindrances to success are well documented, not much is known about enablers of their success (Bailey & İnanç, 2018). Secondly, we also know more about the post-migratory experience but very little about pre-migration and future intentions of refugee students in higher education (Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

I argue that creating value for refugee students starts by understanding their experiences in a holistic manner. Understanding their pre-migratory experience of how they came to be in the host nation, their post-migratory experience and future progression intentions equips us with

the new knowledge of how the three kinds of experiences have impacted on their learning today. This knowledge might provide researchers with a new model to relook at refugee students' lived experiences, rethink and reconceptualise their support strategies.

The new model would provide the host nation in general and university in particular, with ways of better knowing and understanding these students. These gained insights would allow them to rethink ways of giving sufficient support to refugee students. In order to achieve this, I devised a methodology that prioritised the voices of the participants. Consequently, I deployed the narrative inquiry which espoused the biographical narratives to gain a holistic understanding of the lived experiences of this group of students (Clandinin & Huber, in press; Elliot, 2005; McAlpine, 2016). I believe that this type of inquiry has the potential to unravel the not-so-common truth leading us to a better understanding of refugee students in higher education. The purpose of the study was to explore the pre-migratory and post-migratory narratives that shape refugee students' experiences in higher education, how they cope, the perceived interventions and their future progression intentions.

I conducted the study with special focus on the narrative experiences of refugee students in higher education at a South African university in Gauteng. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with four refugee students, who were sampled using the snowball technique. The evidence indicated that refugee students faced challenges because they did not get sufficient support from the University and host nation in general. However, amidst the challenges, they devised ways to survive the odds.

I began by providing a personal narrative. Starting with personal narratives has become popular in narrative research and it not only provides the rationale behind the study but also helps to locate the researcher within the context of the study. Secondly, I provided a general background to the study. The general background helps to situate refugees and refugee students in the global context as well as particularly in global higher education. I also identified the questions that guide the study. This was followed by an overview of the theoretical framework and methodology. I also discussed the significance and justification of carrying out the research. I then provided a brief discussion of operational terms and ended the chapter by giving an overview and structure of the chapters of the study.

1.2 Context of the study: a personal perspective

Personal narratives in theses introductions have become a common feature in narrative research (Thompson & Kamler, 2016). A number of scholars, for example, McAlpine (2016), Perumal (2015), and Thompson and Kamler (2016), have attempted to provide a rationale as to why one should write a personal perspective of the study at the beginning of a thesis. I discuss some of the reasons below.

- The personal narrative helps with locating the researcher's positionality (Perumal, 2015). Arguing for this Thompson and Kamler, (2016) said the reader or the examiner would be in a position to understand how "the researcher's life and/or work experience might influence the research," (p. 36). Moreover, they argue that this kind of narrative approves the epistemological principle that no research, especially that which involves human beings, can be neutral but "written from somewhere, and where matters" (Thompson & Kamler, 2016 p. 37).
- The personal narrative also shows how the research question arises from the researcher's personal life or work experience. I gained the understanding that researchers find the need for research in their areas of specialisation. For example, the work of Faulkner (2015), in which her narrative explains her specialisation in gender and leadership, studied female principalship in South Africa. Similarly, McAlpine (2016) whose area of specialisation was higher education, studied early career research experiences of doctoral students. Thus, Thompson and Kamler (2016) concluded that one sees the mandate of their research from this direct experience in the professional context.
- The personal narrative tends to lay groundwork for a claim of professional knowledge (Faulkner, 2015). Faulkner drew from her experience as a female principal. Thus knowing initially arises from experiences in the work settings (Thomson & Kamler, 2016).

The nature of this study urged me to disclose a brief autobiographical account of my prompts as a postgraduate student and researcher to present the experiences that inspired me to undertake the research. This is my personal perspective on the study:

My friend knocked at my office door and I immediately opened it for him. I knew we were both international students and that we were somehow underprivileged. We would always mock each other as 'foreigner' but little did I know that there were different dimensions of

‘foreignness’. It just dawned on me that day, that my colleague and I might be called international students by the University’s standards but we definitely did not come from similar backgrounds. Neither did we share similar experiences. Our friendship was still new and we were in the process of discovering each other. My colleague always wore a sad face and that day it was worse. I was intrigued about what he said and how he said it. He began his story: ‘On this day, I’m ready to tell you the story of my life’.

From his story, I started to get a comprehensive picture of how he came to be in South Africa and his experiences of feeling very unsafe in both his native country and in South Africa. He feared for not only his life but also for the lives of his loved ones who he had left behind. He expressed how relieved he felt once he successfully managed to get to South Africa alive and how this relief was short-lived once he slowly started becoming exposed to the harsh reality shared by many other refugees in South Africa. I had not known he was a refugee; all along I thought he was an international student, as that is what we were both called. He expressed how helpless he felt at one point when he was unable to feed his family, how he worked as a security guard in the night and how crushed he felt having to come to school during the day, acting as if everything was fine, and how he felt everyone treated him like he was fine, when in fact, he felt as if his whole world was falling apart.

It was not just the story that captivated me, but also the way it was told. He told his story in such a way that with every word, I created a full mental picture of what he was going through in his life. The not-so-common experiences were fleshed out. I felt his pain. It felt like he was projecting his feelings of hurt, pain, fear and anguish onto me, and with every word, I felt myself getting pulled deeper and deeper into his world.

Let me reiterate: for a very long time I was under the impression that my friend and I were both international students. I only knew of the two groups of students around the campus, the international and the native students. As a result, I thought we shared the same reasons for being away from home and the same struggles at university and in the host nation. However, after listening to his story, I realised that though we might share a few similar challenges, his challenges were far more than mine. I felt sure I was not the only one ignorant of the situation. ‘Another topic to research,’ I thought to myself. I consulted with my supervisor to change the topic I had submitted for my doctoral studies. He was quite impressed and in

agreement with my suggestions. And with that, my interest in gaining insights into the lived experiences of refugee students in higher education was born.

My supervisor suggested that we start by writing an article in the area to explore and find out what research had been carried out in the field. My first task was to do an annotated bibliography and report to him on the available literature on refugees and refugee students. My supervisor, one other colleague and I used the information to write a theoretical paper (Maringe, Ojo & Chiramba, 2017). This became my first publication and the beginning of my exploration into the experiences of refugee students in higher education. Although we gained a number of insights into refugee students in higher education, I felt that the theoretical paper was limited in two ways. Firstly, the voices of the participants were absent and as a result the findings were largely about the external systemic challenges and did not explore the lived experiences of the participants. Secondly, we did not gather a comprehensive picture of the experiences. This was so because extant literature has to a large extent ignored the pre-migratory and future progression, concepts I learnt from my colleague's story. These phases have a lot to do with how refugee students navigate higher education. I was about to embark on my PhD journey and my task now was to read more literature and also consider a methodology that would address the refugee issue in a comprehensive manner.

Fortunately, by that time, I became involved in an international project which utilised the narrative inquiry in understanding the experiences of the young researchers in fourteen African countries. I found the approach appealing, especially when researching underprivileged and vulnerable groups such as refugee students. The methodology gives full voice to the participant. I began my PhD journey with the topic and methodology that interested me: Biographical narrative study of the lived experiences of refugee students at a selected university in South Africa. With this I conclude that my assumptions were born out of the evidence from my experiences and literature. In the next section, I focus on the background of the refugee issue globally and within the South African context.

1.3 Context of the study: a general background to the study

I begin by highlighting the international, regional and national perspectives of the refugee situation in general. Secondly, I highlight refugee students in higher education in South Africa, and thirdly, I give a snapshot of refugee students at the selected university. I present

the policy framework, provide a summary of refugee students' research on their experiences outlining how it informs us, and I conclude this section by presenting the existing gaps.

1.3.1 The global picture of refugees

The refugee crisis is a global phenomenon of forced migration (Sidhu et al., 2011). Forced migration happens as a result of threats of harm caused by civil wars, domestic violence, poverty, environmental collapse, violence and human rights violations among others, from one's country of origin (Felix, 2016). The 2019 report from the United Nations Refugee Agency indicates that over 70 million refugees flee their home countries in order to seek refuge in different nations worldwide (UNHCR, 2019). The conflicts in some countries, for example, Syria, Mali, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo and many other African countries, have contributed to the rise in numbers of refugees worldwide (Sidhu et al., 2011).

Globally, refugees are protected by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which is a United Nations (UN) programme tasked to safeguard the rights and the well-being of refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2019). Further analysis indicates that 55% of these refugees come from three war-torn countries namely South Sudan (2, 3 million); Afghanistan (2, 5 million); and Syria (5, 6 million) (UNHCR, 2017). This paints a picture that war is a major cause in the rise of refugee numbers globally. The refugee agency also shows that refugees are hosted in Europe (17%), Americas (16%), Asia and Pacific (11%), Africa (30%), Middle East and North Africa (26%) (UNHCR, 2014). The top hosting countries for forcibly displaced people are Turkey (2, 9 million), Pakistan (1,4 million), Lebanon (1,0 million), Islamic Republic of Iran (979,400), Uganda (940 800), and Ethiopia (791 600) (UNHCR, 2014).

Existing literature indicates that there are more refugees in the world than ever before (Dovigo, 2018). The Syrian refugee crisis is the largest refugee crisis of our time. The civil war in Syria, just as in many other countries across the globe, has seen 5,6 million people displaced, mostly to other counties in its region, causing a strain on the region's ability to cope (Dovigo, 2018). The refugee needs are not only for the basic necessities but for the hope and opportunities to be self-sufficient and this has been a major concern for researchers in this field (Bailey & İnanç, 2018).

A large body of global literature concerning integrating refugees into the host nations is available today, however, investigations into their access to higher education remain relatively underdeveloped, especially as regards to education in general and higher education access, provision and intervention in particular (Dovigo, 2018; Pinson & Arnot, 2010). Research has shown that of the many refugees who flee from their countries, there is a large number of young adults who have already begun their university degrees in their countries of origin (Maringe et al., 2017; Pinson & Arnot, 2010). Some have recently completed secondary education and are aspiring to start higher education (Bailey & İnanç, 2018). To create value in this group, we need sustainable approaches which allow refugee students to navigate their pathways to higher education. I argue that the starting point is understanding how the three phases of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions integrate to inform their educational experiences in the host nation. However, as recently as 2015, Somalian refugees in Malaysia were denied the right to education and higher education (Bailey & İnanç, 2018). The authors further argued that only then did churches, charity organisations and non-governmental organisations begin to provide education for refugees (Bailey & İnanç, 2018). It is also important to note that the voices discussing refugee student issues are largely western and it is only recently that we have begun to notice the growing body of literature in Africa (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017).

1.3.2 Refugees on the African continent

The current refugee crisis on the African continent indicates that by late 2015, there were 16 million forcibly displaced people of which 4,4 million were refugees who sought refuge in neighbouring African countries (Wilhem, 2016). Uganda had an increase in refugees because of people fleeing fights in Burundi, Cameroon also had a rise in refugee numbers on its north-western border with Nigeria, following the Boko Haram crisis. However, the main host countries for refugees in Africa remain Ethiopia and Kenya, the countries which host many refugees from Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan (Wilhem, 2016).

1.3.3 Higher education for refugees in Africa

Zeus (2011) argued that refugees in Africa do not get support to pursue higher education. Instead, they stay in camps where they get basic support from outside organisations, such as non-governmental organisations and the UNHCR. For example, Kiswii (2013) has discovered that Kenya's encampment policy limits the potential economic and social benefits of refugee education. Although it is noted in Africa that higher education for refugees has the potential

to nurture a new generation of change-makers, refugees face challenges resulting from their forced displacement and lack of support (McIntosh & Cockburn-Wooten, 2019). The challenges include lack of information, advice and guidance specific to their needs. They do not have access to language courses for academic purposes and they lack funding (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Felix, 2016).

1.3.4 Creating value for refugees in higher education

Chiramba and Maringe (2020) have argued that value creation for refugee students is necessary and involves a deliberate effort to acknowledge the presence of refugees within higher education spaces. Such acknowledgement involves “prioritising the needs of refugees in higher education” (Chiramba & Maringe, 2020 p. 16). However, as already argued, universities should start by gaining a comprehensive picture of the group so that the intervention becomes relevant and appropriate. In this study I sought to address this gap by exploring refugees’ pre-migration and post-migration experiences and their future progression intentions.

Existing literature has indicated that universities and host nations have failed to create sufficient value for refugees and this has manifest through formidable challenges faced by refugees within and outside the institutions (Bailey & İnanç, 2018; Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013). Maringe et al. (2017 p. 220) have provided some insights on how universities and host nations may create value for refugee students:

Any government that receives refugees should work in conjunction with global bodies such as the UNHCR to make full funding available to support refugee programmes in higher education...the experience of trauma, both at home and away, that is felt by refugee students in universities should cease, and higher education institutions all over the world have an obligation to lead the way

They went further to discuss some of the specific actions universities should take:

[Universities should] make important methodological and ethical contributions in this area of research and academic practice, namely, how best to engage with refugee students in research without exposing them to risk or making them feel or become more vulnerable. [Most importantly they should] avoid the concealment of refugees as international students (as happens in many universities across the world) as concealment contributes to greater marginalisation of a very vulnerable group and

does little to confront the issues of material, financial, and psychological support they need in order to navigate the terrains of higher education and achieve success in the same way as the substantially less vulnerable international and local students (Maringe et al., p. 221).

1.3.5 Regional and South African picture of refugees

In the Southern African region, South Africa is one of the countries which receives the highest number of refugees from neighbouring Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries (Alfaro-Velcamp & Shaw, 2016). To further illustrate, research shows there are fifteen countries from which most refugees came to South Africa in 2015 (Department of Home Affairs (DHA), 2015). Of the fifteen countries, Zimbabwe which is in the SADC, sent the highest number (17 785 refugees) followed by Ethiopia (9 322 refugees) (Department of Home affairs (DHA), 2016). For Zimbabwe, the political instability and recent economic collapse have led to a huge flow of Zimbabwean asylum-seekers into regional countries such as Botswana and South Africa (Sobantu & Warria, 2013).

The phenomenon calls for much attention when literature indicates that of all the refugees flowing into South Africa, the largest group is formed by the young adults (80.08%) who might be seeking tertiary education (DHA, 2015). This is further supported by Sobantu and Warria (2013) who indicated that many of the individuals fleeing places of war are scholars, academics, students or young people. This combination of compelling facts (a convincingly large percentage in young adults of an age that they are most likely to pursue tertiary education, my personal context, as well as the gap in literature on empirical research into refugee students' lived experiences in higher education) have triggered my interest in exploring the lived experiences of refugee students in order to understand the nature, magnitude, challenges, successes, and the possibilities of realising their future progression intentions. (Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013).

1.3.6 The refugees' legal framework

What is important to note is that support for refugees and access to education in general and higher education in particular, is a human right enshrined in global policy (UNHCR, 1951). Secondly, on the African continent, the 1969 OAU convention also speaks to the support and protection of refugees in Africa (AU, 1969, Sidaway & Gibb, 1998; Wood, 2019). Thirdly, regionally, refugees have rights enshrined in the declaration of refugee protection within

Southern African Communities. South Africa has also ratified the global policy above concerning refugee support, protection and management. Moreover, it has its own policy documents, the Refugee Act of 1998 and the Immigration Act of 2002 (DHA, 2016). However, elsewhere, a significant point has been raised by Bailey and İnanç (2018 p. 3);

Some countries and their humanitarian and development partners have not been providing education to the displaced communities whom they host, despite being signatories to the [global policy]...and...that they have presented inadequate reasons for not doing so

This indicates that the problem is not unique to South Africa but it is a worldwide problem which needs urgent attention. As shown previously, South Africa, as a signatory to the global policy, has also formulated its local policies concerning refugees, but what is lacking is the policy at the higher education institutions' level (Kavuro, 2013; Gateley, 2015).

Lack of policies for refugees in higher education can also be traced back to the earlier policies which only emphasised primary and secondary education as crucial (World Bank, 2000). Dryden-Peterson (2010) has argued that supporting refugees only for primary and secondary education has increasingly become irrelevant, given the nature of conflicts which have become more protracted.

The argument is further expanded by Dryden-Peterson and Giles (2010 p. 3);

Currently, there are approximately thirty protracted refugee situations throughout the world wherein the average length of stay is now close to twenty years...it is no longer a short term situation... [yet] there are many unaddressed issues related to the provision of quality education for refugees at primary and secondary levels, [and] the issue of higher education for refugees is virtually unexplored in both scholarship and policy

This has become a major cause for concern and the two scholars have further argued that higher education should be placed “within an educational continuum from early childhood to post-secondary” (Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010 p. 4). Following these debates was UNHCR's new education strategy (2012-2016) which postulated refugees' expanded opportunities to participate in tertiary education (UNHCR, 2012). Ever since, there has been significant developments for higher education for refugees worldwide. For example, Albert

Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) since its inception in 1992 became the first UNHCR scholarship programme to cater for refugee education worldwide (Dryden-Peterson, 2010). Its inception was very useful to refugees in higher education;

Within two decades the new approach introduced by DAFI, in parallel with technological developments like the emergence of online courses, meant that other educational programmes began to flourish, connecting refugees and marginalized populations to accredited academic institutions (Bailey & İnanç, 2018 p. 9).

Such support has been very prominent in Europe, however, few of its benefits extend to African universities. Although the interventions are significant to refugee higher education, they did not exactly halt the challenges refugee students face in navigating higher education (Crea, 2016, Khan, 2019). Moreover, we still have partial knowledge about refugee students' experiences in navigating higher education especially in South Africa.

1.3.7 Why does higher education matter for refugees?

Higher education, in general, is viewed as a “focal point of knowledge and its application...it is an institution which makes greater contribution to the economic growth and development through fostering innovation and increasing higher skills” (Dryden-Peterson, 2010 p. 13). With specific focus on higher education for refugees, Dryden-Peterson has argued that “Higher education plays a critical role for individual refugees and for societies in terms of leadership in protracted settings and in post-conflict reconstruction...” (p. 11) Dryden-Peterson (2010 p. 10) further argued that the “1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights” together with the three other education frameworks called for “access to education [for all as a basic] human right”. However, she bemoaned how the frameworks have concentrated on primary education and how higher education has been completely ignored in the frameworks. In her argument, she highlighted that higher education is just as important as primary and secondary education. Discussing education in the context of refugee students she further argued:

...the only inheritance you can give a child is education. Refugees have been long arguing that future security - economic, political and social – is inherently connected to skills, capacities and knowledge that can accompany an individual no matter where they may be geographically (Dryden-Peterson, 2010 p. 13).

Focusing specifically on higher education she postulated that:

[It] is an instrument of protection in refugee contexts...access to higher education contributes to the rebuilding of individual refugees' lives and the realisation of durable solutions...[it] is a tool of reconstruction. Investment in higher education does not only meet the needs of individual refugees and their individual durable solutions but also contributes to the development of the human and social capital necessary for future reconstruction and economic development in countries or regions of origin (Dryden-Peterson, 2010 p. 14).

In expressing how important higher education is, Dowdy (2017 p. 771) posed a significant question:

What hope can a destroyed country have for rebuilding when its professionals and students are suddenly and forcibly displaced, no longer employed, and no longer in school?

With special focus on the increasing number and protracted situation of refugees worldwide, it is now more urgent than ever to provide support for refugees so that they receive the value they need to rebuild their homes. Dryden-Peterson and Giles (2010, p. 3) have further reiterated that "higher education has socio-economic and emancipatory potential...for both individuals and the society". They also raised a critical question, "where can refugees safely air their concerns and requirements?" And obviously, "post-secondary education has the potential of giving greater voice to displaced populations" (Dryden-Peterson & Giles p. 5).

Zeus (2011, p. 258) argued that higher education has significant value for equipping refugee students with three critical skills:

Higher Education [for refugees] can contribute to the qualification of human resources needed in three durable solutions [namely] voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement [yet] the field is less researched and rarely supported [and this] represents a grave impairment of the effective opportunities and freedoms... to develop to their fullest potential

Having understood the importance of higher education for refugees, I, therefore, argue that supporting them to achieve their goals starts by gaining an understanding of a comprehensive picture of their experiences. This will enable stakeholders to create the relevant support needed.

1.3.8 Challenges of refugee students in higher education

It is well documented in the existing literature that refugee students both internationally and nationally are not given adequate support and protection, consequently, they are always faced with challenges in pursuing education (Kavuro, 2013; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Some of the challenges impact on their education directly, for example, barriers to communication in the language of teaching and learning and financial constraint to pursue education (Felix, 2016).

Furthermore, Zeus (2011) broadly categorised their challenges as ‘financial shortcomings or ignorance of application procedures to political and legal issues involving lack of accreditation and citizenship alongside restrictive host country policies’ (pp. 258-259).

Some of the challenges are indirect, for example, wide-spread inequalities and xenophobic attacks in the case of South Africa (Kanu, 2008; Kavuro, 2013). In a theoretical paper about refugee students in South African universities, the authors managed to come up with several challenges which affect refugee students as they navigate higher education in their host nations (Maringe et al., 2017). The challenges were grouped into three categories, namely societal, institutional and individual level challenges (Maringe et al., 2017). The challenges range from economic crisis, xenophobia, crime rate, inequalities, marginalisation, and financial constraints to internationalism (Maringe et al., 2017). Although the challenges in the host nation are crucial as part of their lived experiences, we lack evidence of what brought them to South Africa and also evidence about their future progression intentions and what informs their success. In all three cases, such evidence is needed for stakeholders to develop useful interventions and support.

1.3.9 Refugees at a selected university

In higher education institutions in South Africa in general, literature shows that refugee students are not noticed by institutions’ strategic planning, especially in the allocation of resources (Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013). Research indicates that most universities in South Africa, including the selected university in this study, do not have policies on refugee students (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017). As a result, at the selected university and in many other universities in South Africa, refugee students, in some cases, are treated the same as international students and in other cases as native students (Maringe et al., 2017). This is consistent with Kavuro (2013); in his research in one South African university, he discovered

that the challenges of refugee students within higher education institutions stem from the fact that they are not treated as a unique group with unique needs, yet there are legal instruments which speak to their support. The only instance when refugee students are not treated as international students at the selected university is on the payment of university fees. Like native students, refugee students' fees are spread throughout the whole year, whereas international students are required to pay 75% on registration and the remainder within two months (Landau, 2006, Maringe et al., 2017).

Basing my argument on this literature, refugee students should be treated neither as native students nor as international students because their experiences differ. Their backgrounds are very different and they require unique treatment as refugees. How they should be treated is already documented in the global and national legal instruments (Kavuro, 2013). In general, the challenges they encounter range from lack of financial and academic support and this indicates the gap of policy and practice in South Africa (Kavuro, 2013). This has defeated refugees' perceptions associated with the universities and host countries as well as their future intentions, hence the urge to explore refugee students' lived experiences at a selected university.

Lack of recognition of this group in university spaces manifests both nationally and internationally (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013; Sidhu et al., 2011; Sobantu and Warria, 2013). Because refugee students in higher education are not recognised as a distinct group, there is a dearth of literature concerning refugee students' lived experiences. The scant literature available on refugee students is mostly quantitative and theoretical (Kavuro, 2013; Zeus, 2011). There is also a gap in the literature considering why refugee students make choices to go to particular nations and study at certain universities. As a result, carrying out empirical research on refugee students' lived experiences gives us insights as to what they expected and how they experience life at a selected University.

At this point, one is inclined to question the nature of refugee students' experiences on one hand and the nature of alignment of those experiences with policy and practice at a chosen University on the other hand. Against this background, it becomes imperative to explore refugee students' lived experiences in South Africa in general and at a selected university in particular.

1.4 Statement of the problem

From the existing literature, there are fundamental problems associated with refugees in universities nationally and internationally. One major problem is that universities have failed to distinguish refugee students from international students in both their support structures and demographical data (Kavuro, 2013). The reason might be the fact that the concept ‘refugee’ can be demeaning. As a result, both staff and students avoid using the term (Felix, 2016; Maringe et al., 2017). Refugee students then accept universities’ practices of including them together with other groups of students that might be privileged and who exist in universities in larger numbers (Kavuro, 2013).

Besides the perceptions that the term ‘refugee’ may be demeaning, refugee students might often be camouflaged within the larger student population of international students because universities lack a comprehensive picture of this group of students (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). There is much evidence of refugee students’ post-migratory experiences, but we do not have sufficient evidence of their pre-migratory experiences and future progression intentions (Dryden-Peterson, 2010). Moreover, we seem to know a lot about their challenges but very little about how they become successful (Bailey & İnanç, 2018). Lacking such knowledge about the group might be another reason why they are grouped with other students. In the process, refugee students become a silenced and unrecognised group within higher education (Felix, 2016).

Consequently, this leads to this group not receiving specific, sufficient and unique support from universities and host nations, as promised in the legal instruments which are meant for the protection and management of refugees (Maringe et al., 2017). This does not only put the refugee students at a disadvantage but also exposes the gap between policy and practice, leading to the aggravation of refugee students’ negative experiences in higher education (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013). Meeting challenges in their endeavour to attain education means their hopes for future progression and rebuilding of their nations are shattered. To those who manage to fulfil their plans, they appear to have done so against the odds (Sidhu et al., 2011).

Whilst I acknowledge a growing body of empirical studies that discuss refugee students’ experiences both nationally and internationally, attempts to understand the refugee students’ present engagement within the institutions is narrow. From the existing literature, we do not

get to know how the individual distinct pre-migratory and post-migratory experiences and future progression intentions have impacted on refugee students. These experiences might have a significant impact on their present engagement in their studies as well as on their future imagined possibilities. By also engaging with their pre-migratory and post-migratory experiences, I hope to get a comprehensive picture of refugee students' experiences in higher education. I am aware that pre-migratory experiences might include a variety of experiences, as a result, I did not explore the experiences in an exhaustive manner but I rather explored the kind of prior experiences of the push and pull factors to migration that might have affected their present experiences at a selected university.

Most studies of refugees in higher education are theoretical (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Kavuro, 2013). From one theoretical paper on refugee students, I gained the insight that refugee students have traumatic experiences from their home countries and they continue living in trauma in their host nations (Maringe et al., 2017). Unlike this theoretical paper, many studies have overlooked how the trauma experienced back home has a significant impact on refugee students' experiences. It has, therefore, become imperative in this study for me to go deeper and understand refugee students' half-told stories of how the pre-migratory, post-migratory experiences and future intentions, from home and away, had influenced their present experiences, intentions, engagement with their studies, as well as their future imagined possibilities. This comprehensive exploration would also help universities become aware of why and how they should support refugees as a distinct group. Through biographical narratives, this study explored refugee students' lived experiences at a selected university in South Africa in Gauteng province.

1.5 Definitions of operational terms

The terms selected here for definition are simply to provide an operational framing for understanding how they are initially used. However, the more in-depth understanding of some of these concepts will be dealt with in detail in the literature review presented in the next chapter.

Refugee/refugee student

A broad understanding of refugee is any person who, for reasons mainly to do with forcible displacements due to, for example, civil war, violence, persecution or natural disasters, flees from their country to another country, and has been recognised under the 1951 convention

relating to the status of refugees. For this study, the concept of refugee students is meant to mean refugees who are currently in higher education university institutions.

International student

International students in higher education has become a broad concept, erroneously used to mean all students who are not natives. These include both voluntary and involuntary migrants. In this research, international students would mean students who cross borders out of their own will to study in another country.

Asylum-seeker

A person who has forcibly been displaced from their home country to another country and has not yet been given refugee status. Upon evaluation of papers, the person might be granted refugee status or denied refugee status and deported.

Lived experience

Personal knowledge used to describe first-hand accounts and impressions of living as a member of any community. In this study, reference is to a minority or oppressed group, the refugee students.

Biography/re-story

Although the two might mean something different in broad literature, in this study I use the two interchangeably to mean reconstructing or retelling and re-organising the stories from first-person to third-person narrative in chronological order.

Higher Education

Higher education is a term used to describe different things in different parts of the world. In some instances, it refers to any kind of education which happens post-secondary. This includes technical, vocational or college learning after secondary education but in the circumstances of this research, it refers primarily to university education.

Value creation

It is the process of delivering according to the needs and expectations of those for whom we deliver a service. A useful starting point for any value creation process is the identification of the needs and expectations of the recipients of our service.

1.6 Overview of the theoretical framework

The problem previously outlined can be meaningfully interrogated using a range of theoretical constructs. In this research, consideration was given to the following theories: push-pull (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), social justice (Fraser, 2009) and resilience (Bahadur et al., 2015) theories. I deployed this eclectic theoretical framework to explore the lived experiences of refugee students across the three phases of pre-migration, post-migration experiences and future progression intentions, in order to develop a more holistic understanding of the group as a basis for creating the value they need.

This theoretical framework enabled me to examine the particular aspects of refugee students at the selected university. The push-pull theory helped me to capture which refugee students' experiences, prior to arrival to the host nation, led them to flee their countries. Secondly, the social justice theory helped me to understand the rights and support associated with refugees at a selected University as well as the host country in general, and how the previous experiences have impacted on them. Lastly, the resilience theory showed me how refugee students navigate the particular challenges they face and become successful in the midst of adversity, and how the universities should intervene to ameliorate some of these challenges. The empirical investigation would unravel the ideas which would enable me to repackage a model that can be used for further investigations to analyse, evaluate and understand the refugees' lived experiences in a comprehensive manner.

1.7 The aim of the research

The research aimed to explore how refugee students' biographical narratives of their lived experiences from pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions may contribute more to the knowledge and understanding of their circumstances at a chosen university in South Africa. I would then develop a broad model of their experiences which would help to raise awareness in the people concerned, to understand their lived experiences in a comprehensive manner so that they may take necessary measures to improve the support system and create value for refugee students.

1.7.1 Research questions

The main question of this study is:

How might refugee students' biographical narratives contribute more to the knowledge of their circumstances at a selected university in South Africa?

From the main question the following sub-questions were generated:

- What factors hinder refugee students to pursue their studies in higher education at a selected university?
- How and why do refugee students at a selected university cope in the challenging circumstances?
- In what ways do refugee students consider universities as facilitating or hindering the attainment of their future goals?

1.7.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to explore the biographical narratives of refugee students in order to understand better their experiences and contribute more to the knowledge of their circumstances at a selected university in South Africa.

1.7.3 Objectives

- To discuss refugee students' pre- and post-migratory experiences and future intentions that enable or impact on them to pursue their studies in higher education at a selected university.
- To identify and document how and why refugee students deploy coping mechanisms when faced with challenging circumstances.
- To find ways in which refugee students consider universities as facilitating or hindering the attainment of their future goals.

1.8 Overview of the methodological approach

Given the intended focus of exploring refugee students' lived experiences in higher education, I conceptualised this study as falling within the interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) and is therefore a qualitative investigation (McMillan and Schumacher 2010). Consequently, I used qualitative approaches. In particular, I deployed the narrative approach (Elliot, 2005). This narrative approach served threefold: firstly as a research method and secondly, as a data gathering tool and thirdly, as a data analysis technique (Clandinin & Huber, in press). In such cases, the narrative inquiry serves as both a phenomenon and a method (McAlpine, 2016). Thus I adopted a narrative research inquiry embedded in qualitative research, a kind of framework that allows the study of a phenomenon in a natural setting (Elliot, 2005). I conducted the study with a specific focus on the lived experiences of

refugee students in a South African university in Gauteng province. The experiences are understood as the students narrated them. I conducted the unstructured and semi-structured interviews with four refugee students who were identified through a snowball sampling technique (Creswell, 2014). Data was analysed using the narrative analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018)

1.9 Preliminary conceptualisation of the study

In this section, I attempted to present a preliminary conceptualisation based on the literature I have read and also on personal experience of the empirical evidence around the experience of refugee students in higher education. The conceptualisation involves mapping how the concepts in the study work together to contribute to the study. I further develop the framework in light of the data that was produced. I revisited the framework in the final chapter as one of the key contributions to this study. Understanding the experiences of refugee students in higher education needs a comprehensive approach. A comprehensive approach involves understanding the individual as a whole, which is, understanding their pre-migratory and post-migratory experiences and future progression intentions, as the experiences might have an impact on pursuing higher education.

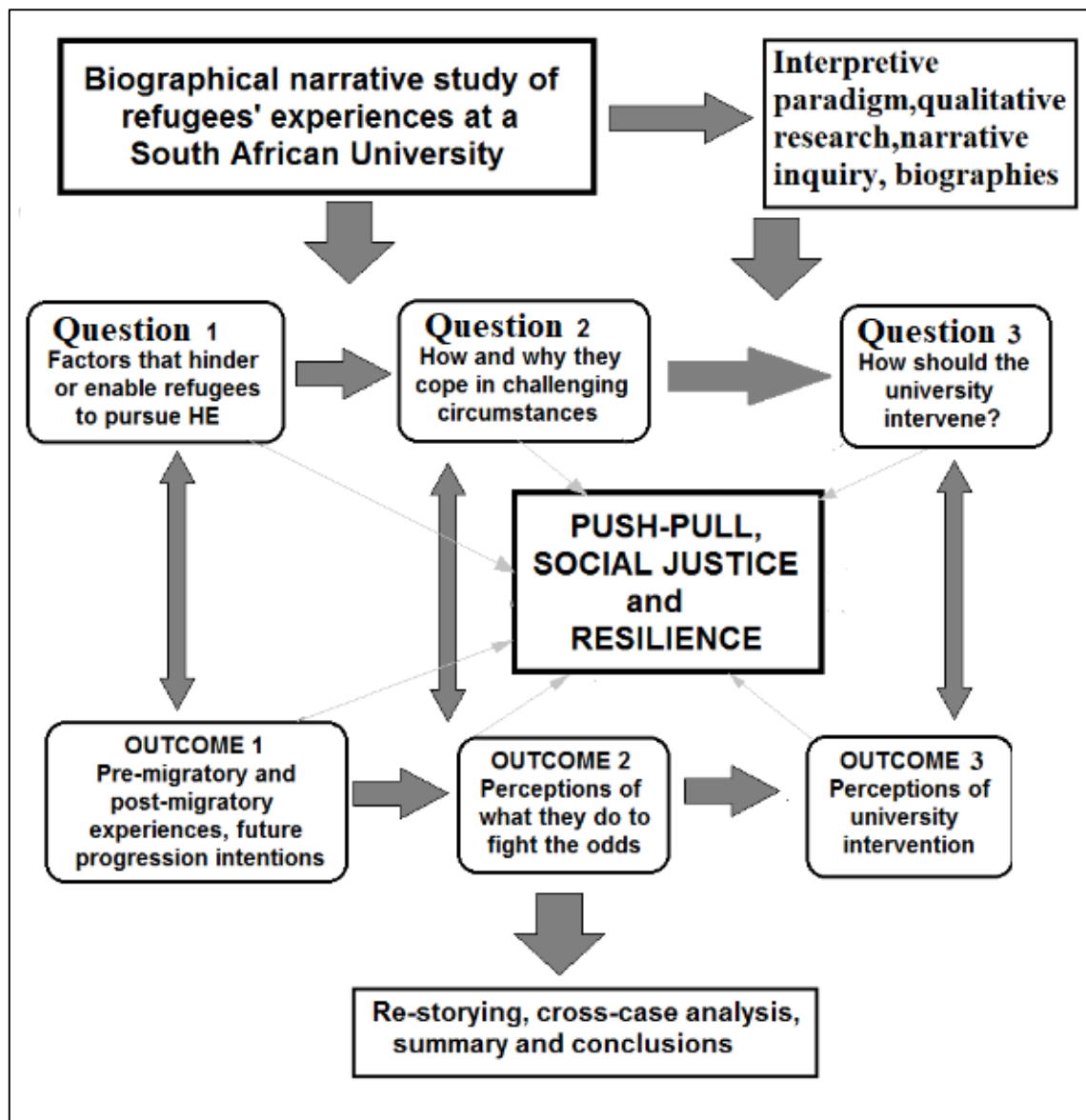


Figure 1 shows how the study is located within a theoretical framework that encompasses the narrative inquiry. I developed a preliminary construct which gives a comprehensive overview of the whole research and how each concept plays an integral role. The initiatory framework served as a map that guided not only the researcher in realising the objectives but also the readers towards understanding the natural progression of the phenomenon under study (Miles & Huberman, 2002).

The preliminary conceptual framework situates the eclectic theoretical framework of the push-pull, social justice and resilience theories in a central role as a lens through which I explored the theoretical issues underpinning refugee students' experiences in an ideal setup

versus experiences in a real setup. The push-pull has helped me to understand their experiences in the pre-migration phase and the social justice and resilience have helped me to understand their experiences across the three phases.

The three questions in Figure 1 provide the overall purpose of the research. Using the theoretical framework as a lens, the critical questions indicate what the study attempted to learn. The first question sought to explore and understand, in a comprehensive manner, the refugee students' lived experiences. This, as I have already argued, was done partially in research available in the field. Much research has exclusively focussed on the post migration phase. Very little research has tried to integrate the post-migration and future progression intentions. As evident, both categories have disregarded the pre-migration experiences. I have therefore set out to understand the pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions in an integrated way that would allow us to understand the refugee students better.

As indicated by the second question, we read of success stories despite the formidable challenges they face. However, available literature has emphasised much on their barriers and less on how they succeed. I therefore wanted to understand how refugee students succeed amidst adversities. The 'why' part of the second question indicates that I sought to understand the intention behind their perseverance, even if circumstances did not allow for success. This might serve us with their perceived knowledge of why they succeed despite the odds. Whilst the question on 'how' people have become resilience has become a major focus in resilience studies, the question on 'why' they become resilient is partially explored yet I suppose it helps in understanding reasons behind cultivation of individual resilience.

The third objective indicates how having understood their resilience, I would go further to understand how they perceive ways in which the University should intervene to help them achieve and realise their dreams. Bonfiglio (2017) has argued that resilience in individual success is crucial but not enough. For Bonfiglio the theory puts much emphasis on the individualistic traits disregarding the power of universities and societies in cultivating it. Thus he argued:

Individualism, grit and resilience have been embraced so enthusiastically that they seem to be a countervailing decline in our understanding of the importance of the support [universities] provide that contribute to individual personal achievement and well being (Bonfiglio, 2017 p. 29).

I therefore sought to explore and understand both their resilience as well as how the university impact on their lived experiences.

At the bottom of Figure 1, the three boxes provide an indication of the expected outcomes of the research: the perceptions of refugee students about their pre- and post-migratory experiences, coping strategies, future intentions and the intervention required. In summary, in this study I have argued that refugee students do not get sufficient support to pursue higher education and in order for them to get sufficient value, I have further argued that supporting refugee student's needs starts by having a comprehensive picture of their experiences, something that is not available in the literature.

The outcomes are:

- Perceptions in refugee students' narratives of the pre-migratory, post-migratory experiences and future intentions and how the three phases have impacted on their navigation of education at a selected university.
- How through resilience they persevere and progress to the future.
- Their call for universities to intervene.

From refugee students' perceptions, I re-storied, did a cross-case analysis, summarised and drew conclusions as indicated in the bottom box in Figure 1. A broad model for understanding refugee students' experiences is developed out of this in the last chapters.

1.10 Significance of the study

This study is a biographical narrative study of the lived experiences of refugee students at a university in South Africa in Gauteng province. This study might help institutions and stakeholders at a selected university and other institutions to understand what refugee students are and use the findings to address the unique circumstances of their refugee students. This study may also conscientise the communities to have a broader understanding of refugees and their needs.

Through recommendations and findings, this study might pave ways to assist other researchers to extrapolate themes in order to understand refugees in their contexts. It is also hoped that with the study's endeavour to reconceptualise and understand refugee students' lived experiences in a comprehensive manner, policymakers and academics may look into

this phenomenon and try to improve the circumstances of this minority group. Therefore, this study will also contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the lived experiences of refugee students in higher education.

1.11 Justification

Much of the literature on refugee students is derived from quantitative research which usually looks for facts and figures for generalisation (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). Moreover, most of the research available in this field is theoretical by nature (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017). As a result, this does not give a comprehensive picture of refugee students' lived experiences. A qualitative approach which is empirical becomes a better fit for the topic under investigation, as well as research needs and questions (Thomas, 2010). It is an appropriate approach for this research because of its ability to answer the what, why and how questions where answers are difficult to quantify. As a result, in this study I utilised a qualitative research, deploying a narrative inquiry because it is very evident that refugee students' voices are scant in previous research, hence the lack of comprehensive knowledge on their lived experiences (Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013).

A large proportion of studies in higher education is about the experiences of students in general (Thomas, 2010). There is also a handful of literature on the experiences of international students (Felix, 2016; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). As discussed earlier, refugee students are concealed within universities' spaces, therefore there is a dearth of research on refugee students' lived experiences and for this reason, they do not get sufficient support. Given that the refugee students' lived experiences in higher education contribute to their future progression intentions, for example, that of transforming their countries, it is hoped that the eclectic theoretical framework which I deployed in this study would help understand their lived experiences in a comprehensive manner which will assist us to understand them in higher education (McAlpine, 2016).

1.12 Overview of the rest of the thesis

The study is presented in ten chapters:

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter which drives the rest of the study. In the chapter, I provide the context of the study in the form of personal and general background. I also provide the rationale as to why the study is worth doing. I also identify research questions

that guided the study. I present the significance and justification for undertaking the study. Whilst the general background situates the refugee students in the context of migration, the personal background locates the researcher within the study. In this chapter, I have also included a brief discussion of operational terms. The chapter concludes by giving an outline and structure of the chapters of the study.

In **Chapter 2** I provide a critical discussion and analysis of a variety of conceptual ideas that help us to understand the essence of the key question. Secondly, I review the empirical evidence in the existing literature in order to conceptualise the existing empirical knowledge about refugee students, so as to identify the existing gaps. In the study I argue for further investigation into the reconceptualisation of refugee students' lived experiences in higher education, which I perceive is not adequately dealt with in extant literature.

In **Chapter 3** I discuss the theories that are prevalent in the field of refugee students and higher education. This helps me as well as the readers to understand the theories that are relevant to appreciating the phenomenon under exploration and also understand broader areas of knowledge being considered. From the theories, I come up with the theoretical framework of this study. Theories I deemed appropriate in terms of ease of application, that explain the phenomena in a broad sense, were selected. The push-pull, social justice and resilience theories provide a theoretical framework for this study.

In **Chapter 4** I provide a detailed analysis and justification of the methodological approach that has been deployed. I also set out the rationale for the qualitative research design and methodology chosen within an interpretivist paradigm. I provide reasons why the narrative inquiry was of particular interest and why I considered it to be the most appropriate approach. In this chapter I also illustrate the dilemmas of researchers in researching vulnerable groups such as refugees, using narrative inquiry.

In **Chapters 5 to 8** I provide a detailed presentation of data collected and drawn from the narratives of four refugee students. This data revealed their pre- and post-migratory experiences, coping mechanisms, future progression intentions and perceptions of university support, as well as how all this has contributed to pursuing their studies. In these four chapters, I present individuals' stories as told to me by each participant over a long

engagement in this study. I present the findings largely through my commentary and direct quotations from the participants.

Chapter 5: Olivier's story: Trauma home and away

Chapter 6: Dominique's story: From a frying pan into the fire

Chapter 7: Tanya's story: I'm on a mission to change my past and present into a better future

Chapter 8: Judith's story: Surviving against the odds

In **Chapter 9**, I set out to analyse the data collected from the four refugees' stories. I identify the similarities and differences in their narrations and derive themes. I locate the empirical evidence within the existing literature and show how it resonated or refuted the existing literature and how the present study has filled the gap in the literature.

In **Chapter 10**, I summarise and conclude the study. I did so by revisiting and addressing the original research question. In addition, I provide my recommendations for future studies in this critical field of refugee studies in higher education. It is clear that the four refugee students have been adversely affected by their pre- and post-migratory experiences and future progression intentions in their endeavour to pursue higher education.

1.13 Summary

In this chapter, I identify the challenges of refugees in higher education and with this, I set out the context of the study. I also demonstrate that knowledge in this area is partial, scanty and bitty. I further argue that developing a more comprehensive understanding of refugee experiences in higher education requires bringing together three broad phases of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions. I also advocate for an eclectic theoretical framework as a way to understand the three stages of the lived experiences in a successive and integrated way. I end this chapter with an overview of all the chapters that make up the thesis. In the next chapter, I deal with literature review, specifically looking at an in-depth analysis of the concepts and empirical evidence in the field.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL DIMENSIONS OF REFUGEE STUDIES

2.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I set out the context of the study. I provided a background of the phenomena under study indicating what is already known as well as the gaps in the literature. In this chapter, I explore in detail the major debates and themes in the available literature and outline how the current study fits in. I also provide the basis for my argument: creating sufficient value for refugee students begins by a thorough understanding of their pre-migration, post-migration experiences and their future progression intentions.

I begin by discussing the key related concepts that underpin the study. I argue that the obscurity among the four related concepts of refugee student, migrant, international student and asylum-seeker has obstructed us from understanding the unique experiences of refugee students in higher education. In this section, I further include a brief discussion of other factors in refugee studies and other disciplines that might be intrinsic and invisible and tend to be trivialised, yet they have a large influence on refugee students' lived experiences.

Second, I explore the empirical evidence in both international and South African literature. I discuss six broad areas beginning with empirical evidence documented in both quantitative and qualitative studies. In both, I identify strengths and gaps and give a short summary of how the current study set out to address the gaps. I further identify and discuss the debates in documented research and outline what has been done and what is yet to be done. Third, I explore the concept of refugee and hidden identity. Fourth, I set out to discuss documented challenges facing refugees and refugee students and fifth, I examine how resilience is conceptualised in the available literature.

Finally, I discuss what the literature suggests universities should do to ameliorate refugee students' challenges as they navigate higher education. I argue that the field needs literature that provides an in-depth understanding of refugee students' lived experiences especially in all three stages of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions.

2.2 Discussion of key related concepts

I attempt in this section to clear the confusion around various closely-related concepts, namely refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants, and international students – which are often (erroneously) used interchangeably. Kavuro (2013) for example found that university policies and guidelines use the blanket notion of ‘international students’ to refer to anyone studying in South Africa who originates from another country. This is an unhelpful practice as it does not take into consideration the unique identity of refugees and their experiences (Maringe et al., 2017). Instead, it places them in the same category of an otherwise privileged group, albeit with its own set of challenges, and could be the source of much inaction, misconception and neglect in terms of the issues of integration and support of refugee students in higher education. I also clarify these concepts to show how the definitions as given in the global, African and South African legal instruments (Maluwa, 1995).

This exercise informs how the concepts are used in this particular study. Understanding the difference and similarities in definitions also makes us understand the relationship between these groups of people, hence a clear understanding of what a refugee student is. I also give a brief description of a range of concepts that are prominent in refugee studies and other disciplines like psychology, that might affect refugees’ experiences in learning.

2.2.1 Refugee

A refugee is someone who has been assessed by the national government or the UNHCR and meets the criteria below relating to the status of refugees:

As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1951 p. 16)

The 1967 protocol has modified and expanded the definition by removing the geographic and temporal limits of the 1951 convention thus giving it universal coverage to all nations, even those who were excluded initially. The first definition of ‘refugee’ given by the African

Union (AU) (1969) and Republic of South Africa (RSA) (2016), which is the South African Instrument 30 of 1998, are almost replicas of the UNHCR's 1951 definition. However, the AU provided a second definition, expanded to cater for African experiences. The new definition responded to African reality at that time, whereby conflict arose both from the ongoing anti-colonial struggles and internal civil wars within newly independent States, of which, these also contributed to the massive flight of refugees.

The term refugee shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality (AU, 1969 p. 2)

In trying to analyse the above definition, Maluwa (1995 p. 662) concluded that:

the OAU Convention broke new ground in international law by recasting the traditional definition of a refugee in embracing, as it does, an additional category of persons as refugees, i.e. all those persons who are compelled to leave their country of origin in order to escape violence, regardless of whether they are in fact personally in danger of political persecution

From the AU (1969)'s second definition, the concept of merely mentioning external aggression in one's country although its not directly targeted on them (unlike in the UNHCR definition of 1951) becomes a prerequisite for qualifying for refugee status. The applicant, therefore, according to the AU (1969 p. 3), must merely prove, "events seriously disturbing public order." In other words, in the AU perspective, one does not need to be personally targeted but by merely mentioning occurrence of such events in one's country of origin is proof enough to qualify for refugee status (AU, 1969).

One of the Universities in South Africa has provided a summary of how it defines a refugee student:

A refugee is a foreign national who has refugee status accorded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has a South African identity book which is stamped as refugee status, and is normally valid for two years until permanent status is awarded...The Refugee Act, No. 130 of 1998 (Section 27) provides refugee

students the right to study without a Study Visa. No medical aid cover is legally required, however, it is recommended (University of the Witwatersrand, 2019 p. 6)

This quote shows that the University is aware of definitional differences between a refugee student and an international student, and is aware that refugees should use refugee papers whereas international students apply for study visas. However, they are still not giving support to this group of students. In fact, the kind of support available seems to have overlooked refugee students: “The holder of a study visa for studies at a higher education institution may conduct part-time work for a period not exceeding twenty hours per week” (University of the Witwatersrand, 2019 p. 7). The Act seems to be in support of those with study visas, yet refugee students do not have study visas. There is nothing else in the handbook showing support specifically meant for those holding refugee or asylum identification within the University.

Secondly, the definition implies that unless the refugees produce the legal documentation they cannot be accepted for studies at the University. From extant literature, we learn that it takes a long time for refugees to get accepted by South African universities, especially because of lack of documentation (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017).

Typically, refugees enter the country of refuge with no relevant documentation, as they often have to leave in a hurry, with no adequate planning. Although many countries have ‘holding camps’ for new refugees, South Africa does not operate such a system (Kavuro, 2013) serve for a few camps established by the non-governmental organisations like churches. Whilst people become refugees for a wide range of reasons, the key issue is that they give up their rights as citizens of the country from which they are fleeing due to trauma, and seek refuge, protection and safety in their new countries. However, higher education institutions rarely classify and use the label refugee students, even if they in some ways recognise and treat them as refugees (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Kavuro, 2013; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Yet studies show that refugees have their own unique needs.

At the heart of most accounts of the experiences of refugee students across the world (see Kavuro, 2013, for example), is how they attempt to integrate themselves into the academic cultures of host nations, and the strategies they use to cope with the new environment,

including ways in which they navigate new legal systems and how they are supported (or not) to achieve such integration.

2.2.2 Asylum-seeker

An asylum-seeker is someone who claims to be a refugee but whose claim is still under assessment as provided in the definition below:

A person who has fled his or her country of origin and is seeking recognition and protection as a refugee in the Republic of South Africa, and whose application is still under consideration. In case of a negative decision on his application, he has to leave the country voluntarily or will be deported (The Immigration Act: Act No. 13 of 2002 In Republic of South Africa (RSA) (2002).

This definition applies to international, African and South African contexts and has shown that an asylum-seeker may reside in the host country waiting for the outcome indicating whether they qualify for refugee status or not. Asylum-seekers often come to the country of refuge illegally and are given an asylum-seeking status and then start the process of applying to be recognised as a refugee. In terms of the South African constitution and its Bill of rights, asylum-seekers and refugees should be accorded the same privileges as local people or citizens with regard to access to social services, education, health facilities and housing. Therefore, this means that asylum-seekers and refugees should enjoy the privilege of free education and transport subsidies if these are also available to ordinary citizens.

Whilst some scholars use asylum-seeker and refugee interchangeably, this study has shown the difference between the two. This study has explored the experiences of refugee students. I wanted to understand the experiences of the group that had already settled with recognised legal status. Because an asylum-seeker is seen as someone who is still seeking the right to be accorded full refugee status in the host country, they might have different kinds of experiences compared to refugee students, although both refugees and asylum-seekers are viewed as falling into the broad category of forced migration. I think we also need research to explore and understand asylum-seekers' experiences in higher education.

I have argued that some universities and host nations view migrants of both forced and voluntary migration as the same (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017). In further

distinguishing the two categories, Hugo (2006) has established forced migration as unique to refugee movement. In support of the argument, Zolberg and Suhrke (1986 p. 14) contend:

...refugees would be characterised by the immediacy of life threatening compulsion, its relative deliberate exercise by some agent and the inability of persons affected by it to rely on their government for even nominal protection

Although I have utilised the UN definition to understand refugees and asylum-seekers, it is a narrow one. Keely and Kraly (2018) have broadened it not only to include external forces brought by political instability caused by humans, but also those caused by natural disasters. As a result, he listed five factors namely, physical dangers, economic insufficiency, religious, ethnic and ideological persecution as all having the potential to cause forced migration. For the first two factors, Hugo (2006) has argued that they are not as life-threatening as the last three and had termed such economic migrants. However, some scholars have established political violence, which is caused by humans, as the primary major cause.

2.2.3 International migrant

The term migrant is a general concept which describes intra-national and international migration. In this study I focused on international migration. An international migrant is anyone who leaves their country of citizenship to stay and live in another country, irrespective of the reasons for migration or legal status (Maringe et al., 2017). Thus, asylum-seekers and refugees (products of forced migration) are also migrants, as are people who voluntarily migrate to other countries to seek new or different opportunities in various areas of human endeavour, such as, among other things, business, employment, education and entrepreneurship. The term migrant thus provides a broad perspective of moving and living outside one's country of legal citizenship and makes no distinction about the causes of this migration.

2.2.4 International student

An international student is one who leaves their own country of citizenship to study in another country. In the context of South Africa, it is a person who comes to South Africa with the aim of furthering education (Kavuro, 2013). Clark (2009) has further differentiated between an international student and a foreign student. He argued that an international student is a person who left their country with the aim of studying. Thereafter they return to their country. A foreign student is a non-citizen enrolled at an institution outside their native

country but who has not necessarily crossed the border to study (Clark, 2009). In this study, despite this insight from Clark (2009), I have referred to both international and foreign students as international students as the issue is not the focus of this study. However, there needs to be further investigation so as to do away with this conflation.

What differentiates refugees and international students is the fact that international students are voluntary migrants, meaning these students crossed borders of their free will. In other words, international students come to the host nations well prepared. As a result, they seem to be self-reliant in as far as financial resources are concerned, to look after themselves in the host nations (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017). In this section, I have differentiated among some of the concepts which are often conflated with the concept of refugee students. I have further distinguished the concepts along five dimensions as indicated in **Table 1**.

Table 1 - Describing different dimensions of migration status

Dimensions of migration status	Brief description	Driving force behind the decision	Balance between driving forces	Nature of first destination	Value anticipated
Asylum-seeker	Anyone who has left or is about to leave their own country and is in the process of applying to be accorded legal status as a refugee	Usually the decision is forced and in relation to political, social, cultural upheavals that push people out of their comfort zones	External forces dominate	Destinations can be diverse and multiple but first point of call tends to be the Department of Home Affairs	To be legally recognised as a refugee, settle peacefully and engage meaningfully in economic activities
Refugee in higher education	Anyone who has been granted the legal status of being a refugee after migrating from their original country of citizenship	Usually the decision is forced and in relation to political, social, cultural upheavals that push people out of their comfort zones	External forces dominate	Destinations may be diffuse and diverse at the beginning, but ultimately become higher education institutions	To access similar educational opportunities as local people and be prepared for a leadership role to transform home countries
Migrant	Anyone who leaves their country of citizenship to live in another country	The decision to migrate can be voluntary or forced	Both internal and external forces apply	Destinations may be diverse and multiple	Diverse, as this can be economic, employment, educational, among others
International student	Anyone who studies in another country other than their own	The decision to migrate can be voluntary or forced	More often the internal forces dominate	Destination is always an educational institution	Concentrated around qualifications, and access to international education, including

Contrary to the definitions provided by the legal frameworks and all the efforts to try and distinguish among the terms, it seems university policies and support systems use the term international student to refer to refugees, asylum-seekers, SADC students and all foreign national students (Kavuro, 2013). Conflating these groups implies ignorance of their individual experiences from their home countries and in the host countries. The universities seem not to distinguish between refugee students and international students in their demographic data, and even less so in their programmes of academic support and cultural integration (Maringe et al., 2017).

2.2.5 Exploring the policy and demographics of refugees, international students and asylum-seekers at a South African University

My overview of global and national policy documents has provided some background to the situation regarding refugee students in South Africa. I now examine how one particular South African university has operationalised the policy documents in recruiting and managing refugee students. The institutional structure that interfaces directly with students with the status of refugees and asylum-seekers and international students is the ISO. The refugee students and asylum-seekers are given access to study without a study permit as long as their foreign qualifications, where these are available, have been assessed and verified through the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

Similar to international students, funding is available for refugee students, on a competitive basis. Whilst refugee students and asylum-seekers are allowed to pay local tuition only, international students are expected to pay international registration fees in addition to local tuition fees. Refugee students and asylum-seekers are not required to have medical insurance for the period of their study, even though this is highly recommended. At this South African university, there is a Refugee Clinic operated by academics of the Law Department to solicit assistance and support for this migrant class.

2.2.6 Emotions and feelings: beyond refugee students' visible experiences

There is a range of concepts that influence refugee students' learning. These are dreams/aspirations, trauma, fear, resilience and frustration. Awareness and necessary caution of the effect of these experiences on refugee students, increases their motivation to learn. Furthermore, such experiences are not readily visible, yet paying attention to them might give

us a comprehensive picture of refugee students' experiences. Van Heelsum (2017) used the terms **dreams and aspirations** interchangeably in exploring the experiences of refugees in the Netherlands. He argued that refugees have many aspirations especially when they come to the host nations. Examples of such aspirations include justice and freedom, education, work and income. If these aspirations are not fulfilled, they end up frustrated, another hidden feeling which manifests when one's hopes are not realised (Dodd et al., 2007). Dreams are most likely to impact on refugee students' experiences positively when they are realised and negatively when they are shattered or withheld.

Resilience is a concept in flux because it is understood differently in different contexts. In ordinary parlance, the concept is used in the sense of the capacity of an organisation or individual to withstand adverse conditions which is an act of defying the odds (Bailey & İnanç, 2018; Felix, 2016; Maringe et al., 2017). Understanding this helps in coming up with strategies to boost refugee students' resilience so as for them to become even more successful. The concept has been explored in-depth in chapter 3. **Trauma** has been widely used widely in psychology to define an inward response to deeply distressing conditions that overwhelm an individual's ability to cope (Levine et al., 2005).

The term involves both physical and psychic wounding (Levin et al., 2005). Whilst it is easy to detect the physical wound, the psychological wound is difficult to detect, especially when one does not have in-depth conversations with the victim. If it goes unaddressed, the damage becomes huge (Maringe et al., 2017). **Fear** is another concept used in psychology to express the person's state of mind triggered by the perception of danger, real or imagined. Gramlich (2019) has conceptualised fear as an unpleasant internal sensation that happens in response to an immediate and identifiable threat, usually of external nature. Continuous exposure to fear in refugee students' experiences might breed trauma and hopelessness hence value destruction.

2.3 Empirical discussions: Global and South African studies on refugees and refugee students

There are numerous research studies on refugees' experiences, mostly in Australia (Crea, 2016; Naidoo, 2009; Sidhu et al., 2011), in the USA (Felix, 2016; Kanno & Varghese, 2010), in New Zealand (Maydell-Stevens et al., 2007), in Thailand (Zeus, 2011) and in the United

Kingdom (Gu et al., 2010; Pinson & Arnot, 2010). However, there is not much research on refugee students in South Africa. Some scholars, like Kavuro (2013) and Maringe et al. (2017), have looked at experiences of refugees in higher education, touching on the aspects of social justice as well as policy-practice gap. Although the two theoretical studies have provided us with insights on how refugee students navigate higher education, the methodological conception does not provide the fundamentals of refugees in higher education. Nevertheless, Sobantu and Warri (2013) in their research on refugee students in secondary education, have used refugee participants in interviews as their main sources of data and this somehow brought us closer to gaining a comprehensive picture of the participants' lived experiences. I started by drawing on a few quantitative studies from the field to demonstrate a few strengths and weaknesses in order to show why I argue for a qualitative methodology espousing the narrative inquiry for the current study.

2.4 Quantitative research on refugees: Strengths and limitations

There are some documented quantitative studies in the field, for example, Bouhenia et al. (2017) and Vigneswaran and Quirk (2012). Whilst this kind of study helps us gain a wider and general idea of phenomena under investigation, the analysis is narrow and superficial. Furthermore, the results are limited as they provide numerical descriptions at the expense of detailed narratives that elaborate accounts of human perceptions. As a result, studies that are quantitative by nature, do not provide an in-depth and comprehensive picture of refugee students' lived experiences. In fact, quantitative studies aim for scale rather than depth. However, we can extrapolate themes to form a basis for understanding the lived experiences of refugee students in higher education in South Africa.

Bouhenia, et al. (2017) conducted a quantitative survey on health and violence endured by refugees during their journey and stay in France. They deployed geo-spatial simple random sampling and had a large sample size of 402 participants. This indeed allowed for a broader study involving a greater number of respondents which consequently made generalisation of the results more reliable. Equally important is the fact that researchers are able to describe a general picture of their challenges, but this kind of research methodology ignores the in-depth exploration and contextual differences of the participants. I, therefore, argue that research on refugees and refugee students, needs a deeper understanding of their experiences and that is what the current study has set out to do.

2.4.1 Qualitative studies: Towards an in-depth understanding of refugee students' lived experiences

I begin with the qualitative study carried out by Taylor and Sidhu (2012) in four Australian schools. The scholars employed a purposive sampling of four schools in investigating the role of schooling and its contribution to the successful resettlement of refugee students (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Their data is based on three data sources: they examined policy documents, school prospectuses and also carried out interviews with teachers and principals. Taylor and Sidhu (2012) argued that they did not interview refugee students because their focus was on school programmes and strategies. This kind of research does not take into consideration issues of heterogeneity and contextual differences in refugee students (Christie & Sidhu, 2006). Because the unique experiences of refugees are not taken into consideration, they are most likely to come up with a 'one size fits all' kind of intervention and it is bound to fail (Pinson & Arnot, 2010). In contrast, I argue that getting students' perceptions helps with capturing their experiences, which are also needed in evaluating and modifying the programmes and strategies.

However, on a positive note and basing their argument on their findings, Christie and Sidhu, (2006) concluded that there is a need for a holistic approach to education and welfare. This can be done when schools come up with comprehensive models to support learning, social and emotional needs. Although this may be true, I further argue that in order to come up with relevant support structures for refugees, we need to first have a clear and comprehensive understanding of their lived experiences. In the current study, I sought to address this by getting an in-depth understanding of their pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions. The stakeholders would become fully aware of the refugee students' challenges and needs, so as to develop appropriate interventions. It has been stated that presenting migrants as a homogeneous group has prevented "detailed examination of pre-migration and post-migration factors which bear significant relevance to understanding their needs and developing appropriate educational support" (Christie & Sidhu, 2006 p. 458). The argument arising from this study is to develop a deeper understanding of the refugee students' experiences, an assignment that has helped me develop a new model which presents refugee students in a holistic manner.

Closer to what this study set out to do is Felix's (2016) study, which explored the essence of the experiences of six students from refugee backgrounds in post-secondary education in the

USA. The researcher employed a phenomenological study and the data was gained through journal entries and semi-structured interviews. The literature reviewed and the background to this report reveal that refugee students face many academic challenges in their experiences, an area that is well researched in available literature (Dryden-Peterson, 2017; Kavuro, 2013; Zeus, 2011).

Felix's (2016) research drew on three theoretical perspectives, namely incorporation and acculturation theory, resilience and grit, and self-efficacy to understand the experiences of these students of refugee background. In her findings, the researcher came up with five themes, namely, mobility and higher education, United States English acquisition, negotiating a bi-cultural identity, connecting to a community of national origin, and sources of support in persisting in higher education. These findings help to understand specific challenges in the U.S. undergraduate refugee students. However, in addition to exposing these challenges, there is a need for an in-depth exploration of ways in which the students navigate success despite the odds. Moreover, colleges and universities should develop strategies to ameliorate some of the structural challenges. This may be done through, for example, clarifying policies pertaining to refugee students' access to education. Felix's (2016) study is useful to my research in understanding documented empirical evidence in post-secondary refugee education elsewhere and making comparisons with the situation in South Africa.

The phenomenological approach utilised in this study is an ideal approach especially when dealing with vulnerable groups such as refugees in higher education, however, the current study prioritised the narrative inquiry espousing the biographical narratives because it embraces the chronological presentation of stories and considers stories as data.

Re-storying has also been used by Sobantu and Warria (2013) in a qualitative study which explored academic experiences of male refugee learners at a high school in Johannesburg. The purpose of the article was to discuss real-life academic problems by hearing participants' stories using the narrative approach. Sampling was purposive and interviews were carried out with five participants. It was difficult for Kavuro (2013), Maringe et al. (2017) and Vigneswaran and Quirk (2017) to obtain participants using traditional sampling techniques such as purposive sampling. Likewise, it was not easy using snowball sampling. I, therefore, think that when researching refugee students in secondary schools in South Africa the

researchers are provided with the full information from the authorities unlike in universities (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017).

Sobantu and Warria (2013) deployed an anti-oppressive practice framework as outlined by Dominelli (2012). The framework fights social divisions and social inequalities. Whilst in Dominelli's (2012) study the researcher used emancipatory frameworks, I argue this can only be done when one has a full understanding of the refugee students' experiences. Thus in this study, I deploy social justice theory with the aim of understanding their social justice issues, whilst also suspending critiquing.

Moreover, Sobantu and Warria (2013) came up with three findings: academic resilience in refugee students, critical role played by teachers in schools in acculturation of refugee students, and the role of the social worker in refugee children's school adjustment. Although this article looks at high school students, it is of great relevance to my research in that the experiences these high school learners have might be similar to those of college and university students, since the study deals with the context of South African education. It is important to note how resilience has been used as part of the theoretical framework by Felix (2016), Maringe et al. (2017) and Warria and Sobantu (2013). In all cases, we do not gain a deeper understanding of what resilience is because it is used as a general monolithic term. A deeper understanding of the theory is provided by Bahadur et al., (2015) who have shown a deeper analysis of resilience as composed of four capacities. Jeans et al., (2017) also presented resilience in three dimensions. The four capacities are absorptive, adaptive, anticipative and transformational resilience (Bahadur et al., 2015; Jeans et al., 2017). Such deep exploration has helped me to be thorough with the indicators of resilience in refugee students. Chapter 3 provides a thorough discussion of resilience theory.

Maringe et al. (2017), in a conceptual paper, explored the experiences of refugee students in South African universities. They deployed four theories as their framework: resilience, social justice, acculturation and ubuntu theories. The theories helped them to explore the disjuncture between policy and practice in higher education institutions in South Africa. I utilise two of their theories, resilience and social justice, as part of the framework of this study. The theories have the potential to explore in-depth refugee students' lived experiences in higher education. The scholars have discovered that refugee students in higher education face numerous challenges that have impacted on how they navigate academics. However, not

much detail can be captured in a conceptual paper, especially fine detail on the context and the experiences. Maringe et al., (2017) have also postulated that refugee students face traumatic situations at home and in the host nation. Though they did not explore in detail the trauma at home, the paper would act as a basis for the current study in exploring in detail pre-migration, post-migration and future progression experiences. This kind of exploration is likely to give readers a comprehensive picture of refugee students' experiences that would help institutions and host nations rethink their support strategies, hence working towards creating value for this group.

Greyling (2016) investigated the expected well-being of refugees in South Africa. He argued that well-being is the refugees' major determinant on migration decision and choice of host nations. He further argued that acquiring knowledge about their expected well-being informs refugee policy in the host nations, however, little is known about this determinant. Among other factors that influence refugees' well-being, are the push and pull factors. However, Greyling's (2016) study is a quantitative study and it is not easy to obtain in-depth knowledge as the current study has set out to do.

2.5 Existing research: Debates and gaps in the literature

Bouhenia et al. (2017) have investigated two factors, namely the migration and post-migration stages of the refugees and refugee students. Whilst this is important, Dryden-Peterson, (2015) argued that any research on refugee migration which ignores pre-migration would be missing a crucial aspect of the refugee students which indeed has a huge impact on their experiences at the present time. However, it seems existing research has indeed focused on post-migration and little on the pre-migration aspect of refugees' journeys, for example, Felix (2016), McBrien, Dooley and Birman (2017) and Msabah (2019). Dryden-Peterson (2015) further contended that existing literature addressed post-arrival experience of refugees and refugee students, ignoring the aspect of how they came to be in the United States. Likewise, Taylor and Sidhu (2012) echoed the sentiment, arguing that the aspect of forced migration is totally ignored. Dryden-Peterson (2015) further argued that such literature, although useful, is limited in that researchers give little attention to the educational experiences in the students' countries of origin and first asylum, which is likely to inform their challenges in the host country. As a result, the researcher sought to address this gap by trying to understand educational experiences of refugee children prior to arrival in the United States. She also contended that in such circumstances, the host country would always

emphasise its history and culture in curricula, whilst neglecting the refugees' original country. Obviously, this shows that the host nations and universities lack awareness of refugee students' needs and therefore fail to provide meaningful intervention. In the current study, I argue for an exploration of refugee students' experiences which gives us a comprehensive picture of their journeys, including pre-migration, migration, post-migration and their future progression intentions.

2.6 Refugees and hidden identities

Vigneswaran and Quirk's (2012) theoretical paper on research completed in Johannesburg, South Africa, has clearly outlined reasons why there is not enough research, especially quantitative research in South Africa on refugees. They have argued that though researchers employing surveys do not gain deeper understanding of this group, surveys remain crucial because they provide essential, precise and up-to-date official data for refugees. In reviewing six papers, they realised that researchers come across methodological challenges, especially with conventional approaches to sampling. The issue of methodological challenges is also very common in qualitative research on vulnerable groups such as refugee students, (Faulkner, 2015; Maringe & Sing, 2015). Whilst researchers had their ideal representative sample, they faced challenges in obtaining the actual samples, because refugees hide from the surveyors and researchers (Vigneswaran & Quirk, 2012).

The issue of refugees and hidden identities was echoed in the theoretical research of Maringe et al. (2017). They argued that it is not easy to secure participants such as refugees, even through the universities' official channels. Vigneswaran and Quirk's (2012) study argued that refugees conceal their identity most probably because of the way they have come to be in South Africa and due to high rates of violence against migrants, they distrust everyone. Similarly, Maringe et al. (2017) argued that refugee students in South Africa are concealed within and identified as international students, yet they form a unique group with unique needs. In fact, refugees seem to approve the universities' act of hiding their identities for fear of being tracked down from home. In clearing this wrong assumption, Kavuro, (2013) has provided a distinction between refugee students and international students. This made me aware of the challenges I might encounter in the field and prompted me to think critically, especially about the sampling technique for this group of people.

2.7 Challenges of refugees and refugee students

Refugees face multiple barriers and challenges in universities and host nations in general. Dryden-Peterson's (2015) findings indicated that refugee students have limited and disrupted educational opportunities, language barriers to educational access, inadequate quality of instruction, and discrimination in school settings (Dryden-Peterson, 2010).

Most of the research covers challenges to do with adjustment to a new language, a new culture and a new academic system that refugee students are exposed to within the host country (Bailey & İnanç, 2018; Felix, 2016; Harris & Marlowe, 2011; Pinson & Arnot, 2010). This is seen as contributing to hindering their progression to the aspired future (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013). As difficult as it might appear to be, adjusting to the new culture, new language and new academic system is a necessity for survival (Zeus, 2011). However structural barriers are evident and many refugees survive against the odds (Kavuro, 2013; Msabah, 2019). In Sobantu and Warria's (2013) study, refugee students in high school faced challenges related to their enrolment in schools. The challenges ranged from effects of xenophobic violence to accessing academic facilities for their education.

Harris and Marlowe (2011), on investigating the expectations and experiences of young refugee adults who were enrolled in tertiary education in Australia, discovered that it is a diverse group with varied educational success. They also discovered that refugee students face numerous challenges, which include difficulties in adapting to new educational contexts and home environments not conducive to studying. The participants recounted their best support as coming from other students of the same background. This resonates with Sheikh et al. (2019) who discovered that difficulties in adaptation arise because of challenges of instability and financial hardship for refugees in Australia. Harris and Marlowe (2011) have concluded that awareness of and response to these issues may help this vulnerable group with easy transition into higher education. In their case, they found that there is a lack of specific services for refugees. As a result, their issues are responded to on an ad hoc basis (Marlowe, 2011). All the scholars concur that policies need to be put in place to conscientise educators and all stakeholders in the refugee's lived experience in education.

Discussing specifically the challenges related to academia within higher education institutions in the host nation, Earnest et al. (2010) came up with the following challenges:

firstly, refugee students had challenges with academic writing and assessment. This was caused by the incompatibility between the education system back home and the one in the host nation. The participants, however, acknowledged the presence of the support system within the institutions, but queried that it was just a ‘generic [kind] of a support service which [to them] was ineffective and often cursory’ (Earnest et al., 2010 p. 168). Secondly, English language competence was a barrier to the groups who did not use it as a language of instruction at home. During tutorials they would try multitasking in both understanding the language as well as understanding the facts. It is quite surprising that even those ones who had an English language background faced challenges because “they felt that their English hindered them from participating in tutorials, as the discussion moved too fast for them to effectively understand” (Earnest et al., 2010 p. 164-165). Thirdly in “learning to navigate the web and using technology, participants found [this] the most challenging new skill to learn” and whilst they experienced improvement in other barriers as the semester progressed, “technology persisted as a confronting and frustrating challenge” (Earnest et al., 2010, p. 165).

The existing literature as discussed above, has indeed explored numerous challenges faced by refugee students in higher education, however, researchers have dwelled much on post-migration experiences and have ignored refugee students’ pre-migratory experiences and future progression intentions (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). Although Dryden-Peterson’s (2015) research is about refugee students at primary schools, it has helped to learn also of the gaps in literature about refugees’ experiences in higher education in my study too. As a result, I adapt the scholar’s stance about interrogating educational experiences starting from the refugees’ countries of origin, to understand how the pre-migration experiences have an influence on higher education in the host country. In order to gain a comprehensive picture of their experience, I therefore, in addition to post-migratory experiences, explore refugee students’ pre-migration experiences and future progression intentions and establish how the experiences affect them as they navigate higher education.

2.8 Looking beyond barriers and challenges

It is important to note that existing research on refugee studies tend to overstate vulnerabilities and helplessness, whilst trivialising refugee strength and resilience. These qualities help refugees to succeed, even in the face of adversity (Bailey & İnanç, 2018). They argued that what is clear in existing literature, is a very strong expression identifying refugees

as passive beings who have been uprooted and who are dependent and always helpless. Contrary to existing literature, Bailey and İnanç's (2018 p. 119) participants showed a "far more complex reality" that goes beyond passivity and helplessness. Likewise, Maringe et al., (2017) argued that emphasising exclusively the challenges and vulnerabilities has provided us with a partial picture of refugees as burdens to the host nation, yet they also bring resilience as a significant trait that can be adopted and taught to different kinds of students within the institutions. As a result, they have listed what could be utilised by universities to promote resilience in refugee students, and listed networking and accessing resources as significant factors to boosting resilience (Maringe, 2017). In the next section I discuss resilience in refugee students.

2.9 Resilience: Crafting a future in memory of an unsettled past and unsettling present

The title above, adopted from Matthews (2008), reveals the essence of people who thrive amidst adversity. Recent research carried out by Msabah (2019), has presented refugees as ordinary people dealing with extraordinary challenges. He argued that refugees leave their homes feeling uncertain about where they are going, but full of hope that they would change their lives. They move beyond just being passive recipients of support by actively devising survival tactics. In his argument, he viewed refugees as agents of change because they actively devise methods to survive, even against the odds (Msabah, 2019).

In the same vein, Bailey and İnanç (2018) used stories in understanding the challenges refugee students in Malaysia face in accessing higher education. They went further to do a cross-case grounded content analysis in order to determine the similarities and differences among refugee stories. They concluded that it is well established that refugee students face numerous challenges in accessing higher education, however, although they face barriers to success, they have designed strategies to aid their success, despite the challenges. One example they gave, is how refugee students make deliberate efforts to "construct their personal identity around education in order to keep focused" (Bailey & İnanç, 2018 p. 119). Because of this Bailey and İnanç (2018) challenged the studies that have presented refugees as dependent victims. Zeus (2011 p. 256) echoed the sentiments that existing research of refugees as "dependent victims have shaped reality in justifying mechanisms for international protection and incapacitating refugees." This is consistent with Meyer's argument that, "the potential for refugees to present a burden is often due to host government restrictions on livelihood opportunities" (Meyer, 2006, p. 12).

Bailey and İnanç's (2018) investigation is similar to what the current study sought to do, especially in terms of presenting data in a story form, with the difference that Bailey and İnanç's (2018) study deployed a grounded approach and was carried out in Malaysia, and the current study is the first of this nature in terms of narrative methodology to be carried out in Africa. In the United States of America, Felix (2016) also deployed biographical narratives in exploring the lived experiences of refugees in higher education. In both cases, resilience has emerged as a characteristic that refutes the narratives of refugees as passive and dependent. The theory of resilience is used for the current study to understand in depth how refugee students succeed against the odds. In the previous section I discussed how resilience can be taught in order to strengthen refugee students' adaptation, especially in terms of adversity, however, there is also a need to fight structural barriers in order to improve their lived experiences in higher education. In the next section I discuss strategies documenting how universities should intervene.

2.10 Strategies universities should deploy

Resilience is significant but not enough (Bonfiglio, 2017). McBrien (2005) argued that refugees continue to face challenges in their host nations, as a result, they continue to live in fear. Higher education is perceived to be "a stabilising feature" in the refugee students' lives (Matthews, 2008 p. 2). As already discussed in this literature review, a great deal has been documented about challenges refugee students meet, and they are, to a large extent, presented as victims, yet they are survivors through persistence and determination (McBrien, 2011; Msabah, 2019; Zeus, 2011). Even though that is the case, structural barriers act against refugee students by instilling fear, delaying, and/or shuttering their progress. Maringe et al. (2017) have presented four critical aspects universities should consider in helping refugees in achieving their dreams and in moving towards social justice. Both Kavuro (2013) and Maringe et al. (2017) share the same view that all the challenges faced by refugees entail social justice issues. As a result, Maringe et al. (2017) suggested reformulation or formulation of university policies to include, firstly, the reconceptualisation of their identity, that is, avoiding their concealment as international students. Second, they should provide holistic support, a kind of support which is beyond academic support (Maringe et al., 2017). Third, universities should emphasise, develop and deploy frameworks that speak to trauma. Fourth, they should rethink methodological and ethical contributions that do not further expose refugee students to traumatic and vulnerable situations. Matthews (2008) argued that there is

a serious need for policies that emphasise refugee students' agency rather than their passivity and vulnerability.

Earnest et al. (2010) discovered that besides boosting resilience, university staff should at least have "a certain level of understanding and empathy" to refugee background experience (p. 166). They went further and argued that, "understanding the particular experiences of students from refugee backgrounds was seen as a vital component that at times was not apparent" (Earnest et al., p. 167). They also argued for "programs and teaching methodologies...that enable refugee students to become active members of an initially foreign learning community" (Earnest et al., 2010 p. 169). They emphasised "offering refugee students a bridging course... [upon arrival into University] so as to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge of university culture and expectations" (Earnest et al., 2010 p. 169).

2.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, I cleared the obscurity of concepts often used interchangeably through providing a conceptual definition of four critical terms, namely, refugee, asylum-seeker, international student and migrant.

I also mapped the field by discussing available empirical and conceptual literature. I argued that quantitative studies are limited, in that they give us a general picture of refugee students. Yet if meaningful support is needed, we should embrace an in-depth exploration and understanding of this group. I further argued that existing qualitative evidence points to some critical issues that might help, however, the engagement is partial and does not provide a comprehensive picture. I discussed the gaps in the literature and showed that such gaps, for example, exploring one stage of experience or emphasising the negative side of experiences only, would not allow the creation of sufficient value in refugee students in higher education. This was followed by a discussion on refugees and hidden identity. It was stated that if these identities remain obliterated, this is another challenge to really creating value in these students. I advocated for a type of resilience which is multifaceted because it helps to understand the complexity of refugees' lived experiences.

In the next chapter, I will briefly discuss theories in the field and the theoretical framework for this study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS: TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Many theories have been proposed and used to explain the experiences of different kinds of students such as refugees, international students and other privileged and underprivileged groups in education. Although the literature covers a wide variety of such theories, in this review I focus on theories that emerge repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed. Some of these theories are resilience (Felix, 2016; Maringe et al., 2017), social justice (Kavuro, 2013), push-pull (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), acculturation (Phillimore, 2011; Sheikh & Anderson, 2018;), Ubuntu (Gade, 2012, Letseka, 2014; Samkange & Samkange, 1980) and self-efficacy (Gibbs & Block, 2017) to mention only a few. Although the literature presents these theories in a variety of contexts, I did this review with the aim of understanding how and why some of these theories might be applicable to better appreciate the lived experiences of refugees at a particular university in South Africa.

In the previous chapter, I dealt with the conceptualisation and empirical evidence that exists in the field of refugee education. I outlined the strengths and gaps within and established reasons why we need further research that gives a comprehensive picture of the lived experiences of refugee students in higher education.

In this chapter, I set out to briefly discuss some theories from a pool of theories in refugee studies, outlining their strengths and weaknesses and why these theories were chosen or not chosen as part of the theoretical framework for this study. I argue that gaining a comprehensive picture of refugee students' lived experiences also requires me to choose the theories that provide a lens that captures all three critical stages of refugee students' three-phase journey. In other words, the choice of theories was informed by the gaps previously stated in the introductory chapter, that we lack a holistic view of refugee students in the existing literature (Dryden-Petersen, 2015). I have therefore argued for an eclectic theoretical framework that is sequenced in such a way that it captures all the stages of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression. The framework of three theories of push-pull; social justice and resilience theories, in that sequence, were chosen as the theories that best fit this current study.

As shown in Figure 2, I start by discussing, in general, the theories which are prominent in the field. The discussion for each theory follows five broad themes, namely, origins of the theory, key proponents, major arguments, what the theory brings to the debate, and the limitations of the theory. I move on to discuss the theoretical framework for this study and end with a summary. Figure 2 shows a summary of the pool of theories prominent in the field and the choice of my theoretical framework informed by the methodology and following the refugee students' three-phase journey.

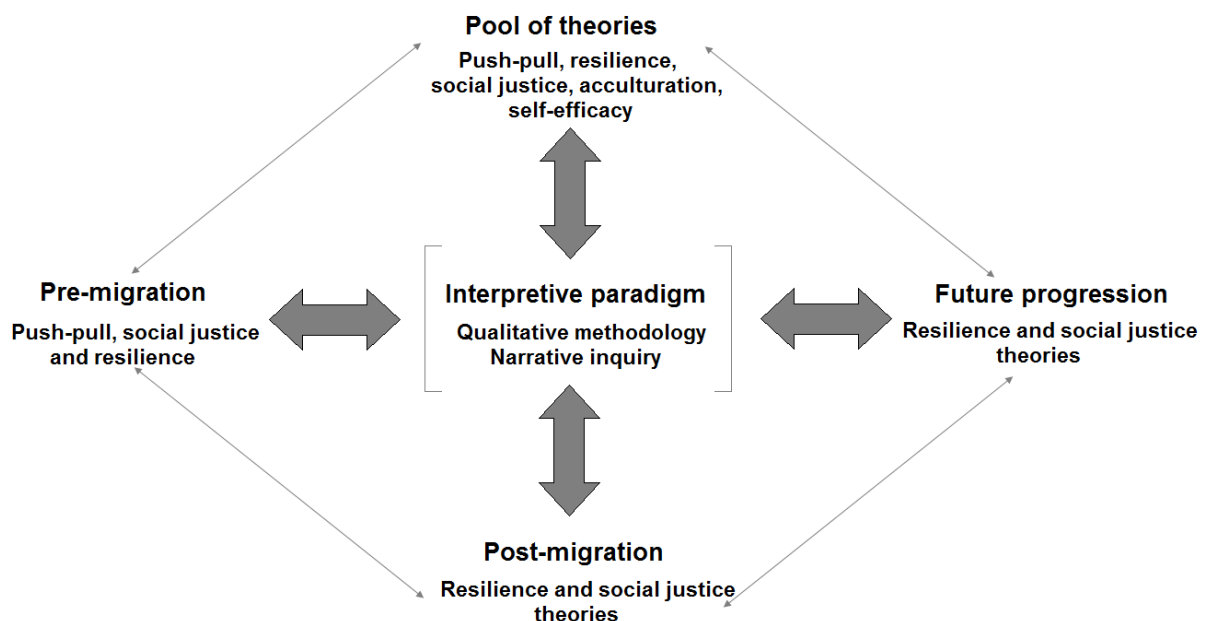


Figure 2 - Pool of theories and the theoretical framework

3.2 Discussion of theories in the field

In the next section, I explore the theories in the field and provide the rationale for the choice of theories for the theoretical framework of this study. The discussion of the theories is not exhaustive, I chose the ones that appeared to be frequently used in understanding refugees and migrants in general.

3.2.1 Acculturation

Acculturation is a theory that originated from psychology and was first described by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) in a study on Polish peasants in Europe and America. Ever since, acculturation has become a significant area of study, particularly well applied in times of large flows of migrants like refugees and international students (Berry, 2006). Scholars in the field have conceptualised acculturation as change in individuals resulting from contact with

people who are of a different culture (Gibson, 2001, Berry, 2006). Sheikh and Anderson (2018 p. 23) have defined acculturation as “a process whereby identity change occurs as a result of exposure to simultaneous multiple cultures.” Change involves a shift in psychological, sociological and cultural beliefs (Phillimore, 2011).

Early scholars have viewed acculturation as unidirectional, arguing that migrants adopt a new culture of the host nation and discard their own (Gordon, 1964). However, in Sheikh and Anderson’s (2018) argument, they viewed the unidirectional model as “too simplistic [and more so] for failing to recognize an individual’s ability to maintain complex multiple identities” (p. 24). In refuting the monolithic idea of acculturation, recent scholars like Berry (2006) have noted that at least four dimensions are possible in the process of acculturation. The dimensions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Dimensions of acculturation

Dimension	Description
Assimilation	Individuals adopt the new culture and discard their original culture
Separation	Individuals reject the new culture and keep theirs
Integration	Individuals receive the new culture and also retain theirs
Marginalisation	Individuals reject both cultures

According to Sheikh and Anderson (2018 p, 25):

...integration has previously been identified as the most desired outcome for acculturating individuals [because it has] a least amount of social difficulty [whereas] marginalisation is the least favored strategy [because of its] association with likelihood of developing other problems like mental health issues.

Sheikh and Anderson (2018) argued that early theorists concentrated on the cultural and behavioural aspect of acculturation and totally disregarded the psychological acculturation. They went further to argue that presenting acculturation in the four dimensions allows it to be “presented [also] in psychological dimensions” (Sheikh & Anderson, 2018 p. 26), that is, in addition to behavioural and cultural perspectives.

Felix (2016) used this lens as an alternative way to think about refugee experiences in higher education. For him, acculturation plays two major critical roles: both acculturation and enculturation and the interplay of the two concepts helped him understand some refugee students' experiences.

Maringe et al. (2017) deployed acculturation theory as part of their theoretical framework. They outlined how it is significant to understand how refugee students in higher education face acculturative stress, especially in South Africa which has diverse races and diverse cultures. Because of the numerous cultures, even voluntary migrants such as international students, struggle to adapt (Maringe et al., 2017).

Sheikh and Anderson (2018), in the systematic review of nineteen articles, concluded that there is a relationship between education and acculturation. They further explained the relationship as “bi-directional and potentially cyclical, in that acculturation may facilitate education, but that education may also facilitate acculturation” (Sheikh & Anderson, 2018 p. 22). Understanding such a relationship is vital for researchers because they become well informed about “the education-acculturation relationship” (Sheikh & Anderson, 2018 p. 22).

Whilst I understand that acculturation theory offers some tools that might help me understand refugee students' experiences in-depth, it overlooks the complexities of acculturation experiences, for example, certain identities like ethnicity and gender also play a significant role in acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In the next section I explore the incorporation theory.

3.2.2 Incorporation theory

The original meaning of the incorporation theory is in the context of internal colonialism where the minority groups like Mexicans and black people were incorporated into the society of the United States (Rong & Preissle, 2008). The theory explains how immigrants were compelled to become more like the host country's dominant group, (Felix, 2016). Incorporation theory is a one-way process where the colonising country had an upper hand. Rong and Preissle (2008) argue that at least two models of immigrant incorporation exist. The first one is classic assimilation “which advocated for the elimination of ethnic identity and reconstruction of an all-American-and-English-only immigrant identity” (Rong &

Preissle, 2008 p. 11-12). The model was later criticised for emphasising the American culture at the expense of all other cultures in existence in the United States.

The second model is pluralism “which is a collection of somewhat different approaches to immigrant incorporation, but they all share the vision of heterogeneous, rather than homogenous society” (Rong & Pressle, 2008 p 13). Rong and Preissle went further to give the following list of approaches to acculturation, “selective assimilation, segmented assimilation, accommodation without assimilation and pluralistic assimilation...all these have been developed to represent actual instances of immigrants’ adaptation to a host country” (2008 p. 13).

However, in the case of refugees today, they encounter the host country differently. Unlike the immigrants in the above context, refugees and refugee students are not subjects to an incorporative process, instead, although they were forced to migrate from their native countries, they are only “welcomed by the resettlement country in policy and practice” (Felix, 2016 p. 78).

To Felix, the incorporation theory, therefore, helped her to “consider the influence of context on refugees” migratory experiences prior to resettlement and the role of forced migration on the transition to the U.S. and the post-secondary education” (Felix, 2016 p. 78). The incorporation theory also allowed her to know refugee perceptions of how they were viewed in the host country and how that affected their academic and social experiences in higher education (Felix, 2016). Although the incorporation theory has been quite significant in mirroring the immigrants in the U.S., it might pose challenges in African societies because of contextual differences. The next section explores the theory of cultural reproduction.

3.2.3 Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of cultural reproduction

As the name of the theory suggests, schools contribute to the reproduction of existing power by privileging the culture of the middle class as if it is more valuable than that of the working class and the poor (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). The authors used this theory to gain an understanding of challenges of a certain group of students within higher education. They have argued:

What is central to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction is the notion of cultural capital which comprised of kinds of knowledge, dispositions and educational qualifications that are highly valued in a particular social milieu. Cultural capital is intimately related to all the other forms [as a result, the disadvantaged learners] are likely to start their education with considerable disadvantages and exit from the education system with smaller gains in cultural capital as compared to native students (Kanno & Varghese, 2010 p. 313).

Bourdieu (1977) argues that schools commit symbolic violence to poorer classes by privileging the middle-class culture. Table 3 summarises cultural reproduction with its forms of capital.

Table 3 – Cultural Reproduction (Source: Bourdieu, 1977)

Forms of cultural reproduction	Description
Cultural capital	Kinds of knowledge highly valued in a society
Linguistic capital	Competence in social powerful language
Economic capital	Money and property
Social capital	Networks and connections
Symbolic capital	Status and legitimacy

Cultural reproduction refugees are therefore likely to be at a disadvantage because they lack competence in all capitals, especially socially powerful language and challenges to adapt to the culture of the host country. Bourdieu (1977) concluded that schools succeed in cultural reproduction because members of the oppressed class internalise their inferiority. This he termed habitus.

Some critiques have however argued that some of Bourdieu's central arguments "are not compatible with known facts on trends in educational inequality" (van de Werfhorst, 2010, p. 158). He went further and argued that:

One central element of cultural theories of educational inequality is that children of lower social origins develop a culture that is incompatible with the schooling culture...However, what we observe in many western societies is a massive

educational expansion, both among the middle classes and the working classes...Although it is as yet unsettled whether expansion either has come together with a decrease in educational inequality or with stable inequalities...there is no research that shows an increasing inequality which one would expect on the basis of a strict interpretation of cultural reproduction (van de Werfhorst, 2010, p. 158).

3.2.4 Self -efficacy theory

The proponent of the theory of self-efficacy was Bandura (1977) who viewed the theory as a significant characteristic of social cognitive theory. The theory “shapes individuals’ responses through cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes that determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave” (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2013 p. 126). Self-efficacy has been identified as influencing a myriad of factors such as personal action, control or agency and it reflects on one’s “belief in personal accomplishment and confidence to face challenging situations” (Bandura, 2006 p. 70). He went further to argue that a low sense or high sense of efficacy can enhance or impede development and discovered that there is a notable relationship between “self-efficacy, lower psychological distress and higher subjective wellbeing” (Bandura, 2006 p. 125).

One’s sense of efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks and challenges. Self-efficacy explains how individuals perceive and manage their own competencies and capabilities. As argued by Bandura (1977), self-efficacy provides a way to understand behaviour, motivation and cognitive functioning. Therefore, it is the way in which individuals’ beliefs, confidence and persistence in their capacity to implement behaviour is necessary for the achievement of specific performance goals (Bandura, 2006).

Whilst self-efficacy could also be relevant for my research I chose not to use it as it ignored the role of the environment on influencing individual efficacy yet it plays a significant role in personal behaviour (Gibbs & Block, 2017; Morris et al., 2008). Moreover, findings in some studies have noted a huge gap between an individual’s perceived capability versus one’s actual capability and concluded that capability may not be explained in terms of self-efficacy alone (Chan & Lam, 2010).

Despite the fact that the theories discussed above could also be seen as relevant enough to be part of the theoretical framework, I have chosen three that I thought best suit the study and they are now explored in detail.

3.2.5 Push-pull theory

Push-pull is a theory commonly used in general migration studies. The originator of this theory is Lee, who, in his 1966 research on migration, concluded that there are factors associated with the area of origin, the area of destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors (Lee, 1966). He deployed this theory in a four-step sequence of identifying the problem: generating alternative solutions, selecting a solution, implementing, and evaluating the solution to understand the reasons why people migrate (Lee, 1966).

Push factors are defined as circumstances that repel people, forcing them to move out of the current location, for example, war, poverty, political instability and religious intolerance (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Wilkins et al., 2012). These authorities went further and defined a pull factor as an attraction force that induces people to relocate to new locations, for example, democratic governments, thriving economy and job opportunities, political stability and safety (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

Recently, the theory has also, to a large extent, been used to understand the push and pull factors around international students' migration. For example, Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) have discovered that what pushes international students to study abroad is a lack of access to higher education in their home countries, as well as economic factors. What they discovered as the pull factors were, to a large extent, historical and colonial links between the native and the host nations and high-quality technology, among other factors. Maringe and Carter (2007) also discovered similar factors that contribute to international students studying abroad and added political reason as a significant push factor. Among other pull factors, a strong one was that people chose the host nation because of its higher education qualifications that are recognised internationally.

Whilst there is significant information on push and pull factors concerning international students' migration, there is less or no research focusing on the push and pull factors contributing to refugee students' migration. This theory works as part of my theoretical framework to understand what exactly repelled refugees from their home countries and what

attracted them to South Africa. This is helpful in understanding the experiences of refugee students back home and their personal choices, as these might have an impact on what they experience now. The next section explores the social justice theory.

3.2.6 Social justice

Social justice is generally known to be a theory which entails two significant principles of politics and economic factors of the nations. It started as a religious concept and later, early philosophers like Rawls (1971) developed it into a theory. Rawls's perspective on social justice became prominent in the twentieth century because it touched on the fundamental principles of "mass consumption economy" and "adoption of the civil rights movement" (Bankston, 2010 p. 165). Plato and Aristotle are also the foundational thinkers upon whose works other philosophers have crafted the theory. Plato (1974) equated social justice to human well-being and Aristotle viewed justice as the "regulation of the allocation and distribution of benefits" in a society (Aristotle, 1980 p. 171).

Many scholars of social justice have emerged, all trying to develop and clarify the theory. Jackson (2005) explored how the contemporary definition of social justice may be used to understand social justice within societies. He concluded that redistributive justice is the only way societies may achieve justice. Contrary to that argument, some scholars, for example Taylor (1997), argued for a different dimension to social justice, which is the politics of recognition. They concluded that with that dimension, we have hope for more just societies. Recently, Fraser (2009) refuted the idea of presenting social justice as either distributive justice or recognition, and advocated for a framework that integrates the two concepts but "without reducing either of them to the other" (p. 73). In her words, Fraser (2009) said, "...[redistribution and recognition], I have argued elsewhere are false antitheses. Justice today requires both. Neither alone is sufficient." Furthermore, she proposed participative justice to be the framework's normative core (Fraser, 2009). In this thesis, I deploy Fraser's (2009) three-dimensional framework on justice because it gives a comprehensive picture in understanding social justice, that is, what it really is and how it is enacted in the context of South Africa and refugee students' original countries. I argue that unless we reconceptualise social justice we remain with partial knowledge about the huge gap between the ideal social justice and enacted social justice within and outside institutions in South Africa. Having said this, Fraser's (2009) conception of social justice theory would be a part of the theoretical framework of this study.

Whilst literature regards who one is and what one does as central sources of giving rise to self-meaning, Fraser (2009) argued that social justice issues also play a significant role in determining self-meaning. Fraser's (2009) theory of social justice explores concepts of redistribution, recognition and participation as core principles to understanding social justice. The set of concepts helps to explain the structural and systemic aspects of the host nation and higher education environment. Whilst the theory of social justice is prominently used with critical realism, in this thesis I used it with the interpretivist paradigm because the aim is to understand how it is enacted, rather than critiquing the society. Figure 3 shows how social justice is conceptualised by Fraser (2009).

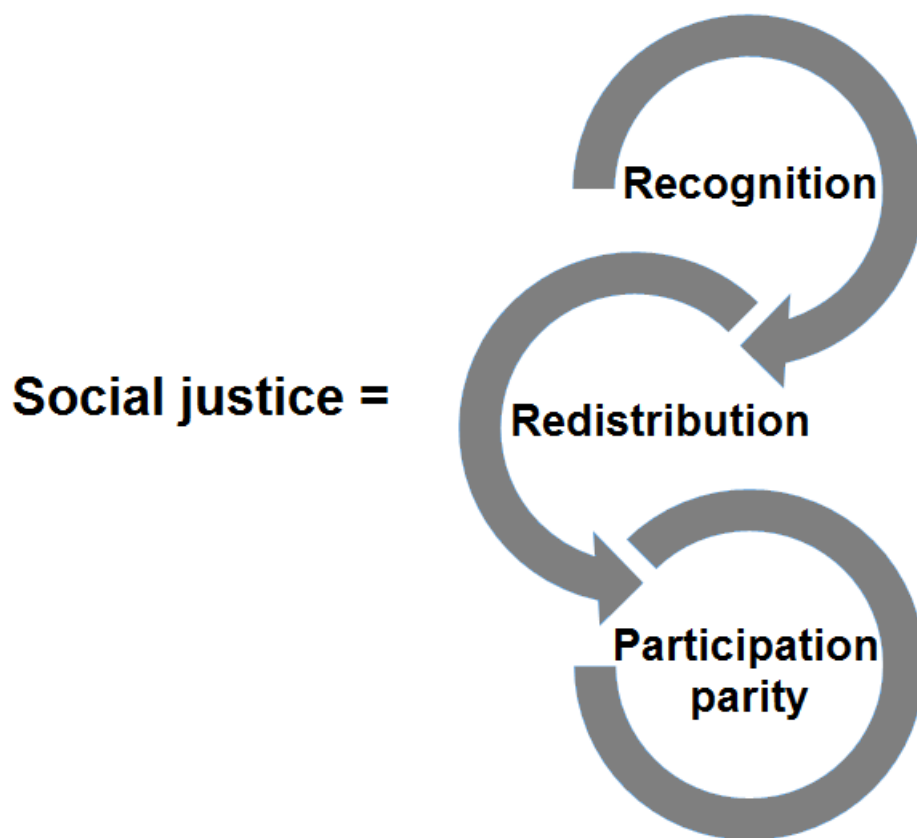


Figure 3 - Conceptualising the social justice theory (Fraser, 2009)

Politics of recognition

Englund and Nyamnjoh (2004) have argued that the politics of recognition has a lot to do with one's identity. It can also be viewed as how society views groups and how that develops and is internalised as self-image by the groups concerned. People can take either low self-esteem or high self-esteem depending on their positions in society. Taylor (1997) has

therefore argued that one's self-esteem can be informed by recognition or lack of it. He has further argued that if one is misrecognised or lacks recognition, that might be one's source of oppression. Misrecognition is therefore detrimental to the minority or underprivileged groups in that, if they remain invisible, their specific needs are not addressed as a result; they continue living like second class citizens. Thus, the agenda of politics of recognition becomes revising "self- images between both the subjugated and the powerful" so as to allow every individual to participate (Englund & Nyamnjoh, 2004 p. 1). Refugee students also fall into the underprivileged groups and this thesis has explored their self-images and came up with a full picture of how they are viewed as a group within University and host nation in general. Once justice of recognition is understood, practised and achieved, that's when we may begin thinking of redistributive justice. The next section explores redistributive justice.

Redistributive justice

The redistributive dimension of social justice is centred on the philosophical justification that prior to the agenda, goods and resources were unequally distributed within societies. People did not question the unfair distribution because they believed "one's economic position was fixed by nature or divinely ordained" (Lamont, 2017 p. 18). With the rise of redistributive justice, scholars began to explore how fairness could be achieved through three basic principles, namely, "equity, equality and need" (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018 p. 295). Current debates on this dimension focus on which principle to prioritise. Those who prioritise equity have productivity as the fundamental goal and argue that "the benefit one receives from the community should be in proportion to one's contribution" (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018, p. 296).

In contrast, equality emphasises equal treatment to all despite "social status, income, contribution, or need" (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018 p. 296). In this case, the primary goal would be to maintain harmony, peace and social relations. And lastly, with the principle of need, the proponents argue that help should primarily be extended to those in need and by so doing, they believe in "individual development and welfare" (Deutsch 1975 in Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018, p. 296). Whilst I would encourage societies to practise all three principles, it is the principle of need that should occupy the first priority as it basically focuses on those who need help and eventually the gap between the underprivileged and the privileged will be narrowed. In their research, Reeskens and van Oorschot (2013) discovered that the privileged preferred equity over equality, whereas the underprivileged preferred the principle of need. I, therefore, argue that if the major goal for social justice is to narrow the gap between the less

privileged and the privileged societies, we should, to a very large extent, prioritise the need principle, especially taking into consideration the previous injustices. The next section discusses parity of participation as a normative core in Fraser's three-dimensional theory.

Parity of participation

For Fraser (2009), the principle of participatory parity is at the heart of what societies might want to embrace as a high level of social justice. Fraser (2009, p. 282) argued that "the two conditions, [recognition and redistribution] are necessary for participation parity and none alone is sufficient." Once the marginalised are recognised and the process of redistribution of resources is exercised, Fraser envisions a situation whereby all members of the society will be on par and in a position to interact at a peer level. In other words, the precondition for such participation assumes that there will be no inequalities between the members. However, the question remains: is parity of participation achievable given how it is difficult to exercise recognition and redistributive justice in societies? Armstrong and Thompson (2009) have also argued that "the complexity of the status order undermines central aspects of Fraser's political strategy" (p. 110). The next theory to be discussed, which also informs my theoretical framework, is the resilience theory.

3.2.7 Resilience theory

Resilience theory was originally propounded by a Canadian ecologist, Holling (1973), who understood it to mean "the ability of systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables and parameters, and still persist" (p. 17). Holling (1973) discussed much concerning organisational resilience, however, the theory has also emerged in psychology studies and deals with adversity in individuals (Rutter, 1987, 2007). The theory explains why and how people withstand situations, even when exposed to high pressure. Rutter (1987), as one of the major developers of the theory in psychology, argued that resilience can also be viewed in individual dimensions and best understood in terms of processes. As a result, he came up with a model: the person-process-context model. In this model, Rutter (1987) defined what he called the six important predictors of resilience. In his six-stage definition of resilience, he believes that stressors trigger the resilience, and external environment context and person-environment interaction play a significant role in determining whether the person would cope or not. Rutter (1987) also defined the internal characteristics of a person as significant in the whole process.

Deploying Rutter' model, Masten (2011) discovered the common traits of young children who are resilient. Among the traits, she found that resilience entails what she called ordinary magic that included their relationships and individual differences (Masten, 2011). What is also significant is that both Rutter (1987) and Masten (2011) concur that resilience is a learnt behaviour found in humans in varying degrees. Ebersöhn et al. (2015) identified resilience in children affected by maternal HIV and AIDS and postulated the resilience traits to be both external and internal. For internal traits they listed "agency, positive future expectations and emotional intelligence [and for] external characteristics [they listed] material resources and positive institution to mediate adaptation" (Ebersöhn et al, 2015 p. 219).

Resilience studies have emerged in different disciplines such as social work (Saleebey, 1996), educational psychology (Ebersohn et al., 2015) and biology (Southwick & Charney, 2012). In studying organisational resilience, Ebersohn et al. (2015) have argued that relations and relatedness are key factors of teacher resilience within an organisation. The idea of relationships as significant to the resilience of any organisation has been echoed by many scholars such as Luther (2006) and Rutter (2006) to mention a few. In her research on teacher resilience, Ebersöhn (2013) developed a model known as the Relationship Resourced Resilience Model, where she concluded that teachers make use of "collective adaptive strategies' that make them 'flock in mitigating stressors" (p. 112). Ebersöhn and Loots (2017) further argued that the teachers in their study fought structural disparities by making use of "existing resources [which are both] implicit and explicit [and these include] physical resources, flexibility, networking, hope and aspirations" (p. 81). Likewise, Ebersöhn (2014, p. 568) in her research into teacher resilience, argued that "the teachers made use of traits such as compassion, creativity, optimism and especially flocking to access and use scarce protective resources."

Whilst the studies discussed above have dwelled much on organisational, children and teacher resilience amidst structural disparities, Bailey & İnanç (2018), Duckworth (2006), Felix (2016) and Maringe et al. (2017) have specifically looked at students' resilience especially with students of refugee background in higher education. These scholars concurred that resilience plays a significant role in these students' lived experiences in higher education. Maringe et al. (2017) have further argued that resilience is a trait that can be boosted in refugee students. Although Bailey and İnanç (2018) also agree on the significance of

resilience in refugee students, they do not think it can fight structural barriers, but argued that it functions in the presence of such barriers.

Whereas a number of scholars have presented resilience as a monolithic term in both organisational setup or as an individual trait, recently, Jeans et al. (2017) unpacked and provided its polythetic nature in three capacities: absorptive, adaptive and transformative dimensions of resilience. They have argued that a universal definition of resilience is necessary as a starting point to understanding the theory, however, they have also realised that “resilience is highly contextual and pathways to enhancing it vary greatly” from one individual to the other (Jeans et al., p. 18). In addition to the three capacities, Bahadur et al.,(2015) added another capacity: anticipative capacity, arguing that this dimension is also necessary and equally significant for a comprehensive understanding of the theory. This would enable meaningful interventions that create value in refugee students.

In this study, I utilise the meaning of resilience in four dimensions, as discussed by Bahadur et al. (2015) and Jeans et al. (2017). I start by discussing what Jeans et al. (2017) mean by their three capacities of resilience. For Jeans et al. (2017) resilience means absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities. All three characteristics simultaneously exist within individuals and may not be reduced to each other. Individuals vary in the way they deploy each characteristic but each is hugely determined by the contextual factors. Figure 4 shows three dimensions of resilience as developed by Jeans et al., (2017).

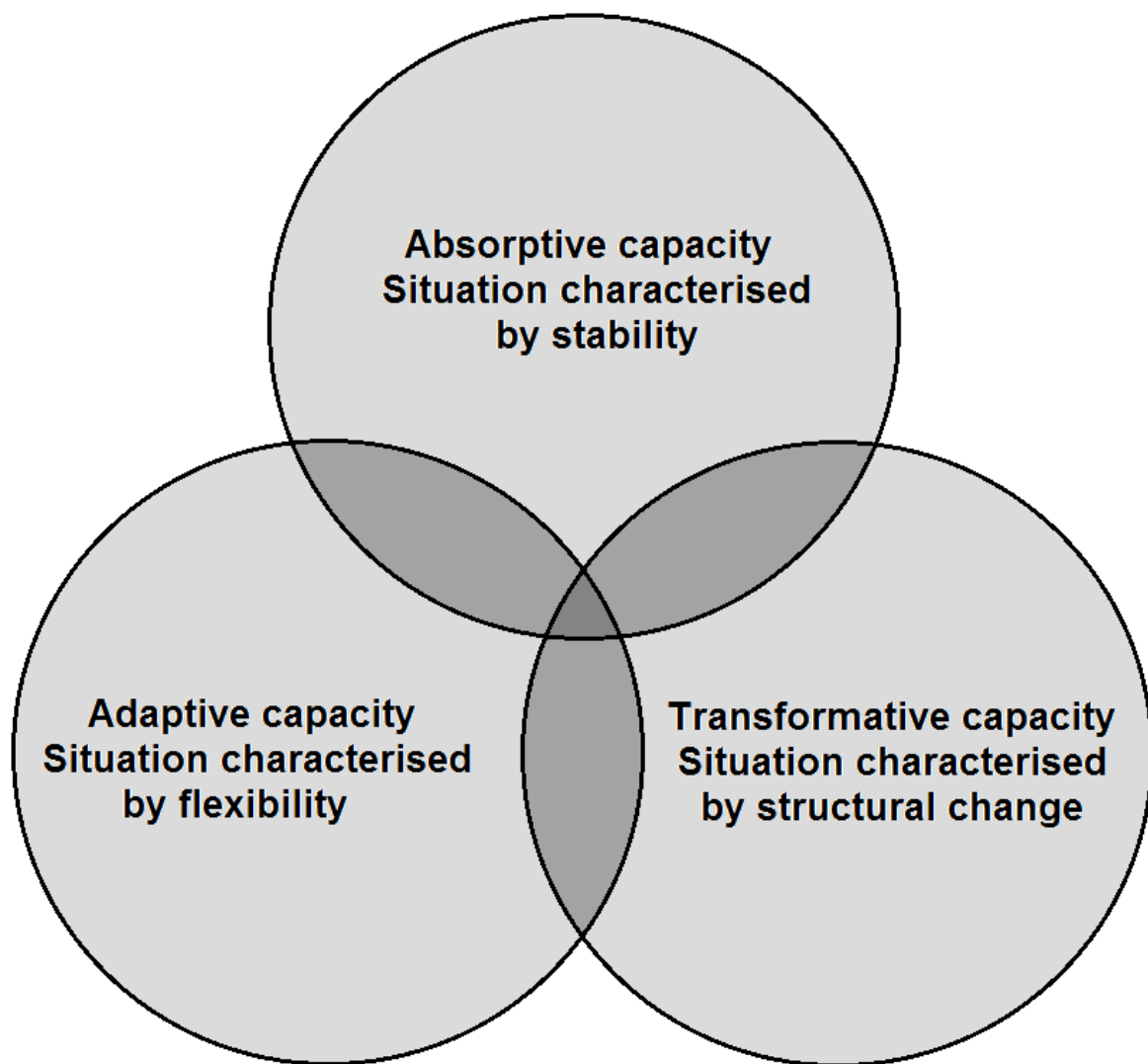


Figure 4 - The three resilience dimensions (Jeans et al., 2017 p. 1)

Absorptive resilience takes a passive form to describe stability. This is only achievable when individuals, and in the case of this study, refugee students, managed to cope with the circumstances around them. Individuals would be in a position to bounce back despite experiencing stresses and strains (Jeans et al., 2017). Furthermore, Bahadur et al. (2015) argue that individuals deploy available skills and resources to confront adverse situations. With this, individuals are in a position to endure the impact of adverse conditions (OECD, 2014). Jeans et al. (2015) further argue that the magnitude to which absorptive capacity is deployed has direct consequences to adaptive and transformative capacities.

Adaptive resilience, on the other hand, provides for incremental change and involves individuals taking deliberate roles in adjusting in adverse circumstances (OECD, 2014). In

this capacity, individuals are in a position to adjust and adopt new strategies to fight the adversities. This involves individuals forming semi-stable efforts like being flexible, becoming actively involved in networking, and mobilising existing resources to their advantage (Jeans et al., 2017).

Transformative resilience is the most difficult stage to attain because it also involves the organisations and institutions making deliberate efforts to make systemic and structural changes. With this, refugee students or individuals cannot do much to make necessary changes in their experiences and may only dream of perceived efforts universities might deploy to improve their circumstances. It seems as if refugee students face numerous challenges because of structural and systemic barriers within the universities and host nations in general. Bahadur et al. (2015) also discussed a fourth capacity which he termed anticipative resilience. Anticipative capacity, including the three previously discussed, would inform the resilience theory utilised in this study. Figure 5 summarises the resilience theory that informs this study.

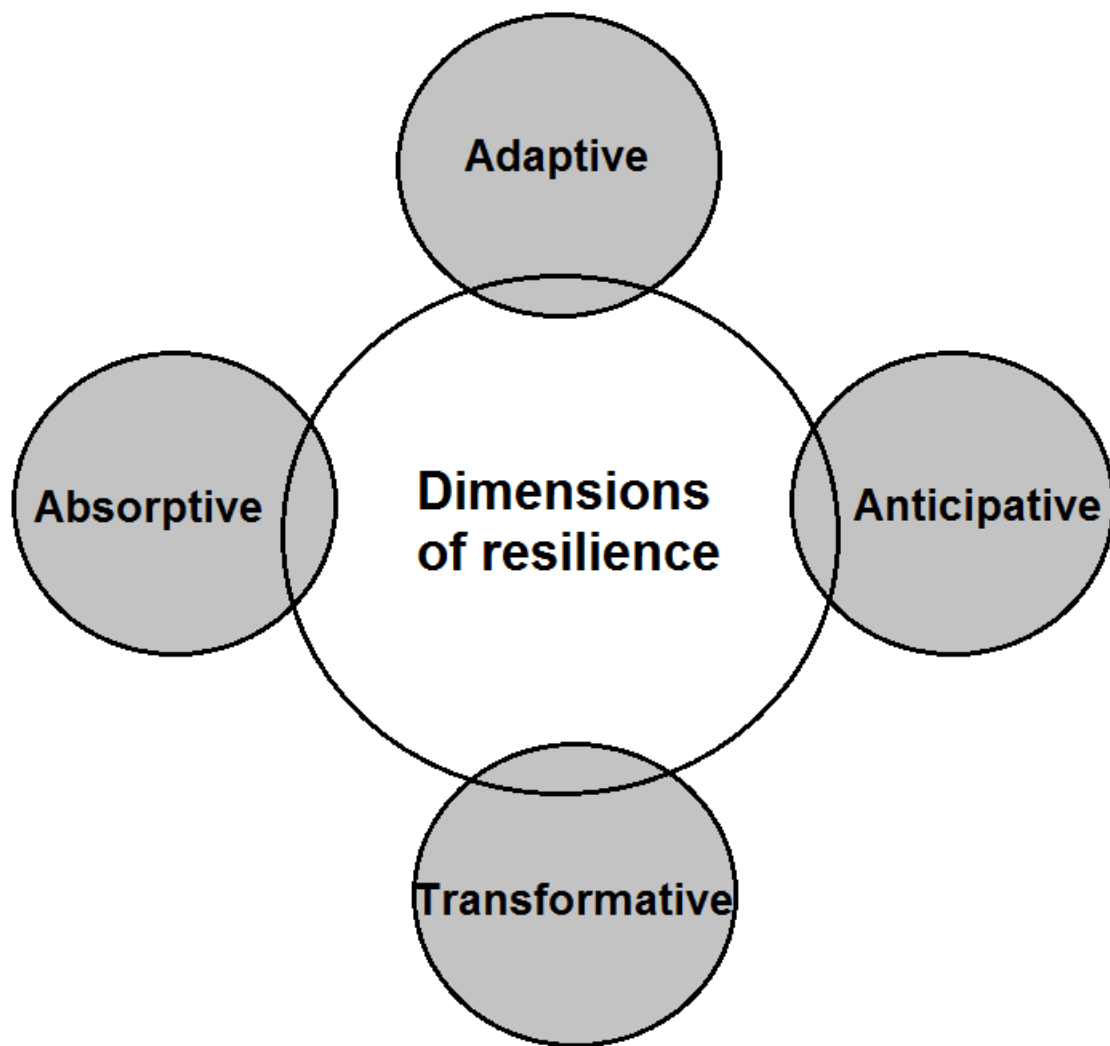


Figure 5 - Resilience as a four-dimensional theory (Bahadur et al., 2015)

In this study I adopt the idea that resilience in refugee students may be understood through four critical dimensions of adaptive, absorptive, anticipative and transformational resilience. Whilst the other three dimensions have already been discussed, I take this opportunity to discuss anticipative resilience as the fourth crucial dimension. Anticipative resilience has been described by Bahadur et al. (2015) as the ability to stay prepared and plan for an unseen challenge. They further argued that unlike absorptive resilience which is reactive, anticipative resilience is proactive. It equips individuals with the tools for planning and preparing for the unknown future (Bahadur et al., 2015). Having these capacities does not only help individuals to survive against the odds, but researchers should aim to gain knowledge of these capacities and look for such characteristics in refugee students' lived experiences. When researched, this would help stakeholders in boosting resilience in this group. In the next section I discuss

an integrated theoretical framework used in this study to understand refugee students' lived experiences in higher education.

3.3 A theoretical framework for this study

Three theories inform the theoretical lens and framework that guides this study. They are useful when aligned in sequence, starting with the push-pull, then the social justice and lastly, the resilience theory. The push and pull theories assist in understanding the lived experiences prior to their arrival in South Africa (pre-migration). The social justice theory highlights the aspirations and commitment, or lack of both, by societies and the higher education institution towards helping refugees overcome their fear and challenges and restore their dignity. Although the theory is widely used with critical emancipatory paradigms, for this research, I am more concerned with “creating knowledge about the phenomena under investigation rather than critiquing and taking action” (Bailey, 2012 p. 402). I believe having comprehensive knowledge first is key. Lastly, I outline the resilience theory to underpin discussions around how refugee students cope with their experiences in higher education.

As pointed out earlier the theories discussed are commonly used in existing research on refugee students. For example, Kavuro (2013) used the social justice theory to understand the experiences of refugees in universities and the host nation in general. Indeed, these were helpful in answering his critical questions. However, for my thesis, it is only useful when used with the other two theories to give a comprehensive understanding of refugee students in higher education. I further argue that creating sufficient value in refugee students requires a holistic understanding of their pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions. Thus, I use an eclectic theoretical framework with clearly and carefully sequenced theories that mirror and provide understanding in each of the three stages. However, it is important to note that it is only the push-pull theory which is exclusive to the first phase. As for the social justice and resilience theories, they seem to be prominent in all the three phases. The theoretical framework is illustrated in the framework in Figure 6.

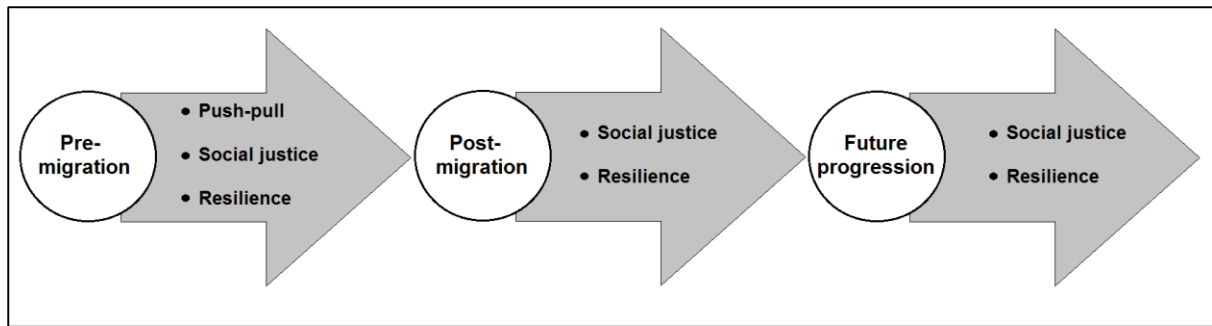


Figure 6 - Theoretical framework for this study

As discussed above, the eclectic theoretical framework of the push-pull theory, the social justice theory and the resilience theory deployed, integrated the experiences in all three phases. Important to note is that the theories were not chosen at random, but how they are used resembles the chronological sequence of refugee students' three-phase journey of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions. The push-pull theory plays a major and only role in understanding refugee students' pre-migration experiences with special focus on their push and pull experiences and how they planned for, as well as the experience of the journey (Mathe, 2018; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Although the studies used to understand this theory were not about refugees and higher education, they have, however, provided tools through which I view refugee students' lived experiences in the first stage.

The social justice theory plays a significant role in understanding a bit of what happened to these refugees before migration and how they are still facing those challenges even in the post-migration stage, and how they feel these challenges may hinder their future progress. Fraser (2009) made reference to politics of recognition based on the fact that the less privileged should first be made visible within society. Thus, I conclude that one's national origin or social status, among other factors, should not be barriers to accessing support and equality. From the discussion of the distributive dimension of the social justice theory, I have learnt that it has the potential to promote equity, equality or/and support fully to those in need (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018). The theory seeks a fairer distribution of goods, resources and services, especially in light of previous injustices. According to Kavuro (2013), prior to independence, South Africa was well-known for unequal distribution of resources to its citizens and after independence, the government put a constitution in place which announced rights not only to South African nationals but also to those foreign nationals who reside in South Africa. Therefore, I include this theory as part of my theoretical framework to

understand how these forms of justice are enacted in the context of refugee education in higher education in South Africa.

Lastly, the resilience theory cuts across all the three phases of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression. It also has four crucial dimensions namely absorption, adaption, anticipation and transformation that help me to see how it manifests in refugee students' lived experiences (Bahadur et al., 2015; Jeans et al., 2017; OECD, 2014). The dimensions have shown us that resilience is not a monolithic concept as other studies have presented it (for example, Felix, 2016; Mathe, 2018). The four dimensions help me to dig deeper and understand different strands of resilience and how refugee students enact them. It has been highlighted in the existing literature that refugees are faced with numerous challenges, so this theory helps me understand what makes them succeed, even amidst adversities (Bailey & İnanç, 2018). The theories are therefore sequenced in such a way that I create a chronological succession of the events in the biographical narratives.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the theories prominent in the field of refugee studies with not only the aim to review the literature but also to identify the most suitable theories for my theoretical framework. The theories I discussed are acculturation, self-efficacy, push-pull, social justice and resilience theories. Indeed, the discussion has helped me identify the appropriate and suitable theories for the theoretical lens. The three theories of push-pull, social justice and resilience theories are integrated to inform my eclectic theoretical framework. The theories are also sequenced to capture the refugee students' lived experiences in-depth, from pre-migration through post-migration to future progression. In the next chapter I discuss the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH APPROACH

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explained and justified my choice of a theoretical framework. I argued for a theoretical framework comprised of the three theories of push-pull, social justice and resilience theories, sequenced in such a way that we get a comprehensive and integrated understanding of refugee students' experiences in all the stages of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions. Its comprehensiveness is shown through how it "delves beneath the outward show of behaviour to explore thoughts, feelings and intentions" (Webster & Mertova, 2007 p. 29).

In this chapter, I address the methodological issues and research methods I use to answer the research question. The overarching question is: How might refugee students' biographical narratives contribute more to the knowledge of their circumstances at a selected university in South Africa? I argue that to address the existing gap of partial knowledge about the group of students, we need to use methods that capture the refugee students' lived experiences in a comprehensive manner starting from pre-migration through post-migration to future progression intentions. I have therefore advocated for a qualitative methodology, in particular, the narrative inquiry espousing the biographical narratives. I consequently discuss and justify the paradigm, methods and approaches that I have deployed.

I begin with a brief discussion of the major philosophical assumptions underpinning research. I move on to explore the interpretive paradigm as a suitable paradigmatic approach for this research. This study is based on the understanding that the choice of the paradigm is guided by the research question(s). I also discuss the qualitative methodology and its suitability for this study. The discussion of its specific approach, namely, the narrative inquiry espousing the biographical narratives, will follow. Furthermore, sample and sampling techniques, data analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical issues are discussed. The rationale for using all of the above is also discussed.

In this chapter, I detail the methods and the instruments used for data collection of refugee students' stories. I also set out to illustrate the dilemmas which I encountered in researching marginalised groups such as refugee students. Although the first participant is also part of the

main research, I somehow used him as a pilot participant in that this initial venture into the research process allowed me to reflect immediately upon methods undertaken in the data collection and that helped me with an unplanned evaluation opportunity.

4.2 Nature of the research: Broad paradigmatic considerations

The two competing major paradigms in educational research are positivism and post-positivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Cohen & Manion, 1994). Positivists believe that truth is objective and rely heavily on scientific evidence, such as experiments, facts and figures to establish how society operates (Ryan, 2006). Some critiques of the paradigm have argued that the paradigm is suitable when doing research about physical objects and not when dealing with society and human beings (Hall, Griffiths & McKenna, 2013). However, positivists have further argued that the social world, like the physical world, should also operate according to general laws. This debate gave rise to the post-positivist paradigm (Hall et al., 2013; Ryan, 2006). The developers of the post-positivist paradigm do not share similar views so post-positivism is a collective concept which includes a variety of other sub-paradigms such as feminism, critical realism, interpretivism and post-structuralism. Although these sub-paradigms might differ in certain principles, they share some similar ideas:

- The world is not objective.
- The world is not external to the observer.
- The world is socially constructed and given meaning by people (Hall et al., 2013).

Each paradigm serves the same purpose as the other but differs in three key elements: “world view, [ontology]; nature of knowledge pursued [epistemology] and different means by which knowledge is produced and assessed [methodology]” (Thomas, 2010 p. 293). This means that researchers who choose to use a certain paradigm should be guided by the chosen paradigm’s three philosophical assumptions in fundamental ways. I use an interpretive post-positivist view of knowledge for this study and as a result, I am guided by its ontology, epistemology and methodology.

4.3 Interpretivist paradigm

Whilst located in post-positivism, a number of paradigms exist that involve critical realism. I have chosen to deploy the interpretivist paradigm because of its motivation to understand the meaning and motives behind individual action. In this study, the underlying philosophical

assumptions employed are that of the interpretivist paradigm. Its major tenet which made it suitable for this research is that “individual experiences affect reality” and in this study refugee students’ lived experiences affect their reality (Felix, 2016 p. 77). Based on the fact that this research focuses on the lived experiences of refugee students in higher education, an often unrecognised group, occupying the peripheral space with scant voices in both academic and social spaces, interpretivism “gives the researcher greater scope to address issues of influence and impact” and ask questions related to subjective meanings of participants such as ‘why’ and ‘how’ things happen (Thomas, 2010 p. 300).

In interpretivism, an assumption about the world (ontology) is that there are multiple realities which can be explored and constructed through human interactions (Creswell, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Many multiple, social realities are evident as a result of “varying human experiences” which are characterised by “people’s knowledge, views, interpretations and experiences” (Thomas, 2010 p. 298). Its ontological assumptions help me to emphasise holistically the lived experiences and world view of refugee students in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of what it means to be a refugee.

Furthermore, in interpretivism, the nature of knowledge pursued (epistemology) consists of “events that are understood through interpretation that is influenced by interaction with social contexts and those active in the research process socially construct knowledge by experiencing the real life” (Thomas, 2010 p. 298). Whilst the positivist view believes knowledge exists in objects independent of experience, interpretivists argue that knowledge is dependent on social context and meanings evolve from interactions with others (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My affiliation to this nature of knowledge is also seen through the aim of this research which seeks to explore refugee students’ lived experiences across the three phases of pre-migration and post-migration experiences and their future progression intentions. What I also like about interpretivism is the preference for small scale research which seeks an in-depth understanding of feelings and experiences rather than breadth advocated in quantitative research.

4.4 Qualitative approach

The most common research methods used in educational research are quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The differences between the two is shown through how one understands the world and through how the data are “collected and analysed and the type of

generalisations and representations derived from data” (Thomas, 2010 p. 301). The selection of methodology to use in one’s study should be guided by the phenomenon to be investigated (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002). This study is about refugee students’ lived experience and the above point made by Guba (1981) makes the qualitative methodology suitable for this. Unlike the quantitative approach, which aims to quantify and establish relationships between measured variables, qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon from a participant’s point of view (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Guba, 1981). Thus, I deploy a qualitative methodology in this research because I want to understand refugee students’ lived experiences from the refugees themselves. I understand that human life is multifaceted as a result, a single reality, as in the quantitative methodology, is not possible with human lives. Because human lived experiences are complex and have multi-realities, they are best researched through qualitative methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Qualitative methods have a number of approaches which can also be deployed and for this research, I deploy the narrative inquiry.

4.4.1 Narrative inquiry as a research method

Many scholars have attempted to justify the use of narrative inquiry as a research method in researching educational experiences, (for example, Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; McAlpine, 2016; Webster & Mertova, 2007) to mention a few. What they argued is more or less similar to Dyson and Genishi’s sentiments in the quotation:

Stories help to make sense of, evaluate, and integrate the tensions inherent in experience: the past with the present, the fictional with the real, and the official with the unofficial, personal with the professional, the canonical with the different and unexpected. Stories help us transform the present and shape the future for our students and ourselves so that it will be richer or better than the past. (Dyson & Genishi, 1994 p. 242-243)

They argued that traditional methods are “insufficient and restricting” when we want to understand human experience (Webster & Mertova, 2007 p. 16). The “narrative turn” in understanding human experience as viewed by Bochner, (2016 p. 140) started in different disciplines for example, sociology (Richardson, Rogers & McCarroll, 1998), history (White, 1987) and education (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Clandinin and Huber (in press) have argued that narrative inquiry is a very useful technique in research which seeks to understand the lived experiences of people and foregrounds the voices of the marginalised and silenced

individuals (Bochner & Riggs, 2014). What makes it suitable is also the fact that it gives the space to disclose very personal information and is also suitable for “addressing the issues of complexity and cultural and human centredness” which other traditional methods are not capable of doing (Bochner, 2016 p. 142). Whilst Webster and Mertova (2007 p. 16) acknowledge the usefulness of traditional methods in other research types, they have no hope for its effectiveness in human experience:

...traditional methods can, in many instances, be rather ineffective with regard to certain important aspects of subjects or phenomena...they frequently tend to overlook complex issues, which are, for instance, considered significant by the participants...the methods tend not to have the scope to deal with complex human-centred issues...

In this study I therefore utilise a narrative inquiry as it allows refugee students to narrate their experiences so that we gain a comprehensive picture of their lived experiences. As a contemporary qualitative methodology, it has provided me with ‘new ways of thinking about and studying refugee students’ lived experiences (Mertova, 2007 p. 1). Clandinin and Caine (2008 p. 543) have indicated its usefulness as “both a view of the phenomena of people’s experiences and a methodology for narratively inquiring into the experiences.” In developing narrative as a view of experiences, Clandinin and Huber (in press) have argued that its emphasis on three common areas of temporality, sociality and place had not only contributed to a better understanding but also a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study. The comprehensiveness of phenomena is achieved through narrative inquiry’s effort to explore these common places simultaneously.

In temporality, researchers have to be particular about the past, present and future of the participants under study as well as the sites under which the events took place. At the same time, they should consider both social and personal conditions as in sociality (Clandinin & Huber, in press). The idea of temporality has been echoed by Webster and Mertova (2007) as a significant factor to understanding experiences: “[n]arrative illustrates the temporal notion of experience, recognising that one’s understanding of people and events changes” (p. 15).

Moreover, recognising and exploring the place or places in which the inquiry and events took place is also a crucial dimension brought by narrative inquirers (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Huber, 2002) to understand why events happen the way they do. Because we

always narrate our stories as long as we live, deploying that stance as a kind of inquiry helps us with naturalistic story gathering which is not only easy with participants but also allows the collection of thick descriptions (McAlpine, 2016). What is also the major attraction of narrative inquiry is its emphasis on the participant as the main source of data (Felix, 2016). As a result, it gives full voice to the participant and embraces the epistemological stance of data as a story and knowledge as understood narratively (Silverman, 2016). It is through narrative inquiry that we get to gather experiential and emotional factors that are also lacking in other traditional forms of research. What is of significant value is that the narrative inquiry might be used as a threefold framework as a way of understanding experience as a methodology, and as a data analysis technique (McAlpine, 2016; Silverman, 2016). Despite its usefulness, quantitative researchers have viewed narrative inquiry as being too subjective and if narrative inquirers fail to build good relationships with the participants it would be difficult to gain full picture of phenomena under study (Mertova, 2007). The next section discusses the sampling procedures.

4.5 Sample and sampling procedure

In this study, I deployed snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher begins with a small population of known individuals and expands the sample by asking the existing study participants to recruit future participants from their acquaintances (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

The rationale behind using this sampling technique is that it is useful when you are trying to reach populations that are marginalised and hard to locate or find. Refugee students form a population which is hard to find given that they are grouped together with international students and they feel the concept itself is self-deprecating (Kavuro, 2013). However, the major weakness of snowball sampling lies in its being non-random sampling, meaning the sample is selected in a process that does not give all the individuals within a population equal chances of being selected. Once you find the postgraduate student, chances are very high that the person refers you to postgraduates most probably from their own country. The demographical profiles of the participants of the study who were chosen through the snowball are shown in Table 4 and I preserve anonymity by using pseudonyms.

Table 4 - Demographic profiles of the participants of the study

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Disciplinary cluster	Marital status	Region
Olivier	Male	35	Humanities	Married	Eastern Africa
Dominique	Male	53	Social sciences	Married	Central Africa
Tanya	Female	38	Humanities	Single	Western Africa
Judith	Female	45	Social sciences	Married	Southern Africa

Whilst my original plan was to recruit refugee students from various perspectives such as under- and postgraduates, both genders, various nations and faculties at selected university, it did not go as I planned. I ended up with a sample of four postgraduate participants from humanities and social sciences. I was referred to a few undergraduates but they all denied the identity of refugee background. I guess this happened because the undergraduates may not be as familiar with research and most probably not ready to confront the new label of identity as refugees. Despite the fact that participants were not easy to get and ended up with four only, in narrative inquiry studies, such sample sizes are acceptable. The sample size in this study and narrative studies is not dependant upon the quantity of data acquired but rather on the richness of such. As a result, the aim was to gain depth of participants' responses and not generalisability which might have been possible through larger and diverse samples. Whilst the small sample in qualitative methods and narrative inquiry in particular allow for in-depth exploration the major limitation lies on its inability to generalise and compare results across institutions.

I also used a pseudonym for the selected University as per my participants' request and the choice of the institution (henceforth Educare) was informed by the fact that in addition to the International Students Office (ISO) the University also has two other centres. The first one is a Refugee Unit which specifically deals with challenges affecting refugees and asylum-seekers and the other centre, the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS), plays a crucial role in research pertaining to the issues of migration in general and its challenges. In all cases, I assumed that Educare University had set records to manage migrants and they also have a special kind of vision in managing refugee students. The next section introduces narrative interviews as data collection methods preferred when dealing with human experiences.

4.6 Narrative interviews as data collection tools

There are many data collection methods that are applicable to narrative inquiry. This study deploys unstructured and semi-structured interviews in its inquiry. These interviews best fit this type of study because dialogue is seen as a pathway to understand the unique experiences and promote the silenced voices of the marginalised groups like refugee students. As the interviewer, as a result, I had to empathise and develop questioning and listening skills in order to gain thick, rich data (Lester, 1999).

4.6.1 Unstructured interviews

Narrative inquiry prescribes certain ways of gathering data. I deployed what Kelchtermans (1994) referred to as cumulative methods of gathering data, whereby one interview is followed by an analysis that recognises gaps and provides questions for the next interview. I started with the unstructured interview. The unstructured interviews have been defined by Alshenqeeti as “an open situation through which a greater flexibility and freedom is offered to both sides (i.e. interviewers and interviewees), in terms of planning, implementing and organizing the interview content and questions” (2014 p. 40). The unstructured interview allowed me to pose some open-ended questions and that helped the participants to express their opinions freely. Although it is time-consuming, the benefit is that it generates thick data and this outweighs the disadvantages (Thomas, 2010).

The participants were asked one broad question guided by the research question during the course of the interview session. Wengraf (2001 p. 90) termed such questions “SQUINs (Single Questions aimed at Inducing Narratives).” The broad question they were asked was: ‘Tell me your story about your experiences as a refugee student covering the experiences before and after you arrived at this university. Begin your narration from wherever you want to’ (also found in appendix c).

This type of interview is meant to induce narratives without any interruptions from the interviewer. The session was also meant to make participants recall, reconstruct and narrate their stories without any interruptions (Wengraf, 2001). Transcription of data and a general analysis was done to look for gaps such as unclear passages, too few details or vague descriptions. The gaps in the unstructured interviews formed the basis for the second interview and this time, semi-structured interviews.

4.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview has been used because it allows participants to respond to the questions when it is convenient and in greater depth (Creswell et al., 2008). Furthermore, they give time to think carefully before responding to each question. One can avoid one-word responses so that the researcher gets a clear explanation of what had been alluded to in the previous unstructured interview or subsequent follow-up interview. Similarly, Alshenqeeti (2014 p. 40) defined the semi-structured interview as:

...a more flexible version of a structured interview [and] it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewee's responses.

The process of transcribing and probing to look for and fill in the gaps to use in the next semi-structured interview was completed and the process continued until I reached the saturation point. Semi-structured interview sessions acted as follow-up probing sessions which helped to explore further and elicit clarity on issues highlighted by the participants. I clarified questions when required by the participants. These follow-up probing semi-structured interviews were not only for further eliciting data but also enhanced reliability, by establishing consistency of the data. As a result, this has also helped to establish the trustworthiness of the participants' responses, within the interpretivist paradigm (Bush, 2012). The next section discusses narratives as a data analysis tool.

4.7 Introduction to narrative inquiry as a data analysis tool

As already pointed out, narrative analysis takes a variety of approaches to data collection and analysis. The approaches include biographies, autobiographies, life history and autoethnography. In this research, I did a biographical study. I have explained the two approaches, biography and autobiography, as the two are at times confused and very often used interchangeably.

A biography is the story of a person's life in the words of another person and is narrated in the third person narrative (Webster & Mertova, 2007). This kind of approach was commonly used in novels by Boswell (1791) and Joyce (1916) to mention a few. I would agree that studying literature for my bachelor's degree has also contributed to my choice of this data analysis strategy.

Autobiography is a story about a person and the person involved narrates their own stories in the first-person narrative (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Drawing from my background in English literature, examples of such are in the novels written by Washington (1901) and Wright (1943).

These strategies, also common in research literature, did not only interest me but provided me with new ways of how we could try the new and suitable narratives in educational research as also echoed by narrative inquirers such as McAlpine (2016). Having explained a bit about the two strategies, I chose not to go for autobiography because I am focusing on narratives about other people and in this case, the refugee students. Therefore, I produced biographical narratives. Maringe and Sing (2014) deployed the re-storying technique to come up with re-storied narratives in their research about the underprivileged learners. This is the technique I deployed to produce biographical narratives or re-storied narratives of the refugee students under this study. As a result, in this thesis, I have used biographical narratives and re-storied narratives interchangeably.

4.7.1 Re-storied/biographical narratives

Quite a number of researchers in different disciplines have deployed the technique to construct a chronological account of key actions and events in their studies (Faulkner, 2015; Maringe & Sing, 2014, McAlpine, 2016). It is a technique which allows researchers to think about the chronological order of events, which data to focus on and which to omit in order to come up with a complete narrative which answers the research questions. Usually, the participants present their narratives in a haphazard manner and it becomes the duty of the researcher to make the story flow. I have already established that in my research that narrative analysis with some of its strategies and techniques, has been deployed. Below are the steps to be taken in data analysis. I start by explaining data management then move on to present the steps taken.

4.8 Data analysis for the current study

The analysis framework I deploy consists of two techniques, namely narrative analysis and thematic analysis. I start by utilising narrative analysis as the core framework. This is a kind of analysis which values the story as data and as a whole, rather than taking segments of the text as its main focus (Byrne, 2017). Unlike some frameworks in positivism, stories do not convince by their objective truth but by their emotional impact on the reader (Byrne, 2017).

This was a useful technique especially in doing research with refugees because they vented out their emotions during the process. The other rationale behind using it is that it provides opportunities to examine the multi-layered ways in which research participants understand their situations in context (Wengraf, 2001). The narrative analysis has also been useful because it utilised approaches that allowed an in-depth understanding of experiences, especially of the marginalised groups like refugee students (Creswell et al., 2007).

The approaches to narrative analysis have given voices to the refugee students, allowing for the inclusion of their voices in a non-hierarchical manner. In this case, my influence as a researcher becomes explicit but not dominant. In most cases, the research is participant-led unlike researcher-led studies dominant in traditional methods (Faulkner, 2015). This framework places “the voice of the participant, the researcher and literature on an equal level” (Byrne, 2017 p. 16). Compared with the kind of order in the other traditional inquiries like positivism, this kind of analysis has brought a quality improvement initiative from the once passive participants (Greenhalgh et al., 2005). This has resulted in new possibilities for making meaning of refugee students and higher education research.

I started by transcribing data from all interviews. This was followed by keeping the data, both audio and transcripts in a password encrypted location for anonymity and confidential issues. This is important especially when one is researching groups that live in fear, like refugee students. This was followed by reading the full interview text many times within an extended timeframe to grasp its content. Analysis of interview data is done using software called the MaxQDA. Different codes and colours are given so as to begin to think about how the data can be rearranged in chronological order. I then rearranged fragments of themes together to create one coherent core story or series of core stories. I returned the core story to the respondent and ask, 'Does it ring true?' and, 'Do you wish to correct/develop/delete any part?' This is what I would term member checking.

I deployed Wiener, Richmond, Seib, Rauch, and Hackney's (2002) story map to re-story each participant's narrative. Story map, as discussed by Wiener et al. (2002) is more or less similar to re-storying (Mishler, 2004). This kind of map-like re-storying is just like the story map as it helps to set the accounts of experiences in chronological order, guided by the research questions. I rearranged each story based on interviews' transcripts and organised bits of

unrelated information scattered throughout the interviews. This include the use of paraphrases as well as direct quotations.

Following re-storying and the story map, I came up with four general headings which emerged in each of the four stories. Table 5 shows how data was captured in the MaxQDA.

Table 5 - Data capture and preliminary analysis in the MaxQDA

Theme	Code in the MaxQDA	Colour in the MaxQDA
Biographical information	Bio	red
Pre-migration	Push factors Pull factors Planning and migration	blue
Post-migration	Life in the host nation Life at the institution Coping mechanisms	green
Future progression	Plans for the future Perceived challenges	yellow

Cross-case analysis becomes the last level of analysis. This deploys thematic analysis. With coding, I assign different labels to the segments in the narratives. I then move on to sorting, which is a way of grouping the codes into categories, grouping similar ones together. The third stage involved synthesising, which is to do with formulating themes. I theorise, that is, I make sense of the relationship between code, themes and categories (Creswell, 2013; 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This allow me to compare and contrast in order to show what is shared or what is different between stories. I reread the re-storied narratives in order to bring some common issues that run through all the stories. The summary of data analysis is presented in Figure 7.

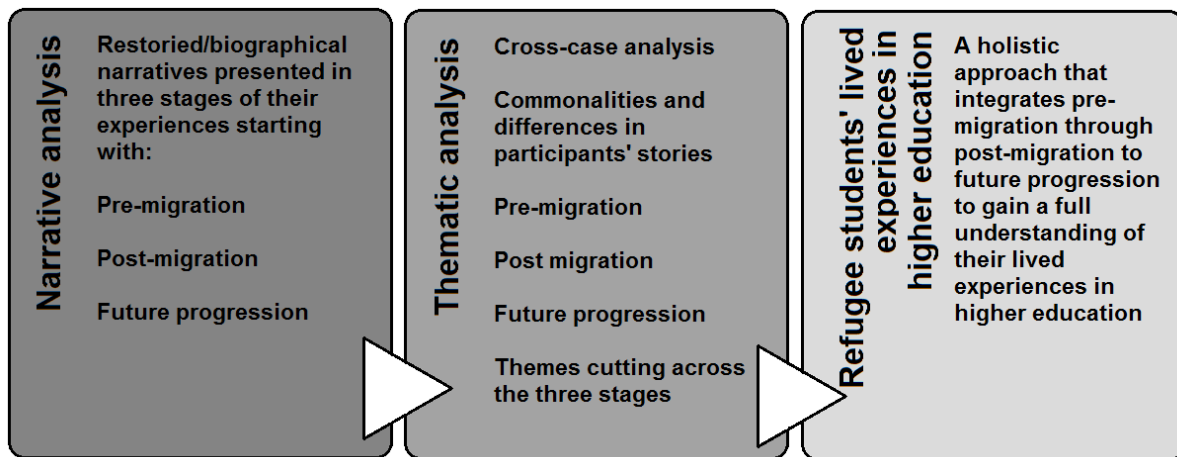


Figure 7 - Summary on data analysis for the study

4.9 Credibility and trustworthiness

Stories derive their convincing power not from verifiability but from verisimilitude: they will be true enough if they ring true. (Amsterdam and Bruner, 2000, p. 30)

The above quote illustrates that the significance of a finding is illustrated through its importance (Webster and Mertova, 2007). Validity and reliability are concepts which are mainly constructs of positivism and might not best fit qualitative research on lived experiences of human beings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For traditional research, “reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the measuring instruments, whereas in narrative research attention is directed to the trustworthiness...of transcripts of the interviews” (Webster & Mertova, 2007 p. 18). However, “authenticity remains an important issue for narrative research” (Faulkner, 2015 p. 69). Thus, Lincoln and Guba, (1985) have advocated for alternative terms like trustworthiness. In support, Willis and Jost, (2007) also advocated for the modification of positivist concepts to “enhance their applicability to interpretivist research” (p. 102). Validity and reliability were replaced with data trustworthiness. Data trustworthiness has credibility as one of its components. Therefore, credibility and its attributes, prolonged engagement, peer debriefing and member checks, have been deployed in this study to contribute to the trustworthiness of data.

4.10 Methodological challenges associated with researching refugee students

In carrying out this research I encountered three methodological challenges. These were accessing the sample, establishing data-gathering sites and times, and re-storying the

narratives to follow the chronological order of events. These challenges were not exclusive to my study because extant literature shows that doing research with vulnerable groups always poses challenges of this nature to the researcher (Bracken-Roche, Bell, Macdonald, & Racine 2017; Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007; Horowitz et al., 2002; Lalor, Begley, & Devane, 2006; Van Breda, 2018).

My major challenge was to do with sampling. It was not easy to deploy general sampling techniques such as purposive sampling. As a result, snowball sampling became the most suitable, because the refugee student population is hard to reach due to their invisibility within higher education spaces. However, although the snowball technique was very useful, it also had its own challenges in terms of representation. The sampling technique is to a large extent the explanation why I ended up with postgraduate students only, because the first participant recruited was a postgraduate and he led me to another participant who was a postgraduate. Although some told me of undergraduate refugee students, I was not successful in recruiting them to the sample. Van Breda (2018 p. 220) has argued, and I concurred, that “it is a general level of distrust that keeps many people from hard-to-find populations from interacting with the researchers.”

The other challenge was to do with establishing data-gathering sites. I knew my participants wanted to remain concealed for fear of being caught by spies from their countries. I, therefore, would give them permission to choose the meeting places they deemed safe and where they could speak freely. One of them chose an open space like a park because they believed ‘walls have ears’. The second one felt their office was a safe place to do the interview. The third one preferred the restaurant over a cup of coffee and the last one preferred their home as the safest place to do the interviews. However at times, they were all flexible in meeting sites, but we ended up circulating between participants’ offices, homes coffee shops and open spaces.

The data-gathering process was long and tedious. In working with hidden populations like refugees, Booth (1999 p. 30) has warned us against what he called:

...data raid, where researchers do a smash and grab. They get in and get the data and get out...this makes me wonder whether the researcher is interested in the people, the problems they face or the data. Taking the time to build the trust...will provide the researcher with much better understanding of their issues.

As a researcher, I had also to be very flexible with time, trying to fit in, in whatever they considered being the right time for them. When conducting interviews in the offices, they seemed to prefer after hours and over weekends when there would be no people around the campus.

4.11 Ethical considerations

Ethics are moral principles that guide us as to how we should conduct research without violating human rights. Clandinin and Caine (2008 p. 4) have argued that in narrative inquiry “ethical considerations require that researchers remain attentive to ethical tensions, obligations and responsibilities in their relationship with participants.” Elliot (2005) has argued that there should be double agency in using narrative inquiry to vulnerable groups like refugee students.

Universities in South Africa have moral principles used in conducting research. As a result, I complied with the ethical requirements of University of the Witwatersrand. Moreover, the nature of the phenomenon under exploration needed the researcher to comply with ethical issues. The following are general kinds of dimensions which I needed to equip myself with as per university requirements. However, I argue that following established procedures is problematic, especially when dealing with vulnerable groups like refugee students.

Informed consent

Informed consent is a research ethics principle which provides research participants with rights to freedom “to exert control over their lives and take decisions for themselves” (Cohen et al., 2011 p. 77). With this, I realised I should not withhold information about the true nature of the study to the participants (Cohen et al., 2011). As a result, I wrote letters informing the participants about the nature of the study to be conducted and the participants were invited to participate voluntarily in the research study. I also issued them with a consent form seeking informed consent from the participants in terms of agreeing to participate and audio-recording and they indicated their consent by signing.

Right to withdraw

The four participants’ involvement was voluntary, as a result, I explained to them that they may choose to participate or not without being coerced to do so (Cohen et al., 2011). I further

explained to them that if they choose to participate, they have the right to withdraw from the study anytime, without prejudice.

Anonymity

A participant is anonymous when no one can identify him/her with the information provided (Cohen et al., 2011). In this study I guaranteed anonymity by using pseudonyms throughout. As a result, the participants, the institution and the countries of origins names were not revealed. Instead, on top of giving pseudonyms to the four participants, I also gave a pseudonym to the University and instead of showing the countries of origin, I identified the participants by their regions.

Confidentiality

The nature of the study had made me devise methods of not disclosing information provided by a participant in such a manner that “the individual might be traced” (Cohen et al., 2011 p. 92). As a result, instead of providing the programmes they were studying I only provided the broad disciplinary clusters. I further exercised confidentiality by doing the interviews in privacy in a one-on-one basis. The venue for interviews was decided by the participant to make sure that they felt secure. I, therefore, ended up interviewing them in food cafes, in my office and some preferred working in their houses. Furthermore, the raw data gathered was kept confidential and safely in a secure manner and will be destroyed after three to five years in accordance with University requirements.

4.10.1 Challenges with the use of university’s procedural ethics

Although the ethics committee provided me with the basics of ethics on the four pillars as discussed above, it does not equip the researcher with sufficient skills of how to do research with vulnerable groups. Working with marginalised and vulnerable participants might require flexible ethical considerations that go beyond the ones prescribed by University (Bailey & Williams, 2018). The two authors argued that at times it is very difficult to enter the field with a pre-conceived set of ethics procedures (Bailey & Williams, 2018). For example, whilst the ethics board perceives that anonymity may be achieved through assigning pseudonyms to participants, I contend that anonymity and confidentiality, especially when dealing with such a group may never be totally achieved. In this study, I found that even if I assigned pseudonyms, it could be easy, with even a very simple discussion, for people to identify them. This can be so easy through even the biographical profile of the participant because it

seems there are not so many refugees at postgraduate level. However, such ethical dilemmas can be acute especially with people who had to flee their countries and are hiding from spies. Bailey and Williams (2018) have cautioned us that such groups require researchers who are not rigid with procedural ethics but rather they should enter the field with a very flexible mind.

4.12 Summary

In this chapter, I explored the methodology to be utilised. The significance of deploying interpretive narrative inquiry in researching human experiences over other traditional methods was identified. I also demonstrated that traditional methods are limited because of the inability to explore the complexity and the inward experiences of thought, intentions and feelings. In the chapter I have also shown the importance of the narrative inquiry as deployed in threefold, first as a research method, second as a data-gathering tool and third as a data analysis tool. Narrative interviews rendered us significant raw data which was initially analysed through the narrative technique, then secondarily through the thematic technique. I also explored the sample and the sampling technique, indicating how difficult it was to secure the participants. Lastly, I explored the ethical considerations as prescribed by my university ethics committee and went further to argue that the procedural ethics as prescribed are limited, especially when dealing with vulnerable groups like refugee students in higher education. In the next chapter I present a re-storied/biographical narrative of the first participant, Olivier.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS: EMBRACING THE INDIVIDUAL AS A UNIQUE AND COMPLEX CASE

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, and the three that follow, I provide a detailed presentation of the data drawn from the narratives of four refugees at Educare University. The data has revealed their experiences prior to migration that have brought them to the present experiences, whilst thinking about the possibilities and constraints of the future time, as both academics and refugees in higher education. To address my intention to represent and reflect very closely what the participants have shared with me in these in-depth and personal narratives, I present my findings through the transcription of their stories. I use some commentary and direct quotes (*italicised*) to illuminate and support key thoughts, incidences or experiences as related by refugee students. I, however, thought at this stage to present the stories in an undiluted way i.e. using existing literature minimally so that readers get to feel the strength and how intact the stories are. Extant literature has however been used extensively in cross-case analysis in chapter 9.

I have not presented all the very personal and intimate details for the sake of issues of anonymity and confidentiality, which my participants urged me to abide by. Thus, to provide clarity in my approach, I presented the four chapters narratively in a chronological sequence of how the events happened but at the same time using the research questions of the thesis. Therefore, the major headings in this chapter and the other three that follow are presented in Figure 8.

Although all four stories are unified by the four broad themes as presented in Figure 8, within those broad themes there are particular themes specific to individuals which might not have been shared or felt in a similar ways by all four participants. This means that whilst in the four chapters readers might come across the common four broad categories, they might however, encounter different sub-categories, subthemes or experiences depending on the individual.

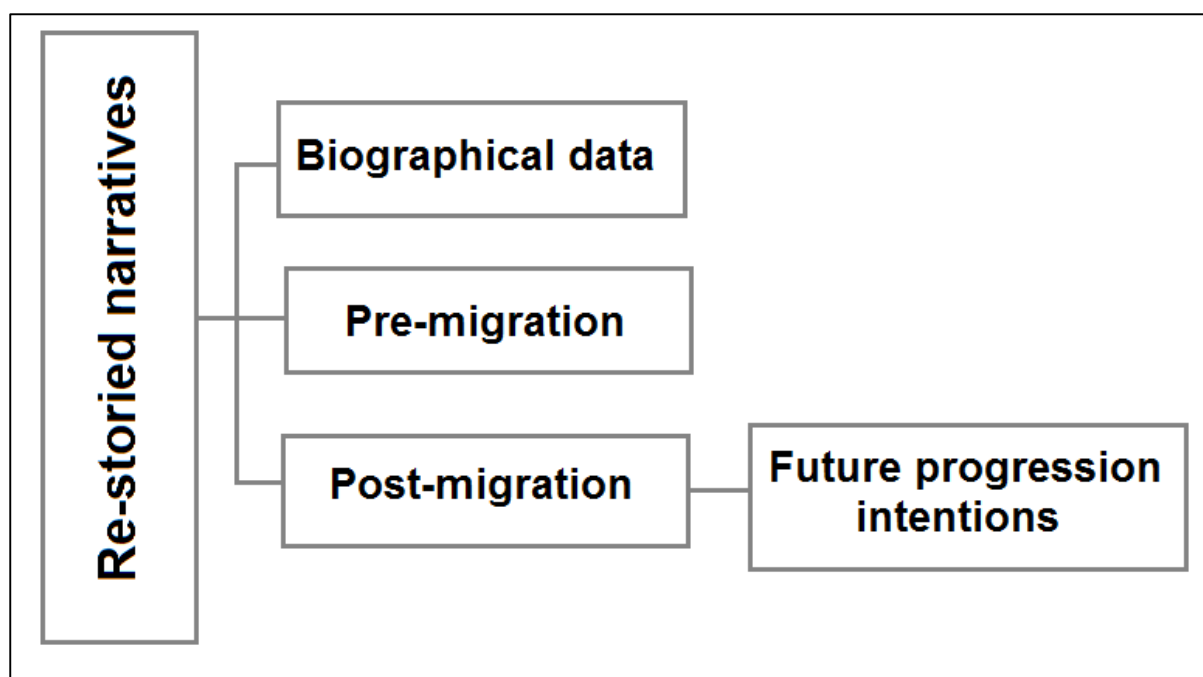


Figure 8 - Structure for the four re-storied narratives

5.3 Olivier's story

Traumatised home and away, (Maringe et al., 2017)

5.3.1 The biographical information

Olivier is a thirty-five-year-old man from East Africa. He came to South Africa in 2008. Olivier did his high school education in his home country in East Africa. It was a special kind of high school in his country which offered a primary teaching certificate at the end. So it gave certificate holders two options: some would pass with at least Cs in their main subjects and qualify for university, but to those who pass with at least three subsidiary level passes and did not qualify for university, they had an option to be absorbed into the primary teaching sector. Olivier did not qualify for university so he went into teaching. He did not like teaching but it seemed that was the only option left for him. He taught for seven years and at that time high schools in his country adopted the Francophone system, which used French as the language of instruction. Because of life threats, Olivier left his country in 2008 and came to South Africa. It is noteworthy that the participants in this study, upon arrival in South Africa, did not start higher education at Educare University. They had been to other universities and colleges before they came to Educare. This also applies to Olivier, who, in 2009, joined a university in KwaZulu Natal province, which offered Education degrees only. This negated his plans for a banking degree in the host nation. This meant giving up his dream of a

banking degree he started back home. He successfully completed his first degree in education and then decided to pursue his honours degree studies at Educare university in Gauteng province. Upon successful completion of his honours degree, he started a master's degree in 2014 at that same university. His educational journey was never easy. Olivier is now pursuing his PhD and had just completed his first draft.

He got married in 2016 and has a son who is 19 months old. He had just got married when he started his PhD and there was a demand for some extra income and time for his family.

When I was still single, I could survive with one thousand rand a month, I did not have to worry about groceries and fees for crèche but now I have to make it happen.

Moreover, he also revealed the aspect of constrained time because when he was still a bachelor he devoted all his time to his studies but now he had to make up time for his wife and child and at times it was not easy to strike a balance between family and study time.

I remember when I was still single, I used to sleep in my office to maximize on time but now it's no longer possible because I'm a married man.

In the next section presents pre-migratory experiences in-depth.

5.4 Pre-migration

I have used the following three headings to explore the experiences of Olivier and the other three participants prior to arrival in South Africa. The phase has also covered the refugee students' experiences in planning and in the actual process of migration.

- Push factors
- Pull factors
- Planning and en-route South Africa

5.4.1 Push factors: why did Olivier leave his country for South Africa?

Reasons why people migrate to new countries are largely attributed to push and pull factors (Mathe, 2018; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). This section would present what Olivier considered to be the push and pull factors associated with his migration. However, more often than not, people run away from bad situations in their countries only to discover that it would be the

same in the host nation. This is illustrated in Olivier story and summarised in the phrase at the beginning of Olivier's story: *traumatised home and away*.

There are several reasons why Olivier left his country, however, the major ones were to escape the threat of death and political violence. His troubles all started with a civil war in his home country which began in 1990. The politicisation of ethnicity led to the grabbing of power by the majority ethnic group. Though it dates back to 1990, Olivier only felt the huge impact of the war when he got to the sixth-grade in primary school in 1994. The war worsened in 1994 when there was a genocide which was orchestrated by the majority tribe which by that time was in power. Because of the genocide, Olivier could not write the national exam for grade six which was meant to qualify him for high school. It was that event that sparked a massive refugee outflow. At that time, Olivier remained in the country because he was still young. He later managed to write the exam in 1995 when the new government took power. The new government brought in the new dispensation and they made major changes to the curriculum which Olivier thinks were not good, especially for those who were about to write the examination. Olivier narrated this in a very low and tormented voice, but at the same time, showing a never-die attitude in his gestures.

The curriculum was not the same, it had changed but fortunately, I wrote the examinations, passed and went to high school.

Olivier was happy that at least he was progressing, but high school had its own challenges. However, Olivier had no other choice but to remain focused despite the challenges. Every statement he uttered, although they indicated hopelessness at the beginning, they seemed to end on a positive note.

Most of the high school buildings had been destroyed, so there was no infrastructure. It was tough but I managed.

Olivier had a story of success although things seemed not to be working well in his country. The education system was designed to eliminate people from the mainstream especially through the way they were expelled from school after failing. Olivier persevered and was successful:

During that time, if you failed two subjects you were chased away from the school. So it was very tough and demanding to move from your first year of high school to get a diploma or your certificate. It was very tough but with God's grace I managed.

Moreover, besides the curriculum change and the tough and rigid system in high school people were also traumatised.

It was really very hard to concentrate because people have been into war so many of them were really traumatised, like myself I belong to the once ruling tribe so I had experienced many killings.

Even after the new government came into power, there remained conflicts between the two tribes. People in the two tribes could not stand the sight of each other. Olivier witnessed violence from a schoolmate of the opposite tribe. He narrated with pain and his eyes were tearing up:

I remember one night in my dormitory one guy from the opposite tribe ran after me with a knife, he really wanted to kill me because I belonged to the other tribe. This is what I was still experiencing even after the new government had come to power. We were traumatised. We lived in fear.

Life would continue as if nothing had happened. There was no law enforcement and violence would continue to prevail. Under such circumstances, it would be hard to concentrate on school.

And on another day we were studying for examinations and the same boy attacked me and I was scared because the boy stayed in the military camp so his brother was among the soldiers who were on power so really my tribe was powerless and defenseless and we had no say even for the things that concern our lives.

Even in terms of educational support within the country, Olivier together with his tribesmen did not get educational support:

It's only the students from my tribe who were paying fees...the people who belonged to the ruling tribe were studying for free. It is still happening even today that people from my tribe pay school fees from primary school to university whilst for those from the ruling tribe education was free.

Olivier knew he could only be liberated through education so he wanted to concentrate and pass high school and go to university, but the grading system for university entry was also politicised:

I was trying to get to university, we were told we had to score a scale of 4, 5 out of 11. I was aiming to get that mark but from nowhere the mark got raised to the scale of 7,5 for my group, I could not make it, I got 4,3 yet I needed 7,5 to get to university (a deep sigh). They made the mark high for us so that we won't get to University.

It goes without saying that there was still discrimination, favouritism and prejudice based on one's tribe. People continued to suffer, even a long time after colonial rule.

Since Olivier could not make it to University, he was left with no other option but to join teaching. As already highlighted in the first section, the kind of high school he attended in his country was designed in such a way that if one failed to qualify for university with their pass marks, they could be primary school teachers.

I started teaching from 2001. I was teaching grade six and I stayed in service for seven years.

Olivier did not like teaching at all because that was not where his passion was and the profession was poorly remunerated. Moreover, as a teacher, they were forced to join the government's political party. This meant democracy was a nightmare and dictatorship prevailed:

...we would be called for meetings and you would think they were professional meetings but when you get there you would see soldiers and politicians and would kind of instruct you to be a member of a certain political party.

What seemed to be irritating Olivier the most was not the fact of just becoming a member but he had problems with the rules and laws attached once you became a member:

...once you signed to be a member there were vows you were inclined to make and those vows required you to make an attestation that anytime you leave the political party, they would hunt you like they are hunting any enemy of that party.

So Olivier made a choice not to join the political party, but by doing so, he seemed again to have been creating a lot of enemies around him.

Because of lack of freedom and poor remuneration that was associated with the teaching profession in his country, Olivier loathed his profession more and more. Judging by the state

of affairs, it seemed there was not even a chance to get admitted at the local universities, so he opted to study for a banking degree on a part-time basis with a university in a neighbouring country.

During the week I would be teaching and will travel to attend classes on Saturdays and Sundays. It was tough but I had to make it work.

Olivier had a fighting spirit. Everything around him seemed to be very tough but he never gave up. He was doing this because he did not like teaching and could not see his future in the profession.

The incidents that have been narrated above were sufficiently bad to make Olivier run away from his country, however, the incident narrated next seemed to be the one that gave him one final push to run away from his country. It happened one day when he was marking his learners' examination scripts at a friend's house. They heard a noise like a motorbike that halted suddenly outside the house. By the time he turned to ask his workmate if he heard the noise, he had already run away. Olivier saw the soldiers who were coming in the entrance door. They told him that they had come to arrest his friend but since the friend was nowhere to be seen, they would arrest Olivier and he would stay in the cell until they found the friend. They took him and he slept in the cell the whole night:

...they tortured me, they called me names.

Olivier's learners came to the soldiers' camp, demonstrating and demanding his release.

My learners were also tortured and beaten (long silence).

Despite the violence to the learners, they continued demonstrating until their teacher was released. Olivier had been living in fear and it was worsened because of that incident. From that time things did not improve, in fact, it appeared Olivier was now targeted.

The whole year I could see they were targeting me and I heard through rumours that they were now planning to kill me (sighed). I thought to myself; 'let me run away, let me leave the country. But where would I go?'

After thinking and reflecting deeply, Olivier thought of family friends who stayed in Johannesburg, South Africa. Many refugees like Olivier, are pushed out of their countries

because of civil wars (Felix, 2016), political instability (Kavuro, 2013; Pinson & Arnot, 2015). This is common in both national and international literature.

5.4.2 Pull factors

The major reason Olivier chose South Africa was to escape from the threat of death and to seek refuge and security in what he thought to be a peaceful country:

I thought of South Africa. Fortunately, I knew of family friends who live in Johannesburg. I said to myself, 'so I am going to flee to South Africa'.

Olivier was also in search of a better lifestyle. Although Olivier had thought of South Africa as a country where he could seek refuge and security, it seemed the following factors in his narrative, such as discrimination, violence, poor education and low remuneration, are both pull and push factors because they contributed to him leaving his country also contributed to his choice of the host country which he thought was free of such. This is drawn from some of the sentiments he had:

...teaching in my country does not pay in fact, a security guard here in South Africa is better paid than a teacher in my country.

It is therefore indisputable that Olivier and many other immigrants are attracted by South Africa's thriving economy when comparing it to other African countries. Consistent with this study, many studies reveal that migrants go to other countries in search of better education, better-paid jobs, peace and freedom because their countries have failed to offer such (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Maringe et al., 2017; Mathe, 2018). The other reason might also be that Olivier really wanted to be very far away from his own country because he said:

...the system in my country relies on spying.

Going far away would somehow minimise the chances of people spying on him. However, although he chose to go far away because of that reason, he found out that there were quite a number of people in South African universities who came from his country under a certain scholarship. Those people did not only come to study but they are sent by the government to spy on refugees.

5.4.3 Experiences and challenges faced by Olivier in planning and en-route South Africa

For refugee students it seems planning to migrate is curtailed by a number of things. Firstly, it is the urgency associated with the need to migrate. Second, it is the whole issue of secrecy. It is not feasible to announce that they were running away to seek refuge because of the nature and circumstances of their migration:

...even certification of documents was centralized so that they could do a follow up of who did what.

Consequently, participants appear not to have much to say on planning. There are elements of delayed, hidden/secretive and hurried planning. All these things happen in the background because they do not necessarily share their thoughts with other people.

It seems even after they have come out of that situation, they still cannot talk about those things openly because of fear:

...intelligence people are everywhere

They also feel they can scare away other people who experienced the same and want to follow the same route as they did. This shows us how planning might be viewed in ways different from what we thought: taking time, sitting down with others and publicly sharing. This kind of planning is usually common with international students (Maringe, 2015; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). However, planning, from refugee stories, could be delayed, hurried, secretive and contingent. The element of planning is not documented in any research which involves refugees and refugee students, however, I found it common in research that involves international students (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). This kind of planning in international and other migrants' stories appears to be well in place and publicly shared among relatives and friends (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

The kind of planning done by Olivier was hurried and secretive. The phrase '*I thought to myself*' shows that Olivier took his thought into action without sharing with anyone. There is not even a single incident he confided in anyone because of the fear of intelligence agents of the government.

...everyone is a spy in my country. You can't even share secrets with your father in case he gets excited and tells the next person then you get in trouble

He took long and dangerous routes to South Africa simply because he did not have money and enough documentation to cross borders legally. He disclosed to me that he came in using buses as well as walking long distances through the bush. He had to pass through three borders to get to South Africa. The journey was long and torturous. As if that was not enough, Olivier also had to bribe people to help him cross some of the borders. At one border however, he had to go through an animal park after jumping over the fence. He was in danger of being devoured by wild animals but he knew that was the only way out of the possible suffering and harm. I could feel, during the interview that words were powerless for Olivier to describe how the journey to the land of refuge was filled with desolation. This overlaps greatly with Mathe's (2018) research on experiences of unaccompanied migrant children. Because they usually do not use the official points of entry to get into the countries of refugee, they are exposed to numerous risks such as bribery, theft and rape (Mathe, 2018).

In the next section I give a detailed account of Olivier's post-migratory experiences.

5.5 Post-migration

This section explores Olivier's experiences at a South African University and South Africa in general. Dodd (2015), in his poem, reveals that today is the past, present and the future. For him, the present is the realisation of dreams (future) through the experiences (past). As a result, in this thesis, the past and the present experiences serve as starting points to understand value creation for refugee students Educare University and South Africa in general. In this section, Olivier was asked to share his experiences and challenges of being a refugee and refugee student in a foreign land. Olivier had various traumatic experiences to share and these are clustered into two subthemes: experiences in higher education and in South Africa in general. The other three refugee stories have also utilised the two clusters. However within the clusters we encounter both similarities and differences.

Through involuntary migration, Olivier arrived in South Africa in 2008 hoping to start a new life free of violence, discrimination and genocide. However, the week he arrived in South Africa, there were xenophobic attacks. This justifies the statement used to introduce Olivier's story: *'traumatised home and away'*. Olivier illustrated that in this statement:

...just two months after my arrival in South Africa, it was xenophobia, it was like moving away from one situation and you find another awaiting you.

5.5.1 Experiences and challenges of accommodation

Upon arrival, he faced the challenge of accommodation. However, he stayed with the family friends who were also refugees in South Africa. Because they did not have proper jobs they stayed in a bachelor's flat together with their children and the flat was already too full to let yet another person to join them, but they had to do so in order to help Olivier. He had to stay briefly with them and secured accommodation at a refugee shelter that same year.

5.5.2 Life at a mission station

It is worth noting that when Olivier arrived in South Africa, he did not begin his studies at Educare University. Consequently, his experiences in the mission station have a huge impact on his education at Educare University. In 2009 Olivier got an opportunity to study in a mission station affiliated to one of the public universities in South Africa. However, at that mission station, they offered degrees in education only. Because Olivier had no financial back up, he grabbed the opportunity. We already know that Olivier had been teaching back home and at the same time studying for a degree in banking in his neighbouring country on part-time basis. He wanted to quit teaching because he was not passionate about it. However, the opportunity he got in South Africa was not for banking but for education. He was financially unstable and he realised that he was not going to get any support to pursue what he had already started back home in banking. He appreciated the owner of the refugee shelter who paid for his registration fees at the mission station. The owner of the shelter, however, could not pay for the tuition fees so that became a huge challenge for Olivier.

Olivier pursued his first degree at the mission station on what is known as a bonded programme. He was supposed to study and finish, then work for the mission station for a certain period to repay his tuition fees.

The principal said they would let me continue with my education and will work for them to repay.

Olivier viewed this as great support and opportunity from the mission station. He was also happy that academically, he was performing well. This is what Olivier had to say:

...God is good. I scored high marks in my studies but could not get the scholarship and every time at the administration, they would call me and update me on how much I owe the University. I learnt that if you are a refugee, you don't have access to scholarships.

Olivier was very frustrated because he thought that at least if he performed well, he could get a scholarship.

When he was in third year, he eventually got a scholarship (DAFI) and was relieved from the original plan to work for the college for a certain period after completion of his degree.

I got the information that there is a scholarship for refugees called DAFI from a friend of mine whom I was with on teaching experience. I applied and got the scholarship that paid for all the arrears, all the fees that I was owing and that means I was no longer going to work for them. God is good.

Lack of information also works as a great barrier for refugee students. If it was not because of a friend he met, Olivier would not have got the information about the scholarship. There could be so many other refugee students who want to pursue education but because they are not aware of the opportunities available to them, going to university remains a nightmare.

5.5.3 Life at Educare University

Since Olivier was performing extremely well, the bursary was going to carry him over to do his honours degree. This time he had to make a choice of university. He chose Educare University because his friend had told him a lot about this university.

I liked the reputation of Educare University. The way he presented it was like a University with a trade mark. He said once I attend at Educare the name...its name alone can make you get a job.

Fortunately he got accepted at Educare University. He did not have many problems during his honours degree because he had the financial back up of the bursary. If refugee students get the support they require, they are most likely to adjust well and excel at what they do.

Because I had not much financial problems, I passed my honours with high marks. However, I did not get a job after completing my honours, I negotiated with the scholarship people to pay for my master's degree but they refused saying I should go to work.

This is a dilemma in many refugee students' lives. Even after upgrading one's education in the host nation, they are not in a position to be offered jobs. The section on experiences in the job market will be discussed in the section to follow.

Olivier decided to carry on with his studies, despite the fact that he did not get funding. Funding remains a big challenge for refugee students in higher education. However, Olivier managed to get a scholarship within Educare University although it was not sufficient, especially for his upkeep; he was happy that he got something to rely on.

I got a bursary within the university which only paid for my tuition fees...yes it was good for me but I needed money for food, accommodation and other basic stuff. So, I had to work as a security guard in the evening and in the morning I go to school.

This indicated that Olivier had insufficient time to rest and to study because during the day he would teach classes as one of the conditions for the scholarship. He would also attend his own lectures. During the weekends he would do gardening to get extra cash for some basics. This was very tough for him however, he had to devise means for survival..

Although Olivier had a French background in teaching and learning, it was not too challenging for him to understand the content and the concepts, however, academic writing was his major problem. English is the language of instruction in South Africa yet he was not proficient in the language.

Back home I was taught in French and our curriculum was very good because when I joined the South African higher education, some other students even those who have been learning in English were struggling.

Of course, Olivier appreciated the support he got at Educare but for him, it was not sufficient. There were writing centres and some workshops were run where he got support to learn academic writing. However, he thinks the way it was done addressed the problems of those who have been using English as a medium for instruction. Refugees, especially, those from the Francophone countries, need a special kind of support.

5.5.4 Experiences of the hidden identities and strategies universities might deploy

The other challenge Olivier identified is that the system at Educare did not really know much about refugee students. In fact, he thought they assumed that all foreign students are the same and that refugees are just international students. In trying to show the difference this is what he said:

International students have the government they look up to and as a refugee you don't have that government to look up to...you cannot even look up to the South African

government. So our voices are not there in this institution, we need support, some provisions as refugees, we need some special scholarships as refugees. We need support in terms of everything... I'm sure there are some refugees who can't just make it to higher education because of these circumstances.

When I asked him what he meant by support in terms of everything, he said as refugees they leave in fear and experience traumatic incidents, so they really need emotional support. Funding to him seems to be the biggest obstacle. Moreover, they also need support in terms of documentation and securing of jobs. He thought universities should be conscientised about refugees and their nature of migration because they seem to be treated as international students. This is evident in literature, that universities treat refugee students and international students in the same way, yet they are different (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017). Both are migrants but the difference is seen in how they migrated. International students are voluntary migrants but refugees are involuntary migrants (Mathe, 2018).

5.5.5 Accommodation and xenophobia

Accommodation was a major challenge for Olivier. Although the refugee shelter was a safe place to stay in, it was not conducive to studying. As a result, he secured accommodation within a walkable distance near the University, in order to cut transport costs. However, the places he chose to stay at were in high crime areas and he tried not to move around the area at night. Such places were very popular with xenophobic attacks but Olivier would try by all means to avoid getting into trouble. He experiences xenophobia both at college and at his place of residence.

I often get xenophobic comments from law enforcing people in town and even from some colleagues and lecturers at college but I have developed a thick skin.

Although xenophobia affects the refugee students, it is also a common challenge with all other migrants (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017).

5.5.6 Challenges in securing a job and the issue of documentation

Even under hard conditions, Olivier successfully completed his master's degree and he decided to look for a job. If refugees and migrants were offered jobs they would be expected to work on half of the normal salary because they are foreigners. This is what happened to Olivier after completing his master's:

After completing my master's, I went for a job interview, I presented my qualifications and after the interview they called me and said that I had the qualifications and they wanted to employ me for three months in order to evaluate my performance and would pay me R4 500 with my master's degree...I told them no because there was nothing to think about...relocating for the money that wouldn't even pay my rent?

This challenge is not unique to refugees but common to all foreign nationals in South Africa. Some would end up taking the jobs with the meagre salaries only to get something to survive on. However, this fuels xenophobia as South Africans think accepting jobs on low wages is one way in which foreigners steal jobs from them. For example, Amisi, Bond, Cele and Ngwane, (2011) have documented a number of such issues concerning xenophobia, and stealing of jobs are among the issues.

It is always a problem to secure a job in South Africa when one is not a South African and it is even worse when one possesses refugee papers. This is what Olivier had to say:

Even if you look at our refugee papers, it says we should be allowed to study and work with all the support we require but if you go and apply for a job with that paper, you won't get the job. These companies do not know anything about this A4 paper (pointing the paper at me), they only recognise the South African ID.

Although his education was relevant to what they wanted, documentation remained a challenge in securing jobs:

I applied for a research position, attached my CV and got the response which said that my CV was good but the only problem is that you are not a South African.

Another time Olivier could not get a job when the employer heard mention of Home Affairs:

I got a call that they were looking for someone who teaches economics and business studies for grade 12 and should go immediately. I told them I was at Home Affairs updating my papers and will be coming on Monday. That same day they called me in the evening and told me that I should not bother to come anymore because they found a South African teacher.

Olivier thought if things remained this way, he and his fellow refugee students would never realise their dreams. The host nation and its universities had to do something:

South Africa must really try to understand the situation of refugees. A refugee does not have a nationality. When you apply for a job, they ask you if you are a South African. I am not a South African. In fact, I'm not sure what I am. We live by faith, we depend on God.

This is the situation that trapped Olivier even before his master's and he had to continue studying. Olivier is also aware that there are no policies:

...there must be some policies within and outside universities and those policies should work because right now if they are there at all, they are not working. Also awareness about the policies must be raised. At the universities we must have voices and we must be represented.

After these negative experiences in the job market, Olivier gave up and applied to do a PhD. For PhD experiences, situations seem to have improved because on top of the scholarship that pays for his tuition fees he also got part-time work in projects managed by one of his lecturers. The next section explores how despite the challenges, Olivier is resilient and still aspires a better future.

The next section discusses Olivier's future progression intentions.

5.6 Future progression intentions

Olivier felt that pursuing his studies might be the only way out of his misery and poverty:

Studying is the only option we have to make it in this country, so quitting my studies is not an option at all.

Although Olivier was faced with challenges, he showed a never-say-die attitude. From home, he escaped death, political and economic instability and came to the country he knew little about to start a new life with the hope to succeed. He knew the journey was not easy but he was ready to embark on it. His hope in God coupled with strong character helped him to be ready to meet the challenges.

Drawing from the literature in this field, we seem to understand this group of students as struggling and facing so many challenges but they remain focused and at the end of it all, they succeed (Felix, 2016; Maringe et al., 2017). Even under difficult circumstances, refugee

students contemplate a very bright future. Olivier wanted to finish his PhD as quickly as possible because he felt he would be marketable, even outside South Africa:

I want to be an academic, doing research and lecturing. I'm sure I can do that even outside South Africa once I manage to complete my thesis.

Olivier is full of hope even if his past and present experiences seem to reveal a story of hopelessness; he wants his future intentions to happen even against the odds:

...in central Africa, people die studying because they think life will be better after they get those degrees. I see the future of my family in this degree, I can even leave South Africa to work in another country if I get this degree.

Olivier stressed more than twice on how the completion of the PhD would bring a bright future to him and his family.

5.7 Chapter overview

This chapter presented the findings from the narrative of one of the refugee students with whom I had in-depth conversations over a period of many months. The presentation and analysis of this narrative have identified four key factors which contribute largely to Olivier's lived experiences as a refugee student at Educare university. The four key factors are the individual and biographical factors, his pre-migratory experiences focusing on the push and pull factors, migratory experiences exploring how they planned, the journey and post-migratory experiences with the major focus on life at Educare and in South Africa in general. Experiences within the University and host nation, in general, include xenophobia, lack of institutional and social support, strategies deployed by Olivier to overcome challenges, perceptions on strategies that might be deployed by universities and future progression intentions.

Olivier's story revealed that the pre-migratory experiences of the push and pull factors had a huge impact on how he chose the host nation. Since he was running away from violence and political instability, he chose South Africa because it has an open-door policy towards immigrants and refugees (Mathe, 2018) and that was evident from a family friend who was already living in South Africa. In this narrative, I have discovered that the educational experiences back home also contributed a lot to Olivier's educational and social life in the

host nation. The pre-migratory experiences are also significant in that we realise the nature of the educational experience, the nature of migration and the trauma involved and support required in the host nation.

I admit that I had at the beginning made assumptions that upon arrival, refugee students started their studies at Educare University. However, the fact is Olivier, and the other three, seemed to have started their university studies elsewhere within South Africa, with the exception of Judith. That has provided a bit of knowledge about other universities in South Africa and how they treat refugee students. The findings have indicated that the experiences seem to be more or less similar in all the universities. Funding challenges, lack of working policies, xenophobia, and lack of support within and outside the institution seem to be the issues in the post-migratory experiences. Table 6 summarises Olivier's experiences.

Table 6 – Summary of Olivier’s experiences

Key factor	Key experiences
Biographical	Personal factors: Thirty-five years old, married, one child, work-life balance Completed his first degree, honours and masters’ in humanities Now about to complete his PhD thesis
Pre-migratory	Push: Genocides, political instability, civil wars, violence, educational factors Pull: Political stability, working economy and education systems, open-door policies Planning: Hurried, secretive The journey: Long and torturous, dangerous
Post-migration	Institutional: Lack of funding, lost identity, lack of university support in language and academic writing, lack of policies, xenophobic sentiments Social: Accommodation, securing jobs, xenophobia, policy-practice disjuncture, securing jobs, documentation Resilience and survival strategies: Never-say-die attitude, persistence, improvisation, strong faith in the supernatural power of God, working extra hard even against the odds Support strategies: Support system in terms of funding, recognition as a unique group, draw up policies, practise the policies, conscientise people Work as an academic: Research and lectureship, finish the degree in financial banking
Future progression	Work as an academic: Research and lectureship, finish the degree in financial banking

Olivier’s deeply held faith in God seems to be the mainstay in navigating the pre- and post-migratory experiences and his story demonstrated how this complemented his never-say-die attitude, determination and focus on education as a tool for liberation. The power of education was a key determinant in his home country and throughout his educational journey in South Africa. He demonstrated his deeply held conviction that it is only through education that social justice could be realised; a key factor to uphold especially when one is academically and socially marginalised because of their social status.

5.7.1 How has the past impacted on Olivier’s present educational experiences?

Although reasons differ, there are elements of delay in pursuing education both at home and in the host nation. Back home, education was delayed because of the genocide and in South Africa, it was delayed mainly because of poverty, xenophobia and lack of funding. Second, back home, Olivier faced prejudicial treatment as a member of the underprivileged tribe and

in the host nation, he still faced discrimination as a refugee and refugee student. Similar to the previous point is the fear instilled in Olivier by the soldiers, and in South Africa with the xenophobic attacks from the natives. Because of these circumstances at home and in the host nation, he lived in fear. He also feared that he might be caught and killed by the spies from back home. Hence ‘traumatised home and away’. Third, back home Olivier did not want to join the teaching profession but circumstances forced him to join and later he undertook part-time studies with a university outside his country, in financial banking. When he fled his country, he had the hope to pursue and finish the degree, but only got an opportunity for a degree in education in the host nation. Fourth, back home, Olivier acquired his education in a Francophone system which used French as the language of instruction. When he joined the host nation, the system was different. It was an Anglophone system with English as medium of instruction. This, therefore, had a great impact on the refugee student and his future progression.

The next chapter provides a detailed presentation of the data drawn from the narrative life story of a second refugee student, Dominique.

CHAPTER 6: DOMINIQUE'S STORY

From the frying pan into the fire.

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I, follow the same structure as the previous chapter and as presented in Figure 8. I provide a detailed presentation of the data drawn from a refugee student's narrative on the experiences prior to migration, after migration and the aspired future to understand how the past experiences have impacted on the present educational experiences and how both experiences are likely to impact on the future. This has been presented narratively in the chronological order of events. Following the same broad headings as in the previous chapter, this chapter is presented under four main headings: biographical data, pre-migratory experiences, post-migratory experiences focusing on life in the host nation in general as well as experiences at a chosen university, and the future progression intentions. Dominique's story demonstrates the essence of a person who is *from the frying pan into the fire*.

6.2 Biographical profile

Dominique, 53, is from central Africa. He is married and has three children. He came to South Africa in 2007 and his family joined him in 2008. He completed his primary and high schooling in his home country. He passed both primary and high school and proceeded to university, where he acquired his first degree in psychology. Soon after he completed his degree, he worked as a psychologist in schools in his country. He later got a government post dissimilar to what he had been doing, but was involved with political issues. So, he began working in one of the districts in his country. Within two years, he got promoted:

I got a post to be the personal assistant to the secretary general in the department of work and infrastructure

Circumstances, which are discussed in the next section, forced him to flee his country.

Upon arrival to South Africa, his aspirations were shattered when job hunting became futile, so he opted to go back to school. He could not secure a place to study for a master's in psychology. So, he took time trying to acquire English proficiency, doing short courses through another university. After that, someone advised him that if he applied for Migration Studies at Educare University he would easily get accepted. He went ahead and applied and got accepted. He successfully completed his master's in 2017, but his passion was still in

psychology. He applied to do a second master's in psychology and he got accepted and it was during the time of his second master's when I conducted my first interview and second interview with him

This summarised paragraph has been explored in detail in the section about the post-migration phase.

Half way through his second master's he was faced with financial challenges to the extent that he had to deregister.

I cancelled my registration in 2018 due to psycho-social challenges.

In my third interview with him, he had deregistered and he spent half of 2018 to the present time going to work. Dominique is now planning to return to school but this time he is planning to leave his second master's degree undone and pursue a PhD in his first master's degree:

I would rather do a PhD in migration studies because I already have a master's in that area. I will do either political science or international relations.

Dominique is right now writing a concept paper as one of the requirements to get accepted for a PhD.

This section has provided a summarised biographical profile for Dominique the next section explores his pre-migration experiences in detail.

6.3 Pre-migration: Why did Dominique leave his country for South Africa?

Just as in the previous chapter, this section explores the push and the pull factors that drove Dominique out of his country. The section also delves into the push-pull model, (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) and what Dominique considers to be the pull and push factors related to his migration. Quite often, people run away from bad situations from their countries only to discover that it would be even worse in the host nation. Most of this is illustrated in Dominique's story and summarised in the phrase *from the frying pan into the fire*. This situation is also worsened by the fact that the education system back home is completely different from that of the host nation. It is even worse in Dominique's case, in that the official and widely spoken language back home is completely different from that of the host nation.

6.3.1 Push factors

Several reasons might have contributed to Dominique fleeing his country but the following incident seemed to be the one that gave him a final push. It was a time of political instability and violence when the regime was changing. By that time Dominique was working as a personal assistant to the secretary general. The opposition wanted important and confidential information from their office. It was the kind of information which was not to be revealed, so the secretary general decided to hide because he could not release the information. As a result, the government targeted Dominique:

I was a PA, my chief didn't want to be in the office, and he was hiding so I was also a target because since the boss was not there, I was the one who had to provide information.

He knew his life was in danger, so he had to flee the country:

In March 2007 I left the country for South Africa.

Besides this incident, there are some other factors which contributed to his final decision. Dominique had wanted to further his education but the political situation and the circumstances around universities would not allow him to do this:

There is no research equipment in our public universities.

Some people would opt to go to private universities, but most people could not afford these institutions:

...they (private universities) were very serious because they were trying to correct the mistakes that the government made... if you start a 5 year degree, then within 5 years you will finish your degree and graduate, and yet someone who might have been doing the same degree...but at a government university will still be there.

Besides the poor equipment in public universities, there was poor remuneration for workers and university lecturers. Yet in private universities and other private sectors, workers were well remunerated:

...if they (workers) are not paid, then they get demotivated.

Although poor education and poor remuneration of workers were not the major drivers for one to leave the country, they significantly contributed to the choice of country to flee to.

6.3.2 Pull factors

Dominique knew that he was in trouble. Because of that fear, he made the choice of not going to any nearby countries:

...the choice of South Africa is relevant in this context. You don't go to a country where the political situation is not stable. Most of the nearby countries are ruled by dictators, and the political context is unstable to the point where if you find yourself in those countries, you will feel unsafe.

Dominique also felt that there was a kind of relationship between his country and the neighbouring countries, so he would most likely be found easily:

Because neighbouring countries seem to be in close contact with my government that meant that if I went there they could easily find me... however, it was not easy coming to South Africa but it was the ideal country.

To him, South Africa was an ideal place because of the fact that there were already others from his country who had run away from political instability; he believed they would help him settle:

I preferred to come to South Africa, because I had contact with some friends in South Africa... I had links because I also have a brother who stays here and we study together, and when I was asking him, he was telling me that South Africa is better than other countries African countries, so I made up my mind to come to South Africa.

In terms of human rights, he felt South Africa was better than all other African countries he knew:

You can't compare South Africa to other African countries when it comes to human rights or democracy, they have made a bit of progress as compared to other African countries.

Dominique also thinks South Africa has the most advanced economy in Africa:

The other reason I chose to come to South Africa is that economically speaking, South Africa seems to be a bit more stable, compared to other African countries.

Given the choice, he could have opted to go to Europe, but European borders are impenetrable, so he knew it was easier to get to South Africa.

...another reason why people come to South Africa, the borders are very porous. People can easily come to South Africa using trucks and stuff

In addition to these reasons, he had already learnt from friends and his brother that he might get a job quickly, given his research speciality and he thought the remuneration would be attractive. In terms of research equipment at universities, he had also learnt that South Africa has attractive facilities and funding. However, when he came to South Africa, his aim was not to pursue education but to seek employment and call for his family as soon as he settled:

I understood the education system, the research infrastructure and work environment was better and the environment political stable than back home.

In summary, Dominique wanted to start a new life in a country far from his own with slim chances of being caught, a country where he believed education and job sectors were very attractive compared to those in his home country.

6.3.3 Experiences and challenges faced by Dominique in planning and en-route South Africa

Since Dominique was planning to run away, his prompt planning became secretive and hurried. Not a lot of people were informed of his plans and because the migration happened under such circumstances, there is not much to say about planning.

My brothers and sister didn't know I was going away but my wife was the only person who knew from the beginning that I was going to leave...I also told my mother when I was left with one day to leave but did not give the detail because I knew it was going to affect her because she relied on me for survival and telling her I was going forever was going to kill her.

The major planning made by Dominique was applying for a fake passport, disguising his identity and changing his name so that he would not get caught at the airport. This kind of migration, just like in the previous story, involves fraud and bribery to save one's life.

Getting to South Africa was relatively easy for him unlike Olivier, since he used his savings and his salary to pay for flights.

The next section explores Dominique's post-migration experiences in detail.

6.4 Post-migration

The section is presented in two parts: the country level, where Dominique's experiences in the host nation are explored, and the institutional level, which include Dominique's life in higher education institutions in South Africa. We should take note that there were a number of experiences which existed simultaneously in both the host nation and the institution. For example, just like in Olivier's story issues of xenophobia were apparent within the institution and in the host nation in general.

6.4.1 Dominique's experiences in South Africa in general

Dominique arrived in South Africa in 2007 hoping to start a new life, but in spite of some positive moments, he was faced with a new set of challenges. Dominique's past experience shaped his present life: the essence of *from the frying pan into the fire* is apt. In the host nation, Dominique seemed to be facing different kinds of problems which required him to adjust or get used to them, hence *from the frying pan into the fire*. Although Dominique experienced a number of negative incidents in the host nation, he also shared moments of sweet experiences.

6.4.2 Documentation

Upon arrival to South Africa, he was under the impression that he was now safe from the violence back home, only to be greeted by a more hostile environment, hence *from the frying pan into the fire*.

The first problem I faced was the problem related to integration...I'm referring to things such as access to health care and education, with documentation being a key in all this

For Dominique, it took a long time for him to get refugee documentation from Home Affairs. That delay affected his life in terms of accommodation, health care, and education and even securing a job.

Wherever you go they will ask for a legal permit allowing you to stay in South Africa, and it's not easy to get from Home Affairs

After receiving his refugee status in 2008, he was under the impression that his life was about to change for the better, but again he found himself facing even more challenges. He thought he was going to secure a job he had trained for but that did not happen.

...even though you have the refugee status, and it's clearly written that you're entitled to study and work in South Africa, however, when you go to look for a job, they don't recognise the paper, so it was very difficult to find a job and this compelled me to go and work as a security guard at one company which was not even registered.

Because the company was not recognised in South Africa, they knew that even if something happened to them they would never be compensated.

For two years, I worked there...I lived in fear but I had to fend for myself.

He also believed that coming from a country which does not recognise English as an official language contributed to his misery. It took a long time to get the response for his application to university.

6.4.3 Accommodation, crime and xenophobia

When he arrived in South Africa, he stayed with some friends. Because the friends had only sufficient space for them, he had to later look for his own accommodation. The kind of accommodation where Dominique stayed was not conducive for studying, nor was it conducive for a family man (as he was later joined by his family in 2008) because it was a bachelor's flat. As a result balancing between studies, work and family and feeding them became a nightmare;

When you have a family, you have to feed them and take care of them. And take for example the time I was doing my job as a security; I would go there at 8 pm, leave in the morning and go to school. But before I went to the University, that's when I perhaps find time to see my children and talk to them. But I still don't have time because the time is short and it's affecting my family and my studies in that I don't have enough time to talk to my kids or help them with homework because I have to rush to go to the University.

There was no choice for better accommodation elsewhere because he could not afford this and the place he stayed was one of the cheapest suburbs in the town. Because it was a bachelor's flat, it was very difficult, especially in terms of privacy and studying.

Firstly, I live in a bachelor place, and my family and I all live together in that place, so it affects me in that when I have to study and do my work for University, we are all together in that one place. I cannot avoid my children or tell them to switch off the television because I'm studying.

Besides lack of space, the suburb is located in a high crime area where one could not freely move around during certain hours. To him, this meant he could not get out of the house late in the evening because of danger.

...so there is a park just around the corner, and just last week someone was robbed there, and I remember someone was shot just under my building, so the area is not safe, so I make sure that I don't leave or come back to the house during evening.

Whilst Educare University provides accommodation for some of their native students, refugees and non-South African students struggle and live off campus where they cannot travel in the evening to make use of University facilities.

South Africa is well-known for xenophobia against people of foreign origin. As a result of staying in that suburb, Dominique was also exposed to xenophobia. He stayed in an area that was densely populated with foreigners, so they were always easy targets. Although Dominique has not yet been directly affected by xenophobia, he has witnessed people beaten and killed around his area especially those running tuck-shops. Dominique fears for his wife and children who are always at home. This really affected him, especially at the time when he was going away during the night for his security guarding job. He also received some xenophobic comments from colleagues at University, asking him why he was in South Africa and also asking if there are no universities in his country. However, he feels it is safer within University compared to his place of residence.

6.4.4 Issues of language

As Dominique had never been exposed to English before, he began to learn the language through communication with friends. He learnt from the beginning that life in the host nation was not easy at all through the kind of words his friends communicated to him every day.

When I reached here, I started learning English every day from staying with my friends. I learn[t] one word every day, and the first word I learned was "busy" because the friends I met would use it quite a lot. So I had to learn what busy meant.

Another word I learn[t] was “stressed” because my friends were always telling me that they were stressed, in this country.

Dominique decided to learn English. He joined a centre which belonged to a woman who was of German origin. Because he did not have money, he was happy the lessons were offered free of charge and the centre belonged to a German sister. She confessed to him that what pushed her to start that centre was the struggles that she had faced with communication when she first came to South Africa.

So I was going there to learn the basics. Also, when people laughed at me because I didn't know how to speak English was very helpful for me, so I was doing well to the extent that there was a time that my English teacher left South Africa and asked me to replace her.

6.5 Institutional experiences in South Africa

Dominique could not secure a job in South Africa; he was considering going back to school to further his education. He thought of University, a university he had heard about from his friends. Dominique wanted to join University because of its reputation, again heard from his friends. Also, University was near his friend's place and the friend happened to have secured a place at University. The friend had presented University as one of the most recognised universities in Africa. Unfortunately, it was not easy to secure a vacancy to do a master's degree at University.

They told me to present my papers and degrees, so I did, but they could not accept me, because they said I did not have a proof of English proficiency.

He was so disappointed because he thought since a colleague and friend enrolled easily, it was going to be easy for him too:

...where on earth am I supposed to get this?

6.5.1 Life at one institution in South Africa

Dominique thought of doing a short course at a certain institution which affiliates to University in order to gain English proficiency. He was accepted and managed to complete the course even though it was very expensive for him.

I had to pay eight thousand rand a month just so I could learn. It was a lot of money. With the little money I had brought from home, I managed.

Besides the fact that it was expensive, Dominique was distressed about the way they communicated in English, not taking into consideration that they were working with someone who was not well versed in the language.

It was difficult because they did not take care that I was not from this country, the English that they were using, but by the grace of God I succeeded.

However, after completing the course, Dominique was not very confident that he could now pursue his degree in English, so he went on to do another short course at another university in Gauteng.

It's not like I wanted the programme... It was a way for me to test my English. So, I completed it, and had confidence that I could learn in English, so why not go to Educare?

6.5.2 Life at Educare university

Dominique really wanted to be admitted at University, however, he was very sceptical about the programme he had been denied access to previously, so he applied for a different programme. Moreover, he opted for a different choice because of the funding for the programme he had heard about from a friend.

I didn't go back to apply for programme I previously applied for because I knew the story might have been the same, so I applied for a different programme though I really wanted to do the previous one. However, I had no option but to take this my friend told me it offers bursaries.

Dominique applied for the course and he was called for an interview. He was very surprised by the inconsistency that prevails within the same university.

They didn't ask for English proficiency so I got accepted by the grace of God and completed the programme in 2018. It was my first degree in South Africa, despite the challenges I was going through.

Another reason why Dominique thinks everything was easier with this programme is that it is studied by non-South Africans only. It could be possible that these scholars, like Dominique,

had previously tried their programmes of interest with failure and were left with the option of this programme only.

So there were no South Africans in the program, we were all from outside. So I was very lucky about that

His previous experiences of being in a class of all natives made him feel lucky this time, learning with people with experiences more or less similar to his own even if with different the countries of origin. However, the challenge of academic language became a reality:

I soon realised that speaking English and writing English are two different things. Academic writing is different from what I knew about English, so it was very difficult for me to adjust to that environment.

Dominique got support from one writing centre within University, however, he thought it was not good enough and decided to join a night school to learn academic language and writing.

...there is a writing centre, but those that are working there are mainly students, so you go there with your piece of writing, and you read it and the mentor tries to help you, by asking you what you wanted to say, because as you know, writing is harder than speaking, and you can't write things the way you would say them, and I used to do that until I went to a night school in order to be able to write, because sometimes when writing, I feel like I am short of ideas, and sometimes I have to translate some ideas from French to English, but sometimes I find that when I translate, it's no longer what I meant when I wrote it for the first time, and when discussing with an English teacher, they then ask what I wanted to say, then they correct me. This is the type of help I got from the library writing centre.

He also thinks attending conferences could boost his academic language skills but he has been denied a visa to travel because of his status. As a result, he feels that puts him at a disadvantage:

Another problem is with traveling, it's a big challenge, because sometimes when they see your refugee status, they automatically deny you a visa, because they do not understand that I can travel to anywhere except my own country.

With the little support he got, Dominique managed to finish his master's degree. However, he could not secure a proper job afterwards.

I was sending my CV to different companies but the results I got was that they were looking for South African citizens

The jobs which were on offer were very lowly paid and some were offered at a half the normal wage rates given to South African citizens. As a result, he thought of going back to school and this time he wanted to apply for the programme he was always passionate about. Also the fact that for the work he was doing, he did not get enough money for survival.

What pushed me is that I didn't have a job... my feeling was that I had to go back to do the programme since that's where my background was, also because I was being paid peanuts.

Dominique had to go back to University, apply for a second masters and got accepted though it was not the exact programme he wanted to do.

I wanted to do community counselling psychology but they said the vacancy is in social psychology and research. More than half of the class, were South Africans, and there were only two people from outside, in a class of 15.

Although this was the case, it did not actually affect him because he thought he was now well versed with the system. He thought he now knew how to navigate within the system and discover his way to success. Although academic language remained a big issue, Dominique was determined to finish his second masters. He had to resign on his part-time jobs which were in the afternoon so that he could attend classes.

Six months down the line, Dominique deregistered from University:

I could not pay rent, or properly take care of my family, or pay my children's school fees or, put food on the table. I had a university funding and the stipend I received was just enough for transport and to pay for printing at University so I had to deregister and look for a piece job to support my family.

Two months following his deregistration, he received the tragic news that his mother passed away. This was horrific to Dominique. For two weeks he had very painful and recurring headaches.

I knew I could not go home and I could not send any financial assistance for her burial (tearing up).

Even if Dominique was in the midst of serious challenges, he still hoped to come back to pursue his studies:

...however, when things are settled I want to come back but I won't pursue my second masters, I would rather do a PhD using my first master's because I'm running out of time.

The money Dominique was getting after pursuing part-time jobs in the evening became insufficient to fend for his family now that they were going to school. He was forced to drop the second master's programme he was halfway through to pursue a PhD in his first master's, the area he wanted was deemed not helpful in terms of employment. This is what he said when he was still pursuing his second master's in psychology:

I tell myself if I complete my studies it could allow me to have a better opportunity for employment. I already have a master's degree in migration studies and it hasn't given me a lot of opportunities. But my motivation in studying psychology is that if the government does not employ me, then I can run my own business in psychology. This is my first motivation but unfortunately I could not make it because of the challenges I am facing.

Even though his hopes were shattered by the second master's degree, he did not give up his studies but planned to return to school and instead of finishing the master's degree, he has planned to pursue a PhD from his first master's and still has hopes that maybe if he upgrades to a PhD, he might secure a job.

I can be a lecturer or it can open doors for me to get another job. It can also help me when I'm back home to work in different fields. Having a background in political sciences or international relations may help my country which is facing political instability

6.5.3 Funding

Dominique thinks all his problems emanate from insufficient funding. Although he gets some funds for tuition from University, he strongly stressed that it is not easy to get the funding because it is not meant for refugees only, but it is given on a competitive basis with all other students. He thought it would be better if University has funding specifically meant for refugees:

The problem is not funds but lack of policy on refugees. The funds are there...an example from this university is it has different scholarships but most of them are for South African students only. They could do the same...for refugees only but they don't have the policy and they are not willing to draw up one. There is nothing concerning refugees. They don't care about us.

The funding he received from University covered all his tuition fees but he had no money to pay for accommodation, food, and fend for the family. So it was always very difficult for him, even with the low paying jobs he got, he could not manage. He thinks it would be better if the government gave him something to live on whilst he pursues education. When he tried to look for promised support from the government, he got none, instead, he was treated with anger and hostility.

I don't get any support from the South African government, I have never heard of any refugee receiving support from the South African government because I now work on part-time basis for a non-governmental organisation which thrives to support refugees and asylum-seekers in mastering English. If you go to GRS they will chase you away and tell you to go and live your life somewhere else. If you go to SASA you can register but you will never get that money.

6.5.4 Discrimination

Refugee students get health care support within University premises, however, Dominique complained about how the staff within the clinic treat them once they discover that they are refugees. What refugee students have to do when they fall sick and want to access the services, is to go to the clinic and produce their refugee papers. Once they produce the papers, they feel discriminated against through the way they are addressed:

Usually after scanning your documents for long periods of time then they start speaking to you in South African languages knowing full well that you are not from South Africa. Instead of attending to your health problem you will unexpectedly get an uninviting question; 'when are you going back home?'

Dominique overheard two of the clinic staff talking about how the foreigners would exhaust all their country's resources and facilities. This kind of behaviour towards refugees worsens their situation in the host nation. It becomes hard to trust that someone would give you proper

healthcare after passing such comments in your presence. Over and above, that is most likely to affect them in pursuing their education.

The next section discusses Dominique's future progression intentions.

6.6 Future progression intentions

Although Dominique faces so many challenges and has dropped out of school, he still has the hope that he will go back to school. Getting a job has also proven to be difficult and he still thinks that education will open the gates for him, therefore, he is devising methods to raise money to go back to school:

If I can just save, I can go back to school and then I can use that money to feed my family and pay rent for the whole of next year, so that I can focus on my studies...if I can find any support from any non-governmental organisation, I will thank God

Dominique has lost hope in getting funding from the host nation and University, so he is now looking for support from the non-governmental organisations and his faith and hope in religion keeps him focused. Although his plan for saving does not show any positive results for now, he still believes he is going to go by his plan:

I haven't even started saving...but I will still rely on my plan.

His initial hope was shattered when he could not get a job with his first master's:

I had hope in getting a job after completing my first master's but it has not given me any opportunities.

His second plan was to study for a second master's degree in a different field:

My motivation in studying for psychology is that if the government does not employ me then I can run my business in psychology.

Unfortunately, his hopes in the second master's in psychology were not fulfilled because he had to deregister due to economic hardships. Now Dominique is planning to save funds to cater for the family and his upkeep and go back to study, not to finish his master's but to pursue a PhD from his second master's. He feels a PhD is the highest academic qualification and he would stand a chance of employment:

It's better for me to go for PhD which is the higher level. I could have preferred to finish my degree in psychology and do a PhD in psychology because I'm very comfortable in that area but now I feel like I'm running out of time.

Dominique thinks even if he did not get employed after finishing his first master's he believes a PhD in that same programme might open doors for him.

A PhD is a PhD; it might help me get work as a lecturer or open doors for another job.

Dominique also still hopes for the political situation back home to improve so that he could return home and make a difference:

When I get back home with this PhD, it allows me to work in a different fields.

Above all, he has faith that all he has studied for will help him to build his own firm:

I have a background in psychology and social sciences and I want to run my own business since I will be registered on the board of psychology. I don't want a situation whereby I will go to someone with my CV asking them to hire me but I want my own business run by me and my fellow colleagues because I know I don't stand slim chances to be employed here in South Africa.

6.7 Chapter overview

This chapter has presented the narrative of the second refugee student I had in-depth interviews with over the course of one year. There are five key issues that contribute to Dominique's experiences. Firstly, I presented his biography, then his experiences prior to migration. Second, I investigated the factors most likely to impact on his present and past experiences at a chosen university. Third, I explored his future progression intentions. Dominique's experiences demonstrated the essence of *from the frying pan into the fire* in that he arguably had worse experiences in the host country compared to what he experienced in his own country. The experiences are listed in detail in Table 7:

Table 7 – Summary of Dominique’s experiences

Key factor	Key experience/ challenge
Biographical	Personal: 53 years old, married, three children, issues around striking a balance between work, studies and family, first degree in psychology, masters in social sciences; currently working to raise funds to do a PhD
Pre-migration	Push: political instability, civil wars and violence Pull: Availability of research and teaching infrastructure, political stability, invited by a friend, democracy, advanced economy in Africa, porous borders Planning: hurried, secretive, Applied for a fake passport Journey: took a flight
Post-migration	Social: Accommodation, difficulties in securing a job, policy-practice disjuncture, xenophobia, crime, documentation, economy, language issues Institutional: Academic writing, discrimination, funding, language of instruction and learning, lack of refugee policy Survival strategies: Perseverance, faith and hope, persistence, self-belief Support strategies: Funding for refugees, conscientise people about the group, academic support, language support, draw refugee policy
Future progression	Build his firm, self-employed, employer

Dominique’s past experiences have a huge impact on his experiences at a chosen university. First of all, he ran away from violence in his home country and now he is facing worse violence of xenophobia and crime. He lives in fear and that is likely to affect his studies. Despite the challenges, back home Dominique had a good job he trained for but then he came to South Africa and despite the policies on refugees and completion of a master’s degree, he could not secure a job. The issue of language affected him in that back home he learnt in French and now he has to learn in English without support of the institution in mastering the language of instruction. What is worse is he was asked for proof of English proficiency yet he was of the Francophone background. Despite all the challenges Dominique is willing to fall, get up and continue with his studies.

6.7.1 How has the past impacted on Dominique’s present educational experiences?

In Dominique’s story I did not learn much about his educational experiences in his native country, however, he argued that education back home was completely different from the education system in the host nation. As a result, he had to go an extra mile in studying in the host nation as compared to his classmates. He had to join a college outside the campus, which

in addition to the writing centre within the campus, was meant to equip him with academic writing skills. Back home, Dominique had a job but upon arrival in South Africa he could not get a job, so he had to give up the dream of working, go back to school and pursue his studies with the hope that if he gets further educated, he might get a chance for a job. He has been living in fear in all the three stages, threatened back home and getting exposed to xenophobia in the host nation. He also is not certain that he will get funding to start his PhD, however, he had believed still believes that through God's grace, perseverance and determination he will realise his dreams. Dominique is convinced that the problem is not lack of funding within the host nation and its universities, but thinks it is lack of refugee policy.

CHAPTER 7: TANYA'S STORY

I'm on a mission to change my past and present into a better future.

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I followed the same structure as the previous two chapters. It presents, in detail, the data drawn from the third refugee student about her narrative of the pre-migratory, post-migratory and future progression intentions and how the past experiences have impacted on both the present and the future. I have also presented it in chronological order of how the events happened. Following the same headings as the previous chapters, this chapter is presented in three broad areas, under which there are various subheadings. I begin with a summary of Tanya's biographical data. Secondly, I explored a detailed presentation of the three broad areas of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression. Tanya's story in her own words represents someone who is *on a mission to change her past and present into a better future*.

7.2 Biographical profile

Tanya, 38, is from western Africa. She is not yet married but she hopes to in the near future and believes in God's guidance in getting a life partner.

I would love to get married one of these days, sooner than later it should happen so when you pray you must have me in your prayers.

Tanya lost her father in political violence when she was still in primary school.

My father was killed.... I never really got the full story, but I know it was something to do with politics. I was still very young.

After the death of her father, her mother fled the country to South Africa, where she taught in a primary school. She sent money back home to support Tanya and pay her school fees.

My mom became a science teacher in a primary school in the Eastern Cape.

When her mother left for South Africa, Tanya was already living with her paternal grandmother and completing her primary education.

She then went to live with her paternal aunt when she was completing her high school and university education. She recalled with tears how her aunt used an iron hand to control her.

...my life was very unstable because you go up and down; you are never in one place and staying with different people within a short space of time. It was never easy especially staying with my aunt. I would do all the household chores whilst she watched TV with her children.

The aunt was a disreputable and violent person. Tanya was happy that she at least gave her accommodation and food. As for her secondary education and for university education, she was assisted by the government.

...my fees was paid by the government social welfare for secondary and university undergraduate degree until I finished school.

During her stay in South Africa, Tanya's mother remarried and had three other children.

I have three siblings. We share the same mother however our fathers are different. We are all scattered now. One is in Sweden, she is a doctor the second one is in South Korea, moving to Japan this month, and the last one here, she works in Midrand.

A few years later, her mother died tragically and was brought back to her country for burial:

My mother got sick and passed away in 1993. At that time... I was still in primary school

Despite their circumstances of losing a parent, she thinks that they are successful in terms of education and acquiring decent jobs.

She passed her first degree, but unfortunately she never worked and she left the country before her graduation.

I was trained to be a teacher but I never taught. I didn't even wait for my results. The graduation even happened when I was already here.

Because of political violence which will be discussed in the next section in detail, Tanya fled to South Africa in 2004. Upon arrival she stayed with her paternal aunt who had organised an air ticket for her. Tanya began looking for a job whilst she was still staying with the aunt and could not secure one. She then decided to further her studies at the nearest university. She

applied and got accepted to do an honour's degree in Information Communication Technology. From there she pursued a master's degree and then moved to Educare University, together with her supervisor, where she is now almost through her thesis and will soon be ready to submit.

The next section explores Tanya's pre-migration experiences in detail.

7.3 Pre-migration experiences: Why did Tanya leave her country?

In this section, as in the previous three chapters, I have explored the major reasons that contributed to Tanya's fleeing from her country of origin. The theory of push-pull will also help both me and the reader in understanding the circumstances around this kind of migration. Although Tanya's experiences seem to cripple her from pre-migration through to post-migration, she is determined to pursue and realise her dreams, as is summarised in her utterance *I'm on a mission to change my past and present into a better future*. Tanya thinks that she and her three siblings, who are also all in diaspora, have already pulled through thick and thin and she would never give a thought to giving up:

I feel like we have moved from where we were. We are not where we think we should be, but we are not where we used to be.

This has demonstrated the fact that was postulated by Meyer (2015), how individuals often demonstrate resilience in the face of hardships and so many times people devise coping responses and thrive, despite stress.

7.3.1 Push factors

One of the major reasons that caused Tanya to flee her country was political violence against the ruling government which was perpetrated by a rebel group. This, however, does not only affect the rulers but the ordinary person within the state is the most targeted. This kind of political violence also created wide scale human rights violations:

...people were displaced and women were raped...they would abduct girls and turn them into wives and they cut off women's nipples, breasts and wombs. They would abduct boys and tell them to kill their parents. They would attack villages...destroy food.

The attack was done at random and the citizens were not only affected in terms of their day-to-day living but fear was also instilled in them. As a result, they were always on the run. Moreover, the education system was disrupted:

...you had those unrests kind of life where you never have a stable environment to sit in and actually even concentrate on school and all those things.

Because of fear it was no longer possible to sleep in their houses. Tanya recalled how they spent a couple of days sleeping in the bush. They had also the option to flee to town because it was only the villages and not the town that were attacked:

...so we spent quite some time sleeping in the bush, I remember there were a couple of times where we used to trek from home to town, because they were coming, we didn't used to sleep at home, we would come in the morning and then we would go to school, you'd be sitting in a classroom and you would hear, they are coming they are coming so you would run out of the classroom and go home, both boys and girls.

The classes were often disrupted and this led to the delay in completing a grade. Tanya remembered that at one point in primary school, she had to repeat a grade because of these disruptions. Repeating a grade meant delaying one's progress by one year. Things were not good but they had no choice:

...I remember I had to repeat a grade, I think it was grade 4 because of that instability.

That was the same reason why she did not do pre-schooling, however, under those difficult conditions, she completed her primary schooling and managed to write the national primary leaving exam, passed and proceeded to high school. She also worked hard for six years and passed high school but she thought the education system back home had low standards:

...we never did public speaking unless you went to a private school or you were born with that desire to do public speaking...we don't speak in public.

Although, she thinks the education system had also deteriorated because of the civil war, but universities back home were always worried about graduating huge numbers of students at the expense of imparting quality and powerful knowledge.

I think it's [University education] more of a commercialisation of education rather than focusing on the quality it has more to do with the quantity how many students do you bring into University rather than looking at what is the quality the students have been getting whereas here I feel like the focus is more on the quality that has been coming out.

There is, therefore, no doubt that the education system also contributed as a reason to leave the country for Tanya. The political instability in the country had crippled the system to such an extent that it was not possible to realise one's dreams in the country. Thus, Tanya decided to flee to South Africa, a decision that was expedited when her aunt opted to help her. Although her journey was hurried it was not that difficult because the aunt prepared an air ticket for her.

7.3.2 Pull factors

It was her aunt who realised that Tanya could actually realise her dreams in South Africa, which was why she offered to assist with migration. However, Tanya also realised that it was a big opportunity for her:

...so my journey to South Africa is basically opportunities. I feel like South Africa had offers, had more opportunities than any other country, which is close home so there is a chance for you to go to school and go and get further education and also I thought there is a little bit of protection for the refugees.

The aunt who was already in South Africa, had informed Tanya that universities in South Africa offer powerful education and they are well equipped with research and teaching infrastructure. The aunt is not a refugee in South Africa; she is on a work permit. She also told Tanya that she was most likely to get a teaching job whilst furthering her education. Upon completion of a degree she said Tanya was likely to get a good paying job. So, Tanya's passion to come to South Africa was mostly stimulated by her aunt.

Tanya, through research and reading, also realised there are government policies meant for refugees, so she thought it was a brilliant idea to flee to South Africa:

The policies show that refugees have rights to protection and a right to education and all those things.

She had come to understand that of all the African countries, even those surrounding her country, South Africa was the best especially in terms of support of refugees.

I felt like South Africa had offers, had more opportunities than any other country, close to mine so I thought there is a chance for me to go to school and go and get further education and also, I also realise there is sort of protection for the refugees.

She came with anticipation. Little did she know that the policies existed but are not actually implemented:

Yes! The policies are there and everyone knows South Africa has such policies. They'll always have the grand policies nice policies and always have the best or one of the best constitutions in the world because they have policies on how to take care of the refugees but the policies are for show. They are showing off to the international communities to say here we are, we have these policies in place but when it comes to practice, it's not helping anyone because as refugees or asylum-seekers, we don't get support especially from the government.

In fact, she thinks the government is being hypocritical in that they preach what they have failed dismally to put into practice:

...they are just putting on this show to show the entire world how accommodating they are, in writing but not in practice.

Tanya thinks they practise completely the opposite of what they have on paper:

Instead of getting support there are always xenophobic attacks. You get to see this in the streets, and when it happens, the president takes forever to respond, to condemn what is going on, to say 'this is wrong come on!' I think it speaks volume if something like that happens and the president takes forever to issue a statement.

She thinks if the government is not taking an active role to warn the culprits, then they are somehow perpetuating and supporting what they are doing.

The next section explores Tanya's post-migration experiences in detail.

7.4 Post-migration

7.4.1 Securing a job in South Africa

Upon arrival in South Africa, Tanya did not face any accommodation issues because she lived with her aunt. This aunt was better when compared to the one she was living with back home. She started applying for documentation and that was also not a big challenge to her because her aunt was connected to some of the people who could help. Although the waiting period was long, the asylum-seeker certificate was issued and then she was eventually offered refugee status. She started job hunting, but without success:

In two schools after applying they told me they offer jobs to South Africans only. I lost hope of ever acquiring a job in South Africa but I did not stop applying

Back home, Tanya had trained to teach Economics and Religious Studies and had realised that Religious Studies is not offered as a subject on its own in South Africa:

I think here a religious study is fused into life orientation, but it's just a small part of it, but back home it is such a big thing, a subject on its own.

However, she also thought that with the issue of considering South Africans first, it would not be easy to get a job:

They actually specify companies and institutions have to advertise nationally in a newspaper to be 100% sure that they can't get a South African who can do the job.

However, Tanya is still hopeful of getting a job even if she is a refugee that is, if she goes the extra mile:

The reason for doing a PhD is my passion but also looking for work in South Africa as a foreign national is very challenging. I think you need to have like an extra something over the national people who are South Africans. Employers should be able to pull an extra factor that you have in order to compete with a South African. That extra something should be very strong hey! So for me PhD in my view gives me an extra factor than what the South Africans, the natives have so it's like when I have a PhD and I apply for a job I feel like I have an advantage, so it's mainly like it's like with a PhD, I have a double gain; you get it and you get to be called a doctor but also if I'm looking for work I feel like I have an advantage with it, so hopefully that would happen, I would get work.

7.4.1 Comparison of her home country university education and South African university education system

Tanya thinks that education back home did not offer a basis to do her postgraduate studies because learning in her undergraduate degree was mostly passive where they would only recall facts for examinations:

With undergraduate education, especially when it comes to issues of reading and writing, I was never prepared on how to read and write academically.

She also bemoans the fact that it also did not prepare them for real-life challenges:

Also, we never did public speaking unless you went to a private school or you were born with that desire to do public speaking...we don't speak in public.

She also confessed that she did not know how to present articles and talk at a public gathering until she came to South Africa. The kind of education in the South African university has given her confidence in self-expression:

I am surprised that I can actually stand in front of people and say something of substance, of which if you take a look at the type of person that I was back then I was never that type of student who for example put their hand up, and now I can surprisingly confidently speak.

She feels just being at a university was enough to push her into developing confidence:

And I think the space that I am in, contributed because I see people speaking out and expressing themselves and I am also sort of forced to speak because I don't want to be left out.

Despite all other challenges she mentioned she has this to say about the South African universities she attended:

I think what South African universities have done is take me out of my comfort zone and make me realise that I need to do things for myself because I am not going to wait for other people to do them. Like take for example, the jobs that I applied for, I had to apply for them myself, by emailing whoever needed to be emailed, and I remember in 2017, I didn't know where I was going to get rent, so I sent out emails to international office, to exam office and the replies were regrets, but eventually...that confidence is

there, and I even surprise myself to the point where I find myself asking if this is me. So in that sense, I can say that I have evolved.

And indeed, there was evidence that her confidence and learning was boosted:

They hold proposal weekends at my university and it's like a whole weekend of presenting for master's and PhD students, and one of the things they do is how to develop a proposal and they used my proposal as an example, and everyone wanted to know who I am.

7.4.2 Life at the first institution

Tanya realised that because of discrimination and one subject choice, her chances of getting employed were very slim. She thought of going back to school to further her studies. She had read that Information Communication Technology (ICT) was the most wanted skill in South African schools so she decided to go back to university to pursue an honours' degree in ICT. Tanya got a vacancy to do ICT at the institution near her aunt's home. Despite the challenges, Tanya was determined to study and pass:

I didn't even know what ICT was because in undergraduate studies we never even used computers, so in the beginning it was difficult but I was determined, I would go to the library and borrow books on computers and sit and teach myself. I taught myself how to use a computer. Because I arrived late when they had already started the course, so when I came in, I remember I had to teach myself.

Tanya was surprised things were done differently compared to her university back home. She was scared and realised with her type of education, she could not fit into the education system, and as a result she knew she had to push harder to fit. She was just thrown into the deep end with no one to help her to swim:

I struggled a lot with my studies because I didn't know where to start, especially with research and theory, and thinking critically and academically... I don't think the education at home worked with that.

In such a situation we expect universities to put structures in place to help students like refugees who will be struggling to fit into the system. That was not the case with Tanya at both universities and she had to master things on her own. Fortunately, she was the only full time student in her class and she had much time to learn and master what she struggled with:

Being in South African universities, with the hope to succeed means pushing oneself out of your comfort zone

What Tanya did, can only be described as resilient. Although there were no support systems, Tanya thinks her supervisor played a critical role in helping her boost her confidence:

Also, I have had a supervisor who put me in that sink or swim situation where I for example had to present at a conference, so she would push me in there and then start asking questions so that I could talk, she would put us in groups and each of us would have to talk.

Tanya thinks she developed the confidence quickly because her supervisor believed in her and had also encouraged her so many times:

That lady had so much confidence in me that she used to tell me that she would not let my PhD lay on a shelf and somehow my first conference was an international conference and I had so many questions about how I was going to do it, but had so much confidence in me that she managed to find me money, I went to Canada and presented my paper, and now my work has been published, I even had an article out and published at master's level. I was surprised, but now she has showed me the way and now I don't need her.

Tanya believes that she gained much of her confidence through emotional support and encouragement from her supervisor, something she doesn't think happens in universities back home and it also does not happen with other students at universities in South Africa. After meeting two white women who gave her courage, she concluded that whites are good at encouraging and that was of help to her:

Another thing that I have noticed are those affirmations and the one thing that I noticed with white people is how they give affirmations to their kids. Like I remember as a student I used to work in the library and we had a white librarian woman who used to talk a lot, and during lunch time the library staff used to congregate and start talking, and whilst they were talking one of the librarian ladies came to tell me that you're brilliant. And I laughed out loud and said, 'Ha! Me!?' and I think that affirmation will make you to start believing in yourself. And with my supervisor...she is so good at this thing that I could be in a crowd of about 100 people and she would

single me out, and acknowledge my existence, and my presence, and tell everyone who cares to listen about me.

Tanya eventually got her honour's degree in ICT after working extremely hard:

So I didn't know what ICT was about until I came to one other university, but then I came out better than most with my distinctions

However, during her studies she realised she needed money for her upkeep. She sought a job at University library:

The first time I went to the library to ask for a job, and I think I looked underfed, and I think she looked at me and thought if she didn't give me a job I would starve. She didn't even interview me, she just said "yeah, sure". And I would shelve the books and I got R300 every month, and I got it in cash since I did not have a bank account, and with my first pay, I took out R250 and went to go and open a bank account. As I got more familiar with the librarian she would leave me, and I would work over time and then I would get paid more.

When they realised that she was hard working, the salary increased which also helped her to finish paying for her tuition fees:

Then I started getting R1000, and that money took care of my needs.

Tanya was also lucky to get a second part-time job at University, which she thinks happened through God's grace:

But I was still learning how to use a computer, and I remember the one time my lecturer found me with a book and she was so happy and impressed, and she went and told everyone who could listen and after that they gave me the job of being a lab assistant, so now I had two jobs.

By working in the lab she not only benefitted in terms of money, but the job gave her time to practise more on computers:

So I used to sit in the computer lab a lot and there was hardly ever anyone so that was easy. I was literally the only full time part-time student.

Upon completion of her degree, she could not find a job. She realised that it was better to go back to school. She applied to do a diploma in early childhood education. Back home, she had trained to teach in high school and her interest in early childhood education developed when she had a chance to teach for a month during her vacation, relieving someone who was on sick leave.

But I taught in a South African primary school, but I wasn't trained to teach in primary school, I was trained to teach in high school. But I am no longer a fan of high school teaching, hence I went back and did a degree in early childhood development, at one other university, but I am very keen on ECD because I feel like where I was at that school there was a boy whose family who had just moved from the Netherlands to start a Game Reserve, and he could not speak English but after 6 months...but for me that was fascinating for me like how did that even happen? So that comes with the pride of knowing that you have contributed to a child's development, so I enjoy it.

She had saved the money to pay fees from her part-time jobs when she was doing ICT. The diploma was quite interesting to her since she was now a bit used to the system. Tanya finished her diploma, but still could not get a job. That is when she realised that in South Africa, one might not get a job no matter how educated you are, as long as you are a foreign national. Tanya did not give up studying, realising that she would be increasing the chances of getting employed elsewhere. She wanted to continue with ICT but could not get a supervisor. She then resorted to changing her area of study and got a supervisor whom she had to transfer with to University.

7.4.3 Life at Educare University

Funding

Tanya left her first university because her supervisor was going and since she had received a lot of support from her, especially for the master's degree, she thought she could not survive without the supervisor's help. She also liked University because of its reputation and support in terms of funding.

The thing that I like about Educare University, and more especially the school of education, is the whole issue of bursaries. Of course we have to work for the bursary, but I like the fact that it pays for your fees because without that money I would not

have been able to pay for my PhD.

She was very happy to leave her previous university because of the serious funding constraints:

There was no funding at my previous institution, especially at the department of education and I don't think I would have been able to pay for my PhD if I didn't get the opportunity to come to University.

Also, comparing Educare University to her previous university, she prefers Educare University because PhD students are also involved in teaching and tutoring. This helps to develop skills to present in conferences and improve on academic writing:

...they get to pay your fees, but you get to stand in front and teach, talk to students and discuss so if you look at it in a positive way, it's actually a good thing. Like take for example, I am a very shy person; I can't believe I get to stand in front of people and talk. My CV is boosted; I now have experience in teaching in higher education....Educare University has actually given me that. Even my confidence is better.

Although the fund is not sufficient, at least it covers a number of basic things that allow one to remain at University, especially when one is single like Tanya:

Yes, but the thing is bursary money still provides money for tuition fees. It's not the grand financial scheme, like NRF which pays your fees and gives you a stipend, but it does pay fees. It comes with some work and will take away some time, but what is free in this world? Maybe you guys think that because I am single, my own challenge is tutoring?

She thinks she has more or less similar challenges as her colleagues who are married because although she liked the idea of the bursary, a lot of time is taken in trying to work for it:

...it comes with too much attachments, some conviction that you have to work; you tutor, you mark, you invigilate and this can take a whole time from your studies.

7.4.4 Securing funding and accommodation in the host nation

Tanya confessed that the bursary does not cover everything and as a result she will have to find some more time for extra work to top up the bursary money for her survival:

But strictly talking about financial matters, I have to top up my bursary funding because the funding we get is insufficient, and we have to look for other money elsewhere, because the money is not enough. However, whilst it's a good idea on one hand, I think they also need to look at it, because they tell you that your PhD comes first, but if I were to take a break from doing their work and focus on my PhD then they would start bringing up the terms and conditions.

To top up the funding, Tanya would spend time looking for part-time jobs:

...so I literally look for jobs, do you know what I did last year? I sent my CV to the examination office, I sent my CV to intonation office asking them if they had any job, but did not find any.

The previous year she delayed registering because she did not have enough money:

...that's how I survive in fact to register for this year I had to wait until April because I didn't have enough money for accommodation and my upkeep.

Tanya feels there is covert discrimination when it comes to support in terms of securing even a part-time job within her university:

So you could get some small jobs here and there as a student but now consideration has been given to South African students so there was an ad that was looking for research assistance, by all means I qualified for the job and because it's in an area that I'm working on my PhD so literacy and this professor was looking for research assistance and I thought I had the job in the bag but then it turns out that I didn't get the job, his reasoning was that you are finishing

She was not convinced of the reason she did not get the job because overt discrimination is very popular in the country in general and at University in particular:

So you could apply for some small jobs here and there as a student but now preference has been openly given to South African students.

She feels that if one is a woman, one really needs some basics and a safe place to stay, especially in this country which is well-known for crime:

...you don't work, you need accommodation, you need to eat, you need to clothe yourself, as a woman I don't just eat, I need other women stuff... you need your toiletries... so all those things need money yet getting employed in this country is an issue.

She thinks if one does have money for fees but does not have money for basics and accommodation, that will affect one's studies:

...you are always stressed because you are thinking, how am I going to pay for accommodation, if you don't have anywhere to lay your head and be comfortable and be relaxed there is no way you are going to be able to function and do your PhD, there is no way you are going to be able to meet your deadlines because your mind is not on your PhD, your mind is on how am I going to get money to pay rent, because for me food is not that important because I feel like, it is important but as long as I have a place to put my head I can look for food... so it's a bit challenging to concentrate and to say, oh I am going to focus on my PhD when you know that next month the landlord wants the money, there is no way it does literally, you'll get stressed out because you cannot concentrate because you need to pay for that rent so until you sort that out, you can never concentrate.

When push came to shove, Tanya would sleep in her office:

I think the one thing that has helped me to keep going is that University gives you an office so if you have money challenges at least you have a place that you can go, but we are not allowed to stay in offices but you can stay in there anyway... some of us have found ourselves sleeping in offices because we can't afford rent, so you end up sleeping in your office and you go and bath in the showers of University campus.

At one time she was happy to find a job, but later on realised that she could not afford to rent a house near her university, so she rented a house far away, meaning a new challenge of transport money:

...the accommodation in this place is ridiculously expensive...it's hard to get a place that is close by because if you don't have enough money you can't afford to get a

place that is near which means it has implications in terms of your transport, if you can't afford a place which is nearby, then how are you going to concentrate?

Tanya is grateful that she had a supervisor who supported her especially during master's because she was doing her research within a big project owned by her, so that support came when she was clueless about where to get funding to continue with education.

Sometimes if supervisors have projects, there is money; they ask their students to do their research within those projects. Because the project is going to offer you fees, so you don't have to stress about I'm going to have to look for a job.

However, the big challenge is that one has to divert their interests and acquire new ones that align with the project's theme. Tanya had to give up her dreams in ICT and start on research which had to do with HIV:

Even if it doesn't align with your interests you take it so you don't have to struggle as a foreign national to get funding.

Tanya, however, had learnt to be flexible and had to build new hopes in her new research:

So I took up access to success which is something I'm now interested in, given where I'm coming from, how you succeed as a disadvantaged student against the odds, so I was like okay, I need to understand that, so that for me feeds in to what I am doing currently.

She believes what she is doing in her PhD now is making her understand why it was difficult for her to adapt easily to the host nation's universities:

With my research, I'm now beginning to understand that I had academic challenges. You need academic literacy to be able to understand the text, the knowledge, the reading, the writing and universities like Edu-care have a way of doing things like how you read a text, how you write and how you do things, so all those things account to what they call academic literacy, your referencing you know, reading for understanding, meaning, making and all those things, so all of these things either lead you to succeed and I now understand it as one of those social capitals that you have to have to be able to succeed, so my masters in a way sort of links into that, it's just that one aspect that can hinder someone or enable them to succeed in a university.

7.4.5 Gender-based challenges

As a woman she also feels that she cannot openly share her challenges, especially with men, for fear of sexual harassment. The statement below shows how Tanya has internalised gender-based violence:

...you cannot go to and ask for money to men because they will always take advantage of that... if you say, 'can you give me some money', they would say, 'well, if I give you the money, what are you going to give me in return for my money?'

Moreover, she feels women have more needs than men:

For a woman I think it's a bit difficult it is really challenging because like I've talked about the whole issue of needs that you needs that you have besides eating and all but there are other extra things that you have to think about which are every month, you need to buy new pads ...as a woman I cannot go even for a day without bathing, even with the underwear, the one that you wear, you cannot wear it for a year, for our needs I feel like they are totally different, they relate to hygiene.

As a result, she thinks is very easy to get tempted into wayward means of getting money:

...this whole situation puts you in a vulnerable situation where you sort of get tempted to find a man who is going to help you... it's easy for you to say let me go and ask a man money but at what cost?

Tanya thinks she has unique experiences as a female and an unmarried refugee student:

...yes we are all refugees but I feel like the men, their lives are a little bit easy, if they don't have families to take care of but as a woman you are very vulnerable ...our needs can be totally different...we might be having the same challenges where we all ran away from our countries for political reasons but when we all arrive in spaces like this, we just face different things it's a big challenge.

The next section explores Tanya's future progression intentions.

7.5 Future progression

Despite all the fears and challenges, Tanya is determined to change her life. She thinks acquiring a PhD has the potential to change her status as well as preparing a better future for

her children. She also wants to be a source of inspiration for those who might be struggling like her:

For me this is my ticket to my dream, my ticket to the foundation that I am hoping to leave my kids like laying the groundwork for the generations that are coming after me. It is to show other people who are going through this, if there is ever going to be one person who gets to read the story or gets to see the story, they can also sit and say I can also do it if she did it then I can also stand on two feet.

She recalls how one of her professors used to inspire her and with his words she feels like she should keep on moving. The professor was happy that he was in a position to change their lives and told the students that one day, it would be them changing other people's lives.

Being a refugee student for Tanya was a huge challenge, but she is determined to succeed against the odds:

There is no room for me for failing; there is no room at all. I get moments when I say what's the point, why am I doing this we talked about the issue of employment, how challenges become bad. I get those moments where I say why am I bothering yet there is no jobs and that, then I have to go back and smack myself out of that and go back to business and see what happens so for me that pushes from where I have come from, I don't want to go back there.

Tanya does not like the life she is living. As a result, she does not want her children to live such a life in the future. She wants to start all over again because she feels she is living a miserable life:

I am moving forward but also I am hoping to have kids and I want to lay a foundation for them that is going to be different from my foundation that I got, something totally different on a different platform, different from what I received as a young female child.

Tanya is on a mission to prove a point to herself as well as to the world:

I think I want to be a researcher, my aim for doing this is a personal thing... can I achieve this given the circumstances, given the background, can I stand here and say

this woman who came from this kind of a background can also stand and say this is something I've achieved.

She also wants to be a researcher so as to help those who might be struggling as she did:

I also have a dream of starting an institute in education purely focusing on education issues, how do we help refugees or how do we give them access to education regardless of who you are, your background, whether you are a woman or a man, that is my focus.

7.6 Chapter overview

The chapter has presented the narrative of the third refugee student I had in-depth interviews with over the course of one year. Four key issues, namely, her biography, pre-migratory, post-migratory and future progression contribute significantly to Tanya's experiences at the selected university. Tanya's experiences demonstrated the essence of someone who is on a mission to change their past to a desirable present and onwards into the future. For her it is not easy but she is determined to accomplish that even against the odds. Tanya's experiences are summarised in Table 8.

Tanya narrated her story and indicated how as a single woman, it is so hard to survive, especially when you are a refugee. She therefore is selective in choosing people who might help her, for fear of abuse. She had been abused and had seen relatives and friends being abused back home in political violence and she did not want to relive the experience. In the host nation, she seemed to be facing challenges again, albeit in different forms. She is working hard to change her present for the better, however, she is always faced with many obstacles.

Table 8 – Summary of Tanya’s experiences

Key factor	Key experience/challenge
Biographical profile	38 years old grew up under the parenting of other relatives Father died in political violence Mother fled the country when she was still a toddler From Western Africa Single First degree home country
Pre-migration	Push factors Political instability and violence Violence against women Unemployment Bad economic situation Disrupted education system Pull factors Attractive policies Relatives already in the host nation Renowned universities Planning and migration Hurried and took a flight Relative assisted the process
Post-migration	Social Documentation Accommodation Xenophobia Language barriers Securing jobs Institutional Funding Academic support Survival strategies Belief in God’s protection Part-time jobs
Future progression	Researcher- underprivileged groups Lecturer Anything that comes her way Own an institute

7.6 How have the pre-migratory and the post-migratory experiences and future intentions impacted on Tanya's present educational experiences?

Tanya grew up with no parents and she understood her father was killed in political violence. Her mother had to flee to South Africa, leaving her with relatives. All her life she never got to experience parental love because she never stayed with her parents. Instead she stayed with different relatives, none of which managed to show her love. In fact, some relatives were very cruel. At the present moment, she is working towards preparing a better future for her own children. She does not want to see them suffer as she did and this is what gives her power to persevere.

She also witnessed and was involved in violence as a young girl, and now cannot ask or accept help from a man, because she thinks most of them are abusive. This past violence has indeed affected how she relates to men, especially as an unmarried lady, she has developed issues of trust with the opposite sex.

The disrupted education system coupled with rote learning was also indeed a barrier to accessing and navigating higher education in the host nation. She thought that in order to be successful, she had to persevere by going the extra mile in studying and seeking support from the necessary groups. For example, back home they never applied ICT in learning and they were never active in presenting their own work, so it took her a whilst to get used to the active learning she came across in South Africa.

CHAPTER 8: JUDITH'S STORY

Persevering against the odds

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I follow the same structure as the previous three chapters. I provide a detailed presentation of data drawn from a female refugee student's narrative of the lived experiences of the pre-migratory, post-migratory and future progression intentions and how this has impacted on the present educational experiences. I have presented narratively in chronological order of events. As a result, the chapter has been presented in four main headings, namely biographical profile, pre-migration, and post-migration and future intentions. Judith's story demonstrates the essence of *perseverance even against the odds*. This sentiment has been echoed by other participants, but it appears very definitely in Judith's story. Existing literature has also shown to a certain extent that refugee students persevere against the odds (Bailey & İnanç, 2018; Felix, 2016; Maringe et al., 2017).

8.2 Biographical data

Judith, 45, is from southern Africa. She is married and has three children between the ages of nineteen and thirty years. She quit her job and came to South Africa in 2005 to join her husband, who had come earlier in 2004.

My husband was already in South Africa. He could not work or further his studies back home because of political violence and poor economy. By the time I joined him, he was nearly half way through his doctoral studies.

Judith did primary to university level education back home. Her highest qualification before she left was a master's degree in education. She was originally working in her country in the civil service and she had a high post.

I used to love my work, we belonged to the country's public commission and that was the department that was in charge of all ministries so in a way we were like the intelligence of the country. I remember even when I went for the interview I was a bit sceptical of the position I would be offered, I was very doubtful, but I think they were preparing us to be ambassadors because eventually we were supposed to train all civil servants in different departments and ministries. If there was a new policy, it was our duty to explain that policy to them in such a way that they would understand and implement it. In a way we were gate keepers for the country's sovereignty.

The circumstances in her country made her leave her job, flee to join her husband in South Africa:

I had a lot of hatred about how I was treated and how my fellow people were being treated back home. At times I would dress up to go for work but wouldn't work at all. The supporters of the ruling party would come, force us out of our offices and we would spend the whole day singing.

Things had become worse and she decided to leave the country to come and pursue a PhD, living with her husband in South Africa. Fortunately, her husband was well versed with the application processes. He applied on her behalf and she got accepted and they waited for the documentation from her country. Her major challenge was now on the issue of study leave:

I thought of taking a study leave, which I was actually denied because the ruling government had started to notice that people were running away.

Even if she was denied the study leave and did not have enough documents, Judith decided to leave the job and come to South Africa. Presently, Judith has just submitted her PhD thesis and found a two-year contract job, however, it was also very difficult for her to get that job, even though her refugee papers were in order. The next section gives a detailed discussion on Judith's pre-migratory experiences.

8.3 Pre-migratory experiences: Why did Judith leave her country?

As in the previous two chapters, this section will explore the push and pull factors that forced Judith out of her country. It often happens that people are faced with difficult situations home and away but they do not usually give up on their dreams. Instead they look for other options that lead them to the realisation of their dreams. Even if situations prove to be hard, they always have the determination to succeed, hence *perseverance against the odds*. Judith's story resembles that of a person who persists, even in the face of adversity.

8.3.1 Push factors

The major reason for leaving her country is that the government was instilling violence against its own people:

The government was not looking after its own people instead it was against the people...it was beating its own people...it was shooting its own people once they suspect you belonged to the opposition party

Colleagues from the ruling party would hold rallies at the work place and Judith witnessed how some of the colleagues were targeted and beaten and that's when she realised she might be in that situation one day:

I had noticed in my workplace, where supporters of the ruling party and other people would come and hold rallies for their political party in our work place. Of course I was not victimised as an individual but I did see it happen to other people, and I was not sure whether there would be a point in time where they would come for me so I thought it better for me to leave the country

Everything was politicised and it was very hard to plan one's day and even harder to work in her country:

You would wake up thinking you are going to work, only to be told that there would be a political rally later on, so you would sit under a shade at work, hoping the political party people would come early, give their talk and go so that you can commence with your work, and sometimes we would sit until 1 or 2 in the afternoon and sometimes they would never pitch.

When they decided to arrive, Judith and her colleagues would be treated with contempt and disrespect:

I remember the one time we were told to kneel down and hit the dry ground with our fists whilst saying certain things we were being told to say and we would be told that the ground is not making enough noise and we would hit it until our hands got swollen. So it was really tough.

The economy and standards of education began to deteriorate. She thinks political instability and violence had given rise to economic crisis:

I remember at one point, my salary was worth R5, that's how bad it was, so we were just going to work for the sake of it. I don't know what was wrong with us, because we were not really getting paid, but we just kept on going to work. Sometimes we would get food hampers like maize and or beans, and we would share it amongst ourselves, and that was much better than the salary.

The education system was also in a terrible state. The state of education in Judith's country affected the development of the economy, whilst the state of the economy also affected the

access to education and the quality of teachers. The once strong state of education in the country deteriorated when teachers were poorly remunerated. There was an exodus of teachers and other specialists to other countries:

...professors, teachers and lecturers were also not paid... so it all comes down to if you are not well paid, you are demotivated to carry out your duties so I could not pursue studies in such an education system.

Realising the situation was worsening, Judith asked her husband, who was already in South Africa, to apply for a study vacancy at Educare university on her behalf. When she got the place to study, her government denied her a study visa and study leave because by that time, many people were running away from violence. Judith just decided to flee without the documents:

When they found out that I left before my leave was approved, I was dismissed from work and lost all my benefits - I had spent 20 years working for the government.

8.3.2 Pull factors

The choice of host country was due to the fact that there was someone already there who she always visited and she realised that South Africa was a better country in terms of freedom when compared to hers:

I opted for South Africa because my husband had already come to South Africa. The time I visited, I noticed that the country had freedom and people minded their own business

Judith seemed to have no other choice of a country because the other countries surrounding hers seemed to be still struggling to recover from the economic and political crises brought by civil wars. So South Africa, to her, seemed the best country in Africa to flee to. Since the end of Apartheid in 1994, there has been a gradual improvement in the country's economy:

South Africa's economy is thriving. It is one of the countries with the best infrastructure in Africa.

Judith also thinks that South Africa has got a better education system and their schools and universities are well equipped with research and teaching infrastructure. As a result it is a destination for most of the people from her home country, especially those who wanted to advance their careers.

It's like everyone from home was going south...especially those who wanted to pursue their studies.

Judith's journey was secretive and she only told a few people who were supportive, such as her boss and her children. Her boss was even prepared to sacrifice his own work in order to help Judith:

Fortunately, my boss was very supportive and he suggested that I go even if he knew it might jeopardise his work

Because Judith was denied both a study permit and a study visa, she knew things were not right and resigning became a tough decision to take. However, for her, fleeing was the only option to get out of danger.

I didn't resign because they were going to ask why I was resigning and potentially even follow me, and they deliberately took time to process my leave, so I just left anyway even though it was illegal, and I knew it, but I decided to leave.

When some colleagues figured out what was going on, Judith was reported to top management, she was dismissed and her boss nearly lost his job.

The next section provides a detailed account of Judith's post-migratory experiences.

8.4 Post-migration: Life in the host nation

When Judith arrived in South Africa in 2005, she applied for refugee status and got it after a few months:

It was not that difficult to get the document because of my story which was full of political instability and violence.

After a week, Judith had to register at Educare University where her husband had already secured a study vacancy for her. She did not face any difficulties in registering. She got a bursary which she acquired on a competitive basis with all other postgraduate students. She was very fortunate to get a bursary because she had good grades for her previous degree. Most of the people with a refugee background found it difficult to get the bursary. They were expected to have good grades for their previous degree, but it was not always possible for

them, given the circumstances under which they received education back home. Judith thinks it is by God's grace that she had good grades for the last degree she did back home.

Fortunately, when I came, I applied for [a bursary] because my marks were really good. The [bursary] was supposed to pay all my tuition and I would get a monthly allowance. However, most of my colleagues could not get it because it was offered on competitive basis.

Besides the fact that her husband was already at Educare University, Judith liked the University because of its reputation worldwide:

I realised it was one of the best universities in Africa and actually amongst the best in the world, and so when I came, I was coming to this particular university. I never actually considered any other universities.

Unlike back home, Judith could not afford a maid, so it meant she had to learn to balance between her studies, family and work, which was a big challenge to her. Traditional gender roles had a huge impact on Judith's studies.

At home, things were also very hard in terms of my husband also expected me to play the role of the wife by cooking, washing, and cleaning the house, so sometimes I ended up working throughout the night to meet deadlines, so it was really tough

At school she had a male supervisor so at times she found it difficult to share her challenges and fears with him. She thought as a male it was difficult for him to understand what she was going through:

...my supervisor was male so he did not understand some of the things I was going through, so it was a bit tough.

She was also very much affected by the idea of her husband going to conferences with women:

...sometimes I worried about my husband going out to seminars and conferences with the beautiful South African ladies.

8.4.1 Accommodation

Accommodation was one of her major challenges. She joined her husband who was staying in a very small space which Judith thought was not enough space for two PhD students. It was, however, an ideal place in terms of rentals and the walkable distance to the University so they both had to make things work. It was not possible to stay at the University and then walk back home because of the crime between her place of residence and the University.

At that time, we were staying in a one room and that setup on its own was very difficult especially for studying in the evening, but I tried.

Judith had to devise methods of studying which suited her circumstances at that time:

...the space was not big enough for two students to work in, especially in terms of tables and desks so we would use one desk, and I didn't have a laptop so I would print articles, read them at home and then type when I got to my office in the morning.

Judith would opt to go to her office up until midnight but it became difficult to go back home at night because of crime in the park near their residence and also xenophobic attacks which always happened to foreign nationals. As a result, she had to devise a better option:

I would study and sleep in my office and go back home in the morning to freshen up and back to the office.

Judith and her husband were both full time students but they had a family to cater for. As a result, they had to take any part-time work which was available at the University. Doing this also took a lot of her time to concentrate. Even when they did this, the money was never enough and because of insufficient funds to send to their children, she was always quarrelling and fighting with her husband:

Although I had registered as a full-time student, one quarter of my time was dedicated to my studies, and three quarters to my work because I had children to take care of. It was really difficult, because sometimes my husband and I would fight unnecessarily and it took a toll on my studies, but I tried to engage in everything and balance everything.

Judith claims to be balancing her studies, work and personal life, however, she actually did not have sufficient time for her own studies and some members of staff ended up thinking that she was a full-time lecturer:

Time was always a problem...I remember at one point the members of staff thought I was one of them and not a full-time student.

8.4.1 Securing a job in South Africa

Judith thinks that her status as a refugee has barred her from securing full time employment. This is what she had to say:

The status that we have is not stable, because even if you have a refugee status, that does not mean that you are free from harassment, even with jobs, you might have all the requirements, but as soon as they look at your documents, they will turn you down.

As a result, Judith realised that not all that is written, is working in South Africa. She thinks there is a misalignment between policy and practice in the host nation:

Theoretically it says that once you are recognised as a refugee in South Africa, nobody can deny you a job... some employers do not recognise the document so it's very difficult to get a job. So you will find that on paper, something is written, however, what's written on paper is not actually practised in real life.

Judith had realised that it is written in international and national legislation, as well as on the refugee papers, that they should get opportunities to work, but it seemed very difficult:

...the refugee status... is clearly written there that you're entitled to study and work in South Africa, however, when you go to look for a job, they don't recognise the paper, so it was very difficult to find a job

The first preference for jobs will be given to South Africans and she does not think employers are aware of the refugee policy. It seems she was desperately in need of a job but she could not secure one. Judith also thinks that unless the employers get conscientised about refugees, the group will always face challenges in South Africa:

I think South Africans lack knowledge about the document, but also, maybe it's because of the politics of the country. You know that there is a very high rate of unemployment in South Africa, so therefore, they prefer to hire local citizens than foreigners.

8.4.2 Life at Educare University

Judith felt that it was very difficult for her in the first days enrolled at Educare University. The major problem was on how to operate a computer. She claimed that back home there were a few computers and were only used for administrative purposes, so it took a long time for her to get used to computers:

When I came here as a student I was shown the computer lab and my supervisor would ask me to read articles from the e-library and for me that was a problem. My husband had to come and show me how to open the computer, use the e-library and save documents onto the memory stick.

That took a lot of Judith's time, but she knew what she wanted so she had to practise day and night on the basics for using a computer.

Another challenge was she felt as if she was thrown in the deep end and left to swim alone. Compared to the education system back home where the supervisor held her hand all the way, she thinks at Educare University the supervisors only gave minimal support and most of the time one would be alone:

...the way things are done at home, here it was different, you sort of had to be on your own...the supervisor would probe you and encourage you to think further, but that was it. At first it was overwhelming especially with all the different people from different countries, but in the end, I think I succeeded.

Despite the challenges, Judith thought Educare University tried its best to give general support to all the students, however, she argues that the support might not be sufficient for refugee students considering the nature of their migration.

Yes, Educare University is doing its best, although they treat everyone the same without knowing their background, so their best might not actually be good enough for people like us coming from a different background.

She enjoyed going for writing retreats because she believed that's where she did most of her work in research, but again, the chance to go was offered on a competitive basis with all other students and most of her friends and colleagues would not qualify:

We had writing retreats, and that really benefitted me in the sense that it relieved me from wifely duties back home. We had mentors, who really helped us, and those

writing retreats are usually what I used in order to push my chapters, because I would go to about four of those in one year.

There was also a group initiated by Educare University which helped to inculcate the spirit of reading in postgraduate students:

...we would meet once a week and we would each be allocated a chapter to read in a certain book, and every week, we would present one person would present on the chapter that they had been allocated.

There was also a programme where lecturers would take turns to present various aspects of research to students:

...the staff where they would come and present on different topics so we would also attend those Wednesday seminars and we would learn a lot from that.

Judith appreciated all this support given by the University, but still thought she needed some more unique support in order to survive as a refugee student, however, even under those circumstances, she paved ways to succeed:

I look at others and see how they are coping and use what the University is giving me to the best of my abilities.

Judith thinks that lack of support is because the concept refugee is not used at all within the University. In fact, all foreign students are referred to as international students, a term which has concealed refugee students' identities. The refugee students would also prefer not to reveal their identities for fear of spies and persecution.

...the term refugee students did not exist... but then again, maybe it was because we never talked about these things because of trust issues, so we were all just treated like international students. There is no office within the international students to differentiate between the different international students, we were all just treated the same.

Realising Educare University is not doing enough to ameliorate some of the challenges especially for refugee students, some of the refugees, like Judith, have devised ways to survive and succeed within the system:

During some days I would work throughout the night and day, and sometimes when I was tired I would lie on the carpet for some hours. Especially at night, I would lie on the carpet, wake up after some hours, go to the bathroom to freshen up and get a cup of coffee and then continue working. So that was helpful.

Judith also became a member of a group of students meant to support each other in difficult situations. The group was meant for emotional, academic and social support:

...we formed a ladies group with other students who were also doing PhD and we would check on each other. We would also meet once a week and presenting what we were working on. The person presenting during that particular week would also actually have to send their presentation to the group in advance and get feedback and comments, and the day you presented you would also get feedback so that was helpful in that group helped to give feedback before I even actually submitted to the supervisor. So we were forced to actually do the work which we were supposed to work on. So that group was really helpful.

8.4.3 How should University intervene?

Judith thinks that the refugee permit presents challenges when it comes to applying for a job or vacancy at a university and would like the University to devise better ways to help students acquire documentation that works:

The first thing would be documents, I think if I get a green ID, I will be very much in a good condition. Refugee status is very limiting, and I think with the green ID book there are more opportunities, and I need those since I am almost finished with my PhD.

Judith also needs to be taught more on how to write articles and publish. She feels that she still lacks the know-how and she lags behind on publishing:

I also need more knowledge on how to publish, so if I get any post-doctoral job, I want to get into publishing. These is the kind of support I need.

Judith thinks Educare University should be aware of the presence of refugees at the institution and try to give them the support which is due. She argues that this can only be possible if they come up with policies that speak to refugees as a group and stop grouping them together with international students:

Actually, as a refugee student it's like you are not there, or you are just like any other student, so I don't know if there would be anything the University would come up with to help refugee students. I haven't heard of any policy meant for refugees.

It seems the universities are not aware of the differences between refugee students and international students, as a result they would never realise the kinds of challenges faced by refugee students which negatively impact them on pursuing higher education:

It ends at enrolment centre to say you are a foreign student, and then in class no one actually knows the nature of the problems you deal with everyday as a refugee student. But maybe if they knew the nature they might support in terms of resources, free accommodation or link you with organisations and people that deal with refugees, because when you first come to a new country you don't know which organisations to go to help you as a refugee.

Judith feels that Educare University should try not to disclose the status, but should try some means to connect to refugee students to learn of their challenges as a group:

They could even send and ask those of refugee background within the international student office to complete an online questionnaire and then always follow up to see where they are and whether they have actually settled in. That would help.

She argues that there are policies in South Africa which speak to the support of refugees but up to now, she has not experienced any of the support which was specifically meant for refugees. She therefore thinks it is high time these policies should work:

On paper it says that once you are recognised as a refugee in South Africa you get all the support you need be it institutional, social or emotional

The next section discusses Judith's future intentions.

8.5 Future intentions

Looking to the future, Judith wants to mentor students who are underprivileged like her, and wants to learn more about how the students could be helped. She also thinks that doing a post-doctoral course would equip her with the skills and experiences on how to write articles:

...now that I know the environment, I would like to be a mentor for people of my type, so that they don't go through the challenges that I faced in terms of resources and

accommodation, not necessarily by providing them with the resources but by suggesting things they could do in order to acquire those resources

She also would love to become a lecturer at Educare University because she thinks she has a lot of experiences in part-time tutoring:

From the experience that I have had at Educare University I wouldn't mind joining the University and being a lecturer.

8.6 Chapter overview

The chapter has presented the narrative of the fourth refugee student I had in-depth interviews with over the course of two years. Five key issues have contributed to Judith's lived experiences. The issues are her biography, her experiences prior to migration, her post-migratory experiences, how universities could intervene, lastly, her future progression intentions. Judith's story has demonstrated the essence of *perservering even against the odds*. The experiences are listed in Table 9 below

Table 9 – Summary of Judith’s experiences

Category	Experiences
Biography	Age - 45 years Married female with three children From the Southern region Work-family balance
Pre-migratory experiences	Political instability and violence Poor working conditions Poor remunerations Unplanned journey Documentation Accommodation
Post-migration	Social Documentation Accommodation Xenophobia Institutional Funding ICT support Academic support Survival strategies Part-time jobs Securing cheap but unsafe accommodation
Future progression	Mentor Post doctorate Lecturer Barriers to progression

Judith has narrated how her biography, pre-migratory, post-migratory and the future progression intentions combine to shape her career trajectory. She has fleshed out how her personal life has played a role, for example, as a married woman she feels having children and a husband has impacted on her career and she ended up finishing her PhD in six years although she was doing it on full-time basis.

Political instability and violence back home had made her embark on an unprepared journey to South Africa. As any country facing political instability, the whole system was disturbed starting with poor working conditions where it was impossible to predetermine how your day would turn out. This had also created a situation whereby workers were poorly remunerated and everyone lived in fear.

Upon arrival in South Africa, Judith was faced with new kinds of challenges which were to do with documentation, accommodation and xenophobia. They had denied her study leave

back home so the only option left was to apply for refugee status in South Africa. Although it took time to get the refugee status, she eventually got it. Accommodation was a problem when she arrived but fortunately she had a small apartment which she shared with her husband. Wherever she was, she felt unsafe because of xenophobia and violence in South Africa.

After a long struggle to get the refugee status she got accepted at Edu-care University where her husband was also enrolled as a PhD student. There she also faced a new set of challenges, namely lack of funding, academic support and lack of social support. However, although that was the case, Judith managed to finish her PhD even though she felt it took long. She has recently been called to an interview for a part-time job, however, she feels that it is very difficult to get employment in South Africa and that will impact on her future prospects of becoming a mentor, doing post-doctoral studies and becoming a university lecturer. She feels her status and the kind of documentation she has have a huge impact on her future. Moreover, the misalignment of policy and practice in the host nation has become a cause for concern for Judith.

8.6.1 How have the pre-migratory and post-migration experiences and future intentions impacted on Judith's present educational experiences?

For Judith, back home both the education system and the economy were destroyed, so she knew there was no hope for her career. Upon arrival to South Africa, she was faced with a different kind of curriculum in her postgraduate studies. She was expected to actively use technology in both communication and learning. She was also expected to actively participate in her learning by presenting research at conferences and talking about her writing. Compared with education back home, this was all new to her, yet in the host nation, no bridging courses were offered for students like her. Despite this, Judith had to devise means of making things work. Like Tanya, she would spend a lot of time self-teaching in the lab and seeking advice from her colleagues.

Her other major challenge was funding. Considering her background, she was not strong financially. As a result, she would do part-time lecturing which took a lot of her time and eventually her personal work could not be done in time.

Traditional gender roles as a married woman affected her studies and work. On top of her university work she would have to do all the house hold chores at home without any help from the husband yet they were both PhD students. She felt these wifely duties had taken a lot of her study time.

The next chapter is a cross case analysis of the four refugee students' stories.

CHAPTER 9: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS: MOVING TOWARDS AN EMERGING ANALYTICAL MODEL OF REFUGEE STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I draw on the themes that are emerging and that cut across all the participants' narratives in terms of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression. I deployed a thematic analysis for further understanding of the biographical narratives of the refugee students in higher education at a South African university. Whilst the previous four chapters have dealt with the narrative analysis and have re-storied individual narratives, the chapters have performed their role of understanding the biographical trajectories of individuals. Moreover, re-storying in the first instance has focused on understanding the particulars of an individual's account rather than looking at commonalities across individual cases. The previous chapters of analysis have indeed helped me to understand "the complexity of unique individual" experiences (Elliot, 2005 p. 119) and thematic analysis would help the readers to understand the commonalities and differences across individual cases.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to bring together the ideas running through the individual cases as presented in the previous four chapters. These four previous chapters were set to discover the experiences of refugees prior to migration, post-migratory and their future progression intentions and how they come together to shape each individual within Educare University. In this chapter, I discuss the general emerging themes across the participants in the three phases of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions. I then moved on to discuss the recurrent themes across the three phases and this has become my major contribution to the study. I argue that understanding both recurrent and general themes is key towards gaining a comprehensive picture of refugee students' experiences in higher education. I concluded the chapter by discussing what has emerged as strategies universities and governments should deploy in order to improve refugee students' experiences.

9.2 Emerging general themes

The evidence seems to suggest that there are five critical elements that are closely associated with the pre-migratory experience of refugee students. These fall in the broad theme of push and pull factors. They are political instability and violence, disrupted education systems, dysfunctional economy and unplanned, desperate and dangerous journeys. For post-migratory

experiences, the key subthemes are documentation, accommodation, securing jobs, misalignment of policy and practice, xenophobia and crime, funding, academic support discrimination and gender based challenges. The themes for post-migration are further divided into two sub-categories namely institutional level (funding, academic support) and national level (securing jobs, xenophobia and crime). I have also discovered that the three subthemes, namely misalignment of policy and practice, documentation, accommodation and discrimination have an impact on both institutional and country level challenges. For the future progression, the key ideas emerging are academic advancement, building helpful research institutions, creating job opportunities and rebuilding the countries. Although each of these is important in their own ways, I was also intrigued to find out that there are some themes that appear to be sustained right across the three phases of the experiences of the refugee students. These themes are fear, dreams and resilience. The recurring themes will be discussed at a later stage. The general findings are therefore illustrated and shown in Figure 9.

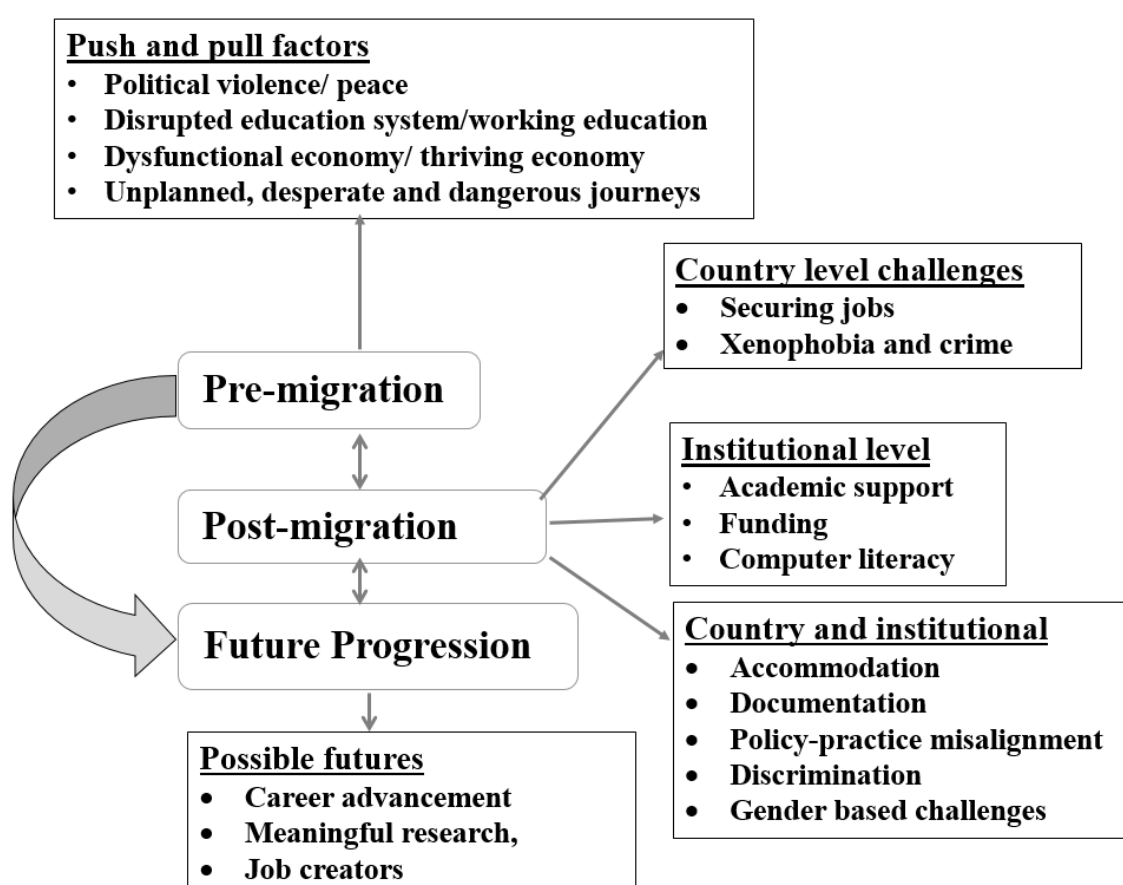


Figure 9 - Emerging themes

Although many narrative researchers view thematic analysis as reductive in nature (e.g. Elliot, 2005; Floyd, 2012), I have chosen to further analyse my findings using this method in order to go beyond the telling of the stories in narrative analysis and tried to explore the commonalities and differences, bringing the individuals together as well as understand how the themes relate to extant literature that demonstrates the wider society in which the participants have lived, worked and studied. As a result, in this second phase of data analysis, I deployed the four narratives as the starting point for identifying commonalities and differences across the participants. Moreover, I have connected this phase of my work to extant literature. The chapter has been structured around the three broad areas that I have identified from the refugee students' stories and I have five major themes that I grouped under the following three broad phases which represent the:

- Pre-migration
- Post-migration
- Future progression

These broad thematic phases do, to an extent, provide a common pattern that resonates and applies to all refugee students in higher education. However, within these broad phases there are fine but specific and important distinctions that must be understood through each narrative and this allows a deepened understanding of the lived experiences of each refugee student through this cross-case analysis. The themes emerging from this study have been explored through the analysis of each of the three broad areas that the narrative analysis data has revealed and had impacted on each refugee student to varying degrees. This has then helped in determining the emerging theory, thus answering the key questions underpinning this study and providing the basis for my thesis and conclusion in chapter ten.

9.2.1 Pre-migration - Fear at home

This key section explores each of the refugee students' lived experiences prior to migration. The findings have indicated that the reason for fleeing their countries had to do with fear due to instability in their countries. Despite the challenges, refugee students remained focused for a while until the fear of death gripped them. They had to think of pursuing their dreams elsewhere. The category has covered their education, work life back home, reasons for fleeing and choice of the host nation. Their planning and the process of migration are also discussed under experiences prior to migration. The broad category of pre-migration is a key

feature in that some of the experiences back home and during migration have impacted in a significant way on their experiences of navigating higher education in the host nation. However, as noted by Dryden-Peterson (2015) the growing body of scholarship on refugee students has not explored the aspect of pre-migration experiences in depth. Her argument has made me understand that the past always has an impact on the present, thus I saw it necessary to understand the pre-migratory experiences of refugee students that have shaped their present into the future.

Each of the refugee students revealed detailed stories of their experiences prior to migration, which they think had a huge impact on what they do now. As they revealed these experiences, in most cases, they would show anger and in other instances they would laugh or shed tears as they graphically presented their stories from back home. The experiences indeed showed the myriad of events that shaped and some happen to be shaping their lives still. The refugee students' experiences of pre-migration are going to be discussed under the broad theme of push and pull factors. The push factors were discussed in the following four subthemes: political instability and violence; disrupted education system; dysfunctional economy; and unplanned, desperate and dangerous journeys. The pull factors were discussed under the following subtheme which I posed as a question: why did the refugee students choose to come to South Africa?

9.3 Push factors

9.3.1 Political instability and violence

There are many economic, social, political and physical reasons as to why the participants of this study fled their countries, and in this section these have been classified into push and pull factors. Similarly, the extant literature has also indicated many economic, social and physical reasons that have contributed in pushing refugees out of their countries, however the evidence lacks depth (for example, Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Kavuro, 2013; Felix, 2016; Maringe et al., 2017). The push factors are those associated with the refugee students' home countries and evidence for all the participants has shown the major pull factors to be political instability, violence, disruption of the education system, and shattered economy. Although this was experienced by all the participants in the study, the factors impact on each refugee in a very unique way. Political instability and violence were major contributors to migration for all the participants and it also contributed towards crippling both the education system and the economy. There were killings in all the cases. In the case of Tanya, violence was orchestrated

by the rebels, whilst for Judith, Dominique and Olivier, it was the ruling parties who feared to lose power to the opposition parties. Moreover, for Olivier, Tanya and Dominique the political violence was directly experienced. Olivier was once imprisoned and beaten for not supporting the ruling party. Tanya had spent many days and nights in the bush hiding from the rebels, whereas Dominique had to spend weeks hiding because he was head hunted by the ruling political party.

Many scholars in the general field of migration have advanced diverse circumstances that coerce people to migrate. For example, Maringe (2016) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2010) have attempted to understand the push factors around international students in higher education. Although there is not much literature on refugee students' push factors, Bailey and İnanç (2018) in their research in Malaysia, have attempted to understand the push factors through narrating refugee stories in higher education. Some of the push factors range from forced labour to being accused of associating with the rebel groups. Mathe (2018) in her doctoral thesis, explored the reasons behind the continuous inflow of unaccompanied migrant children into South Africa. This included running away from poverty and death as they witnessed their close relatives being killed. An understanding of an array of factors contributing to refugee migration is crucial for this study.

Whilst refugee students in this study have talked about a variety of reasons why they were pushed out of the country, civil war and violence are major contributors to the fleeing of this group of people. Because of the destruction of the country which came by civil wars, there was also a rise in other forms of ills, such as lack of basic services and lack of protection of people and property. Basic services that include education, economy, transport and hospital infrastructure were disrupted. Some services have been discussed below to show the extent of the damage.

9.3.2 Disrupted education system

From all the four stories, I have discovered that all the participants experienced significantly interrupted schooling. It was worse with Tanya and Olivier who experienced this starting from primary education through to higher education. Kavuro (2013) has argued that developing countries' educational systems, in particular, suffer negative effects from violent conflicts. Firstly, because of political conflict and fear, the number of teachers and students able to attend school decreased (Kavuro, 2013). This is true for Olivier and Tanya whose

school leaving examinations were deferred to the following year. They also both confessed how at one point, they repeated grades because they were always hiding or running away from political violence. Second, the quality of teacher training is affected because of infrastructural challenges within the country and brain-drain (Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017). Dominique bemoaned how he longed to further his studies but he could not because they lacked professors and lecturers in the universities back home, because they also had fled from political violence to work in other countries.

Research has, however, indicated that increasing education levels in countries at all levels reduces conflict and fosters peace (Sidhu et al., 2011). As, a result, if a country does not have a working education system it has lost on one of its broader economic development agenda. Judith, who wanted to pursue education on a part-time basis whilst also working, could not because the universities had run short of lecturers. Olivier had to pursue further education in a neighbouring country on a part-time basis and would travel to the neighbouring country every weekend to attend classes. That was something which was not easy to do but he was determined to get the degree in order to improve his life.

The experiences of these refugees indicated that they had faced the challenges of educational access from back home.

9.3.3 Dysfunctional economy

Political violence has also significantly contributed to the dysfunctional economy in the home countries of the four participants. Brown and Stewart (2015) argued that civil wars and violence continue to be crippling features in terms of the economy. They further argued that although the conflicts could be results of politics, ethnicity and religious difference, “these conflicts generally have an economic basis” (Brown and Stewart, 2015 p. 1). Violent conflict has always been listed as the major cause of underdevelopment (Sobantu & Warria, 2013). However, it is also argued that underdevelopment is a major cause of conflict and that leads to a vicious cycle where the two feed each other, (Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013).

The challenge has manifested through my participants. Tanya did not get a job after completing her first degree back home because of the economic situation. She did not get employed because there were no salaries. Vacancies for jobs were there but they could not remunerate the workers. All the participants complained about the meagre remunerations

back home. Judith complained that the salary was meagre to the extent that if she converted her salary to South African rand, it would give her five rand. At times they would work for the whole month and did not get paid. In the same vein, Olivier commented that a security guard in South Africa is paid better than a teacher in his home country. Besides the political violence, the dysfunctional economy and the disrupted education system have also contributed to the participants' shattered hopes in their own countries and decisions to flee their countries. Even if the countries had huge challenges with their economies, they would not create chances for citizens to go and look for greener pastures. This manifests through Judith who applied for study leave which she was denied, hence the decision to flee. This as a result indicated that there are quite a number of reasons that push refugees out of their countries. Political violence and instability have proven to be the major reason for leaving. This has resonated with the literature in the field which stipulates, though in a narrow sense, how significant and in most cases, violence has given a final push to flee (Dryden-Peterson, 2016; McBrien, 2005).

9.3.4 Desperate and dangerous journeys to South Africa

Evidence revealed that there was no real planning done by the four refugees. Very quick decisions were made. In leaving, they were involved in some kind of social ill such as bribery. The extent of not planning varies in degrees depending on the individuals and their circumstances. For example, Dominique, in trying to fast track his departure, was involved in bribery with the Home Affairs in his country to change his name because he was desperate and did not have the time to do it in what might be considered to be the correct way. That also applies to Olivier who bribed the police officers and the smugglers throughout his journey because he did not have correct documents.

Evidence had also shown that their abrupt plans were rushed by mixture of fears, desperation, uncertainty, hopes and ambitions (Idemudia, Williams, & Wyatt, 2013; McBrien, 2005). Whilst the other participants, Dominique and Tanya, reported to have flown to South Africa, it was not easy to raise the airfare. In planning for the flight Dominique had to use his month's salary, whilst Tanya had to wait for the aunt to raise money for her. This means these people, upon arrival, did not have money for basic needs for survival. Judith had to use a bus from her country, which shares the same border with South Africa spent a day to get in South Africa. As for Olivier, though we could have expected him to fly, he could not even raise money for an air ticket so he had to travel by road to South Africa, a journey he

described as cumbersome, dangerous and inhumane. Olivier is the only participant who experienced a very long and torturous journey. As discussed, the refugee students faced serious challenges prior to migration and during migration. The next section discusses why the refugees, in their hurried planning, chose South Africa

9.4 Pull factors

9.4.1 Why did the refugee students choose to come to South Africa?

The four participants talked about a range of factors that had an influence on their decision to come to South Africa. The two prevalent reasons that enticed them to opt for South Africa are mainly to do with seeking employment and furthering education. They all talked about how South Africa is economically stable with attractive teaching and research infrastructure for furthering their education.

Mazzarol and Soutar (2001) discovered that many people, including refugees, choose certain countries because they have prestigious universities and attractive job markets. However, Mathe (2018) has argued that under the worst circumstances, it might be very difficult for people to make choices, so he concluded that refugee students have significantly limited choices compared to other migrants, because of the circumstances under which these choices were made. This is revealed through Olivier and Dominique who had a French background. Their ultimate goal was to run away and get as far away as possible from political violence and where their countries of origin had no links with the host nations' government. For example, Dominique had Europe as his first choice but realised the borders were impenetrable, especially for refugees. He knew he would need a great deal of time to plan and prepare, yet that was not possible. As a result, the quick choice with immediate and positive results was South Africa, which he thought to have porous borders and chances of furthering education and job opportunities.

This helps us to understand how these participants make choices within a very limited field of options. In line with this, Dryden-Peterson (2015) has argued that their choices are limited by finances, visas and routes used by human smugglers. Zeus (2011) has also argued that refugee students' movement is more chance than choice. This is so because decisions are rushed. In all cases decisions about where to go and why are heavily influenced by others (Chen and Zimitat, 2006). Whilst for Tanya it was the aunt who initiated the movement, for Judith it was partly influenced by the husband. For Olivier and Dominique, family friends

played a crucial role in initiating their movement. This has been supported by Zeus (2011) who argued that knowledge for potential destination countries for refugees is usually limited, therefore pull factors are heavily determined by the presence of social and family networks in the destination country.

This study seems to concur with the opinion made by Zeus (2011) and further argued that it's not simply about searching for greener pastures but more to do with refuge and protection. Tanya and Judith had clearly indicated that they had no intention to leave their countries but due to threat of life in their countries, they came to South Africa, based on the perception that it is peaceful and all of them already had relatives and family friends in the host nation. Upon arrival they felt they had escaped all their troubles only to discover that they were faced with new kinds of challenges. For some, the challenges in the host nations were more or less similar to those they experienced at home, but for others the challenges were even worse.

9.5 Post-migration: Fear away

In this category, issues related to the experiences of post-migration were discussed. My findings have indicated that in this category, there are three major themes which emerged and in which the participants' experiences are discussed. As illustrated in Figure 9, the following are the broad themes in post-migration:

- Country level experiences
- Institution level experiences
- Country and institution level experiences

Each broad theme has its own subthemes; the subthemes for the first category are: securing jobs; xenophobia and crime. In the first broad theme, the participants talked about the issues that form their experiences at country level.

The second broad theme has four subthemes namely: language proficiency; academic writing and learning styles; funding; computer literacy. This is where the participants discussed the matters which shaped their experiences within the institution.

The third broad theme has combined the two categories and has been named as the country and institutional level experiences. Under this, the four following subthemes are discussed:

accommodation; documentation; policy-practice misalignment; discrimination. The four subthemes have affected the participants at both country and institutional levels.

The refugee students left their countries for South Africa, with the hope that they would pursue education and improve their economic conditions, only to find themselves in traumatic situations. They always live in fear because it seems they are reliving the experiences prior to migration, though at this stage the experiences of fear are presented in different forms. As planned prior to migration, some of them could not pursue the dreams they had. Instead, they had to build new dreams and determine to pursue them despite the challenges. Moreover, in some of the circumstances, the participants felt that although the situation back home was bad, being in the host nation was worse, hence ‘from the frying pan into the fire.’ In these situations, they would fall, remain ensnared for a certain period, pick themselves up, re-strategise and come up with new dreams.

9.6 Country and institutional level experiences

9.6.1 Documentation: State of in-betweenness

The experiences of seeking and applying for documentation for the participants in this study revealed the essence of people in the state of in-betweenness. They are caught between the two stages of which they have neither the option to go back nor the option to access support in their host nation. Manjikian (2010) referred to the period as the one of being in-between and that is when the refugees were ensnared and could not do anything because they did not have the necessary documentation to be legally in the host nation. Without documentation, none of them could access any kind of basic support from the host nation. In their host nation, the four participants reported having faced challenges in varying degrees of acquiring the documentation of refugee status. At this stage, they had a new kind of fear of whether their applications for refugee status would be accepted or rejected.

The application and waiting periods seemed to have been very long, difficult and painful experiences. Although research has indicated that the process is slowed down by officials’ quests to verify legitimate from false claims, this has imposed hard times on refugees (Mathe, 2018).

Because of adversity, we expected the participants of this study to get stuck and eventually do nothing during this waiting period. Ebersohn (2012) argued that adversity leads to

maladaptive behaviours such as hopelessness, passivity and distress. In contrary, the refugees in this study defied the odds by taking action for survival. For example, Olivier and Dominique worked as security guards whilst awaiting the outcome of their statuses. Although the companies they worked for were not registered, it was risky but the little money they got helped them to survive during that period. To add to the little they earned, they also worked as gardeners. Under normal circumstances we would not expect people who were once of high social standing to be prepared to do menial tasks and again, under such circumstances, we also would expect people to run out of ideas, but that did not happen with my participants, hence defying the odds.

None of the participants took less than a year to get refugee status, with Olivier's period being the longest with no employment. However, even if the government showed no concern during this period of in-betweenness, the participants had forged their survival (Manjikian 2010). The participants were very lucky to have family friends to share challenges and stay with. Some scholars have argued that in such challenging times, relationships are key to resilience (Luther, 2006; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 2000). In her research about teachers' resilience, Ebersöhn (2012) came up with a model called the Relationship Resourced Resilience (RRR model) where she postulated that "relations and relatedness are pivotal to resilience" (p. 37). Thus, getting social support to her is a positive adaptation to challenges (Ebersöhn, 2014). In the case of Olivier, he was later taken in by a non-governmental refugee camp. Again, I assume that being together with other refugees enabled the "flocking...[as an] adaptive response to stressors" (Ebersöhn, 2012 p. 36).

Whilst documentation is the basis for refugees to get accepted and to get support, they often struggle to get it and end up spending a lot of time neither furthering their education nor working in their fields of expertise (Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013). However, when the refugee students in this study eventually got their documentation it was still not easy to get accepted in the job sectors and the universities because of a variety of challenges that were mainly to do with, for example, the officials failing to recognise the refugee document.

For some, upon receiving the refugee certificate, they discovered it was not the only document needed to get accepted in universities. For example, Dominique could not get accepted the first time at Educare University because they needed proof of English proficiency, which he could not produce. Dominique was from a French-speaking country

and it was not possible for him to get one. Whilst in such scenarios, some universities in countries outside Africa offer a year course of learning English to international and refugee students after they have admitted them, in Africa, especially South Africa, there is no such support for refugee students (Kavuro, 2013; McBrien, 2005; Sobantu & Warria, 2013;). There is also inconsistency in terms of what is required for one to be admitted to universities in South Africa. This is so because whilst Dominique was asked to submit proof of English proficiency, others were never asked for that. Most probably it was because some could speak fluently during the interviews indicating their competency in English and others started by attending private institutions in the host nation before coming to Educare University and the certificates from there were proof enough of English proficiency. This was a different scenario with Dominique. However, whether proof of English proficiency was a pre-requisite or not, they all faced challenges when it came to academic writing.

The other new challenge faced when they got accepted was to do with the freedom of traveling. For example, Dominique lamented how he had missed international conferences because some countries, especially in the west, do not like refugees to travel to their countries, fearing that they might choose not to return to their countries of first asylum.

9.6.2 Accommodation: Living on the margins of society

The four participants have indicated that accommodation is a major challenge in the host nation. Finding accommodation was basic and urgent for them and they ended up living in overcrowded and substandard houses, due to their financial standing (Beer & Foley, 2003) hence living on the margins of society. The four participants have reported that they lived in areas where there was high crime and xenophobia or in small apartments that were not conducive for studies. For Dominique, the area he stayed in was small and at the same time, it was in a high crime area. The residential area was characterised by unemployment, poverty and safety issues. Such suburbs were only attractive to the refugees because of affordability and the proximity to the universities and other basic service agencies, otherwise the residential areas were very poor in quality (Carter & Osborne, 2009). Carter and Osborne (2009 p. 309) have argued that refugees settle in “older, inner city neighbourhoods characterized by urban decline.” Whilst in other countries refugees are accommodated in refugee camps (Détourbe & Goastellec, 2018), South Africa is one of the countries where there are no refugee camps save for a few which non-governmental organisations like churches have tried to establish (Kavuro, 2013, Maringe et al., 2017). Hulchanski (2000)

have argued that acquiring proper accommodation for refugees is difficult because of discrimination based on social status imposed by the landlords. The findings of this study have also revealed that this discrimination is exacerbated when one has not yet acquired legal documentation to be in South Africa (Kavuro, 2013).

9.6.3 Policy-practice disjunctures: misrecognition of refugee students

The participants in this study have indicated their disappointments after they have learnt how the practices on the ground misaligned with both the national and international policies. As academics, they had read and heard about refugee policies in South Africa and that is why Dominique, Olivier and Tanya made rush decisions to travel from far away countries to come to South Africa with the hope to further their education in a country which they thought recognised and supported people of their nature. As argued in different refugee policies, the major aim of refugee education policies involve access to quality education, build social belonging and participate in economic development (Brewer, 2016; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Kavuro, 2013; Mendenhall, Russell, & Bruckner, 2017). In contrast, Maringe et al. (2017) have argued that there is a serious misalignment between policy provisions and policy implementation in the issues around rights and privileges of refugees in higher education and refugees in general.

The absence of implementation of the policy has been seen to be exacerbating the traumatic experiences of refugee students in the host nation especially if they hope to better themselves and rebuilding their nations is shattered, withheld or delayed (Maringe et al., 2017). Moreover, it creates inherent tensions and contradictions in the process of improving oneself (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). Participants in this study faced a web of challenges both at country level and at institutional level that come together and act as barriers to the participants' quest for furthering their education (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). The participants have further argued that the only policy that was emphasised was the one that favoured native students in terms of academic support, accommodation and funding (Kavuro, 2013).

What exacerbates their disappointment is the fact that Educare University did not even recognise them as a unique group; instead they are grouped together with international students. Olivier in his narrative has indicated that international students have at least a government to support them back home, whereas refugee students are stateless beings who

were forced to leave their countries. In the same vein, Dominique bemoaned how he was ignored by two prominent governmental associations in the host nation which claimed to cater for the welfare of refugees. Judith also argued that both the government and Educare University seem not to be aware of how they came to be in South Africa as refugees. Tanya also thought that both the government and Educare University are quite aware of the refugee issue because of the grand policies about refugee students, however, they are not willing to implement the policies (Kavuro, 2013). Dominique had not much to comment on the issue but only said: *The government, the University just don't care about us*. The following section discusses the refugees' experiences associated with the universities in South Africa.

9.6.4 Xenophobia and discrimination

Whilst it can be very difficult to pinpoint the differences between the two terms from the stories, I have found out that xenophobia has caused discrimination. In this study xenophobia and discrimination have proved to be prevalent issues both inside and outside the universities. Whilst within Educare University, xenophobia is not openly displayed because of the University policies against it, however, it manifests itself covertly, verbally and through actions. For example, Dominique was disappointed when he wanted to access medical facilities within the University and when the officials realised that he had a refugee identification, the process was deliberately delayed, prolonging his period away from his studies. They would speak in a local language to him knowing full well that he could not understand.

Another example which clearly showed discrimination is when Tanya applied for a student part-time job which was internally advertised within the University. The eligibility criteria did not specify the South African citizen's criterion but Tanya was informed that she did not get the job because she was a non-South African. All the participants in the study have discussed how they lack opportunities specifically meant for them. They clearly told me that the opportunities available are the ones where they compete with all other privileged students and the competition was always stiff for them. The issue of discrimination against international and refugee students has begun to emerge in literature in South African education system (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017) and in global research (Dryden-Peterson, 2016, 2017; Felix, 2016; Pinson & Arnot, 2010).

Whilst all concurred that xenophobia and discrimination within the University are at least bearable, they witnessed it overtly outside the universities. Although none of them had reported direct attacks from outside, they have witnessed their countrymen and friends being assaulted and killed. The issue of xenophobia in South Africa is well documented (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015; Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017; Sobantu & Warria, 2013). Foreign nationals, including refugees, are attacked and killed by South Africans. Chinomona and Maziriri (2015 p. 24) have argued that:

The effects of xenophobia include injury to people, loss of property, death, displacement of victims, loss of jobs, women being raped, political instability, and violation of innocent people, children's rights being abused, businesses being destroyed and the country's image being tarnished.

A major reason, among others, is the perception that the foreigners are taking away all the jobs (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015). This might not be true because foreigners in South Africa get employed on the basis that there is no South African with such qualifications. As a result, Chinomona (2016, p. 26) argued that “foreigners including refugees do not necessarily steal the jobs but provide valuable services by filling in the voids in the country.”

Gender based challenges

Another kind of challenge which is common, particularly with a married female participant, is based on traditional gender roles. This has been revealed by Judith, who together with her husband, was studying for her doctoral degree, but when she was expected to cook and wash and he would not help her carry out these duties. That contributed to Judith taking longer to finish her masters' research report. Chiramba (2016) has argued that African societies are patriarchal by nature and women would always be expected to perform all the chores traditionally meant for women and it appears very normal, even when men sit back and do not help them.

However, another challenge came from a female who was unmarried and feel vulnerable thinking with her marital status that she could easily get victimised by some men. One point she expressed is that if she seeks support from men in her University and around her social circle she thinks she is most likely to be sexually harassed. As a result her support network is limited because she feels insecure sharing her challenges with men. Gordon and Collin

(2013) argued that gender based violence is common in South Africa and fear of falling victims greatly impedes women's progress.

9.7 Institutional level challenges

In this section, I have identified and indicated two categories associated with the participants, namely academic support and funding. These emerged as challenges refugees face within their institutions. Under academic support, they discussed three subthemes which include language proficiency, academic writing and computer literacy. To add to the list, only one of the participants talked about discrimination, especially when one wanted to access University facilities. Similarly, Maringe et al. (2017) have dealt with the issue of language instruction and how refugees face challenges in adjusting to the language. This had made them adjust less well to the institutional environments (ibid). In the second category, all the participants in this study complained about how it was hard for them to access funding to continue with their education. This challenge is also prominent in both national (Kavuro, 2013; Sobantu & Warria, 2013) and international literature (Felix, 2016; Pinson & Arnot, 2010).

9.7.1 Language proficiency

Findings of this study have shown English proficiency as a basic requirement for those who wanted to secure study vacancies, especially at Educare University. However, literature has indicated that a number of refugees come to South Africa from the countries whose official languages are not English (Kavuro, 2013; Maringe et al., 2017; Mathe, 2018). In like manner, two of my participants, Dominique and Olivier, came from a French background and it was difficult to integrate into the institutions. For Dominique, it was a serious challenge when he wanted to apply to do postgraduate studies at Educare. For Olivier getting accepted at Educare was not an issue because he already had a degree from one of the private institutions in South Africa. They could not accept Dominique because he had no proof that he could learn in English. Although some had confirmed their acceptance even without English proficiency, it remained a challenge because it was very difficult to participate in workshops and tutorials and it was even harder to follow the discussions.

Other public universities, for example, those in the United States enrol such students and offer language courses for a year before they enrol them into the mainstream (McBrien, 2005; Woods, 2009). However, this has proved to be a different case with Educare and South

African universities in general, as my participants indicated having spent more than one year trying to learn English in some private and semi-private institutions before they got accepted at Educare and other public universities they went to (Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Maringe et al., 2017). When Dominique later got accepted at Educare he was surprised that there is a university-sponsored language school which equips students with language and linguistic competencies, but unfortunately, they only offer this resource to students who take courses in the languages division.

9.7.2 Academic writing and learning styles

The participants in the study bemoaned how it was very difficult to study the articles with understanding and writing meaningful essays. Tanya thinks although she was from a country with English as a formal and language for instruction, content and pedagogy was completely different in the two countries. Schröder, Grüttner, and Berg (2019) have argued that refugee students get enrolled in the host nation universities despite the lack of knowledge about the curricula.

Tanya, like Judith, when comparing education back home with that of the host nation, concluded that at home the teaching and learning styles were rigid. All the participants put an emphasis on their challenges with essay and academic writing; back home it was mostly rote learning with an emphasis on memorising for examinations. When she joined the first university in South Africa, she had serious problems in presenting her work because back home they were never taught public speaking. Moreover, it was difficult for her to research and come up with something meaningful because she had never done that before. This resonates with Earnest et al. (2010) findings of refugee students' challenges in Australia which confirmed that refugee students find it difficult to write academic essays because they had no background in essay writing. The participants of this study concurred that they were never taught to do that at the universities but only acquired the skills through experience and practice. Whilst discovery learning may be good, the method is only worthwhile for those who have the ability to persevere and stay focused to the end goal, despite the challenges. Although there was a writing centre within Educare University, they think it was not sufficiently equipping them with the skills needed for academic writing so they would seek support elsewhere outside the University.

9.7.3 Computer literacy

The refugee students had difficulties in using the internet to do research, create and check their emails. The participants explained that back home they did not use computers for academic purposes so using the computer for research and communication with lecturers was overwhelming, to begin with. For Earnest et al. (2010) the issue of navigating the web for their participants remained a challenge such that it became a major barrier in their progress. In this case, they also had to find the means to gain basic skills. To defy the odds, Tanya started with a course in ICT when back home she had never learnt to use a computer. She was determined to teach herself and pass the course, which she did.

All the participants undertook self-teaching in order to catch up with others. From the way the participants spoke, they seem to have a lot of things to learn to do when compared to international and native students and they get overwhelmed with everything. Kanno and Varghese (2010) have argued that refugee students have complex experiences which hinder them in progressing as they wish to. They went further and said universities provide a generic kind of support which does not address the specific needs of refugee students.

9.7.4 Funding

The issue of funding is a salient feature very common across all four individuals, though in varying degrees. Whilst the participants expressed their appreciation that the University offers a bursary, albeit on a competitive basis, the funding is just sufficient for tuition fees. Those who had families like Judith, Olivier and Dominique are greatly affected and they need to look for jobs in order to supplement the bursary money for their and the family upkeep. It was worse for Dominique because he did not get enough part-time work to the extent that he dropped out of the University. In their quest to fend for the family, they struggle to strike a balance between family, work and study time.

Bailey and İnanç (2018) argued that we only come to know of the challenges of those who have attempted to join the universities, and there might be a lot who have never attempted to come to study, due to their financial standing and the lack of funding within the universities. To those who are already in the system, they study and live in fear because they are faced with a dangerous and uncertain future, not aware where life would take them next (Chiramba & Maringe, 2020).

9.8 Future progression intensions: Aspirations beyond the hurdles

In this broad category, there is one broad theme, namely possible futures. Under this theme there are two subthemes which are:

1. Career advancement and job creation
2. Meaningful research and rebuilding nations

Despite the challenges on their journey, refugee students have indicated what they hope to attain and most of the time they tend to ignore the challenges that surround them now.

9.8.1 Career advancement and job creation

The participants' most pressing aspiration, for now, is to complete their degrees and progress either to doctorate or finish the doctorate and reach for full professorship. However, all of them had shown that if they remain in the host nation after the completion of their degrees and given the circumstances in the host nation, they would take any job that comes their way, be it research, or lectureship. However, they all live in fear that they would not be in positions to secure jobs because of the policies that favour South African citizens only. As a result, they are working towards gaining entrepreneurial skills to place them in positions to be self-employed, at the same time creating jobs for others. This sentiment is strongly brought out by both Tanya and Dominique who have argued that they really want to change the narrative of how people view them.

9.8.2 Meaningful research and rebuilding nations

Some of the participants think that if they remain in South Africa, they will aspire to establish colleges that would cater especially for the people of the same background as theirs. The sentiments are echoed by Tanya who wished to build institutions which cater for the underprivileged through writing meaningful research which would help in solving people's problems. Judith wishes to create a laboratory which caters for the people specifically like her so that they would not face the same problems as she faced. This, according to them, may happen if they actively get involved in seeking sponsorship. However, they still fear that it may be impossible to get funds to work on their dreams. What also was of interest, was to note that all the participants hope to go back home in the future. For example, Dominique thought that his degree in political science would be a powerful tool which he will use to rebuild his country which is currently politically unstable. This section has further advanced the notion that refugees should not be seen as burdens to their host nations but rather should

be seen as people who aspire to develop both the host nations and their countries of origin (Bailey & İnanç, 2018; Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Felix, 2016).

9.9 Recurring themes across the three categories: Emerging framework

The framework that follows emerged after exploring the themes across all three stages of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions. The framework is representative of what has been persistent in the three stages of refugee students' journeys. It has captured the three dominant themes which are recurrent across pre-migration, post-migration and future progression intentions. However, it is important to know from the beginning that the three recurring themes as shown by the framework, are not each exclusive to a single stage but rather overlap across the stages. It is, therefore, a complex process where I discovered that the three themes correspond to each other not in a linear and straight forward manner. Figure 10 shows the themes which are recurrent across the three categories.

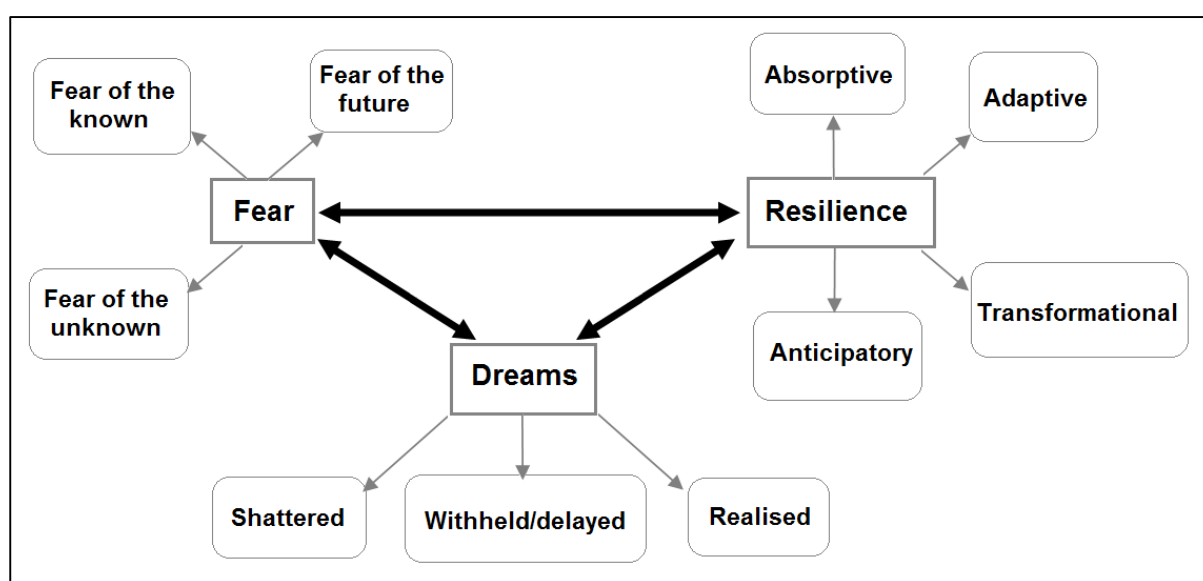


Figure 10 - Recurrent triadic experiences of refugee students

9.9.1 Fear: Finite disappointments

The refugee students in this study bear the feelings of apprehension, disquiet and fretfulness in all three stages of their lives, however, they believed that even if the situation is hopeless, they would persevere. In the pre-migration stage, fear was dominant and they were exposed to violence, home displacement and torture. They had fear of what might happen to them during the violence and knew they also might die having experienced the death of their own relatives. Moreover, they feared that they might not get the education they hoped for because

of the disruptions back home. During their journeys, some were not sure whether they would arrive or not. Thus, fear of the known, unknown and fear of the future is apparent in pre-migration.

In the post-migration stage, they had feared from the beginning whether they would get the documentation required and continue with their education. The kind of accommodation they lived in within the host nations made them wonder each day whether they would see the next day because of xenophobia and crime. Moreover, all the challenges had made them reflect on the future and whether they would make it given the circumstances surrounding them today. Dryden-Peterson (2016) has argued that refugees are likely to suffer psychological problems even after resettling in their host nations. The more one stays in violence, the more that would be recorded as part of living, even in the era of peace. Thus, this violence and fear, coupled with the challenges they face in the host nations, are most likely to affect their success in education (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). This is the stage when strong fear dominated at the expense of their resilience and their dreams. However, the participants remained strong even in the face of adversity.

9.9.2 Dreams: Infinite hopes

Struggles and violence back home made them abort their dreams and thought to pursue instead new dreams in a country perceived to be free of violence (Kavuro, 2013). They had at one time withheld their studies unexpectedly. For example, in the case of Olivier, there was a time when examinations were delayed because of the genocides and Tanya was also delayed in completing a grade because of the rebels who were causing instability in the region. Judith had to leave her job because of political violence and build new dreams of furthering her education in the host nation. Dominique also had to leave his well-paying job in his country because of fear of being kidnapped and killed. This has illustrated that all four participants had dreams to fulfil in their countries, persevered to do so, but eventually, they realised they had to think of new dreams to pursue away from home as their original ones had been shattered.

Although they had built new dreams to pursue in the host nation, they again found it very difficult to follow the dreams. For example, participants had thought of the degrees they wanted to pursue in the host nation but could not follow their passions. For example, Olivier wanted to pursue a banking degree but could not because of the kind of bursary he got.

Another example is Dominique who had to do a different course from the one he dreamed of doing. Upon completion, he wanted to register for the course he always wanted to do but has now deregistered because of funding constraints. His hope now is when he gets the funding he would not pursue his dream degree but would do a higher degree in the previous one.

Hopes to get employed were shattered from the time they arrived until the present, however, their endurance and persistence allow them to achieve some of the things they had hoped for. What struck me is even if their hopes get shattered, they still hope to go back to fulfil the dreams *in the ripeness of the time*, as uttered by one of them.

Whilst most of the literature has attributed trauma as the dominant result for refugee students' experiences (Kavuro; 2013; Maringe et al., 2017; Pinson & Arnot, 2010), this study has discovered fear to be the most appropriate, as it also encompasses, in addition to the actual fear, perceived fear.

9.9.3 Resilience: Survivors not victims

The study has revealed the essence of refugee students who persevered even against the odds. Although the circumstances from pre-migration through future intentions seem to present their lives as victims, they defied the odds. Rather they have presented themselves as survivors throughout the three stages and their refusal to succumb is key to their success (Duckworth et al., 2007). In the first phase, the four participants showed absorptive resilience as they tried to endure the on-going civil wars, conflict, political persecution and general instability back home. Bahadur et al. (2015) argued that in this stage people are stable and passive and try to just get used to the bitter circumstances around them.

Once they discovered the situation was hopeless, they engaged with adaptive resilience. Thus, when the challenges were increasing, the four refugees made spontaneous and genuine efforts to attain their education back home. For instance, Olivier having realised his country's standard of education had dropped, made an effort to study a degree on a part-time basis in a neighbouring country. Tanya had to relocate to stay with her aunt in a different region with the hope that circumstances within schools were still better than her region of birth. However, circumstances remained bad despite the efforts and they reached a point when they realised nothing would materialise if they continued living in their countries. They fled to seek refuge in South Africa with the hope that their circumstances would improve in a different country.

Because they were going to a country they knew nothing about, they were aware, well in advance of the likelihood of the challenges, failure and disappointments but they had chosen to retain infinite hope. This on-going determination should be acknowledged as refuting some assumptions that refugees are passive victims of circumstances; rather they are survivors whose agency in fighting the odds should be admitted (Bailey & İnanç, 2018).

Despite the roadblock at every turn in the pre- and post-migratory experiences, they have refused to accept these finite disappointments in their lives. For example, all of them had endured and later escaped violence in their countries of origin and now they are presented with new kinds of violence in the form of xenophobia and crime. A specific example is Dominique. Back home, he was hunted down with the aim of killing him when he chose not to release the confidential information they wanted, so he had to flee to South Africa where he only realised that he could afford accommodation in high crime suburbs and living in such areas exposed him to crime and xenophobia more often. That is also common with Olivier who escaped violence which was orchestrated by the opposite tribe, only to come to South Africa to experience xenophobia.

The other challenge which recurred is within education. Because of the civil wars back home, the education standards had dropped in terms of teaching and research infrastructure. This also affected the remuneration of the teaching staff to the extent that they decided to look for greener pastures. This had also increased the will of the refugees to leave the country. In their home countries, the refugee students had experienced delays in completing grades in their education. Previously mentioned is the case of Olivier who could not complete the grade because of genocide in his country and Tanya also had to repeat a grade because of so many disruptions in that year. There came a time when they could not contain it anymore, so they left their countries.

They all left their homes with mixed feelings of fear of the unknown about the host nation, at the same time with the anticipation that in the host nation they would improve their lives. Anticipative resilience helped the refugees to be well equipped for the unknown future (Bahadur et al., 2015). Upon arrival in South Africa, they could not secure sufficient funding to further their education so they had to wait for long periods. By the time they got the funding, it was again insufficient to cover upkeep and fees. They engaged in adaptive resilience when they made deliberate efforts to take menial jobs and pursued networking in

order to make ends meet. They fled to South Africa, a country they did not really know anything about, but with determination to face the consequences. Jeans et al. (2017) argued that in the adaptive stage of resilience, people take a flexible and active role, making use of available resources around them.

Despite all the hardships and their preparedness for the worst, refugee students have remained focused. The presence of threat and their positive adaptation has defined their resilience (Ebersöhn, 2014). Moreover, the source of their endurance has been a strong belief in their religion. Believing in God was significant for their determination. It is their faith in the supernatural that had provided support and guidance, distracted them and prevented distress. For all the four participants, their religion was a source of hope and God served as the confidant. As one of them commented, *After God has taken me this far, I can't give up*. To them, every success comes *by God's grace*. They knew that hardships would dog them but they would always hope for the best. Faith in a supernatural power is seen as a source of hope in most research which deals with the underprivileged groups (Maringe et al., 2017; Matlin, 2018; Zeus, 2011). Thus, I have established beyond doubt that spirituality has also contributed as one of the coping mechanisms for the participants.

Their stories indicated how they have carved tunnels of hope through the dark mountains of disappointments. However, the four participants have acknowledged that hardships and disappointments had been stepping stones to think deeply about how to escape from the entrapments. Their lives had revealed a never-say-die attitude. They feel the hardships they face are temporary and to continue with their studies, they ended up doing menial tasks in order to add to the little that they have. Although to a certain extent refugee students maintained their progress, they feel universities should intervene especially with circumstances like delayed or shattered dreams and fear which they do not have the power to control.

9.10 Perceptions about what universities and governments should do to improve their experiences and ensure their future intentions

Whilst figure 10 is an analytical model which has helped us to understand the experiences which were not only recurrent in three phases but were also intrinsic by nature, it also acts as a starting point for universities to closely look at the triad and find ways to promote experiences that are desirable and ameliorate those which are not. The university and the host

nation should therefore find ways to leverage students' resilience, challenge their fear and promote their dreams through specially designed support systems at policy, curriculum and other institutional and national mechanisms which are discussed in-depth in Chapter 10.

Although refugee students in this study have shown resilience as key to their success, Bailey and İnanç (2018) have guarded scholars against assuming that it is only resilience that empowers these individuals to succeed where others cannot. They went on to argue that resilience is necessary but not enough to fight the structural barriers. Refugee students have argued that universities should create a conducive environment because not all of them are resilient. As a result, Hochanadel and Finamore (2015) have argued that “academic environment that also teaches resilience and fosters growth may help learners to persist” (p, 47).

The sentiment that is illustrated by Kavuro (2013) indicates that universities should begin by recognising refugee students as one unique group that has its own unique challenges and needs. The participants have also argued that the policies for refugees should be implemented on the ground. The issues of policy-practice misalignment in refugee studies are well documented in the literature (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Felix, 2016; Kavuro, 2013; Mathe, 2018; Sobantu & Warria, 2013). The participants in this study argued that if South Africa ratified the refugee policies, surely they should devise means to support the group.

In this chapter, I discussed the general themes in each of the three phases of refugee students' experiences. I explored the commonalities and differences across the four cases. In the process, recurrent themes for all refugees across the three stages were discovered and discussed. This appeared to be new knowledge in the field of refugee students and refugees in general. I concluded by discussing strategies the refugee students think the universities and government could deploy to improve their experiences.

The next chapter provides conclusion, recommendations and implications for further research.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

10.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented a thematic analysis and discussion of refugee students' biographical narratives outlining the themes dominating the stories. I have discovered two types of themes dominant in refugee students' lived experiences and these were general themes which are unique in each of the three stages and the recurrent themes, which are present in all the three stages and they all form refugee students' biographical narratives.

In this chapter, I present an interpretation of the results of the study in relation to the research questions and also report on the conclusions and implication of the research. I have revealed that the participants' stories which followed the pre-migratory, post-migratory and future progression phases, worked together in influencing refugee students' experiences in higher education. The three stages have therefore worked as a cornerstone in better understanding refugee students' lived experiences. Most important to realise is how fear, dreams and resilience were dominant themes throughout the three stages. This has to a large extent provided us with a comprehensive picture of the participants' experiences. The study, therefore, proposes a revised model that provides a holistic approach to understanding refugee students' lived experiences in higher education. The model which integrates the two groups of themes, is shown in Figure 11.

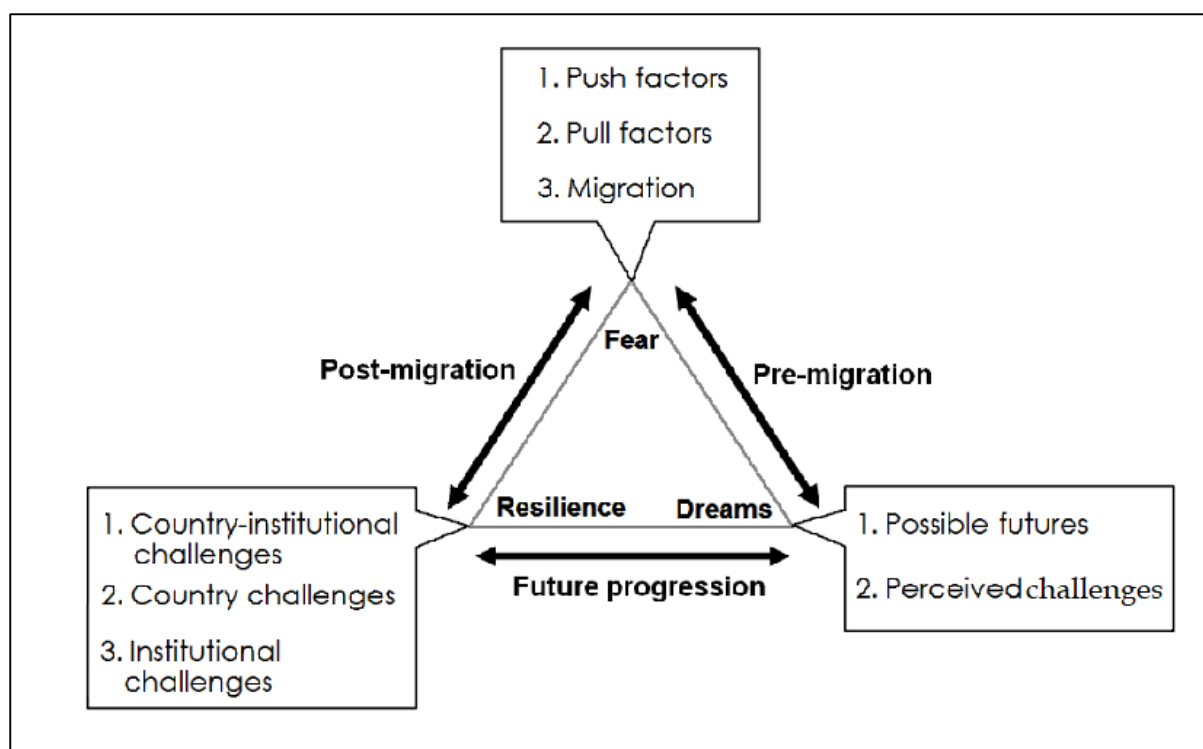


Figure 11 - Exogenous and endogenous dimensions: An integrated model in understanding refugee students' experiences in higher education

As discussed in-depth in the previous chapter, refugee students' experiences in higher education are better defined and understood by the three phases in their lives, namely pre-migratory, post-migratory and future progression. In the three phases, two groups of themes are discussed and I have initially named them the general and the recurring themes. The general themes are those I not only find to be common in extant literature but I also discovered to be visible and having an external impact that can be easily recognised. I have therefore termed them exogenous dimensions of refugee students' lived experiences in higher education. I have also discovered the recurrent themes to be internal and associated with emotions and feelings and have called them endogenous dimensions of refugee students' lived experiences.

As an illustration Figure 11 indicates how I have merged the two kinds of themes. From Figure 11, we learn that there are quite a number of exogenous themes and each is unique to a certain stage of the three-stage journey of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression. On the contrary, the endogenous themes are themes that are often overlooked in extant literature but have become dominant in all the three stages of refugee students' journey of this study and this has become a major theoretical contribution to this current study. The

other fact I have discovered which is often overlooked in the existing literature is that exogenous and endogenous dimensions of refugee students' lived experiences are mutually dependent. In other words, there is a complex interconnection between the external and internal experiences. Putting it differently, every outward experience triggers an inward experience. Therefore, understanding the relationship between the internal states and the external states renders us a comprehensive picture of refugee students' lived experiences in higher education and that would help stakeholders to come up with meaningful interventions.

To summarise, refugee students' challenges in all the three stages as shown in the nine visible or external themes have a huge impact on the invisible and internal themes of fear dreams and resilience. To illustrate, fear became evident when they were faced with death, violence and political instability during pre-migration and continued when they were faced with numerous challenges and uncertainties in post-migration, hence some dreams for the future were withheld and/or shattered. It is their resilience that kept them going and that made them realise some of their dreams. I, therefore, argue for a comprehensive framework, one that not only seeks to understand both the external and internal dimensions but the interrelatedness of these dimensions. I argue that it might be one way which provides us with an in-depth understanding and a comprehensive picture of refugee students' lived experiences.

10.2 Addressing the research questions

The study was underpinned by the following **aim**:

To explore the biographical narratives of refugee students in order to understand better their experiences and contribute more to the knowledge of their circumstances at a selected university in South Africa.

The aim and the objectives were the keynotes that underpin the study and these formed the basis of the research questions listed and discussed below.

At the beginning of this study in chapter 1, I set out to seek answers for the following main research question and three sub-questions:

Main question: How might refugee students' biographical narratives contribute more to the knowledge of their circumstances at a selected university in South Africa?

The following three sub-questions help with answering the overarching research question:

1. What factors hinder refugee students to pursue their studies in higher education at a selected university?

2. How and why do refugee students at a selected university cope in the challenging circumstances?
3. In what ways do refugee students consider universities as facilitating or hindering the attainment of their future goals?

With the aim to address these research questions I did a conceptual and empirical review of literature in chapter 2 and a theoretical review in chapter 3. This covered a review of literature on the issues of refugees and migration in higher education and education in general. This helped me to establish gaps in the literature. The established gaps led me to frame my aim and the research questions above. The answers to the questions were gathered using a narrative inquiry in chapter 4 which utilised two types of interviews, namely the unstructured and semi-structured interviews. From the interviews, I came up with disjointed narratives which I re-storied into chronological biography for each participant. As a result, chapters 5-8 contain biographical narratives of refugee students which follow the chronological order of their three-phased journeys, starting with the biographical information moving to pre-migration and post-migration experiences into the future progression intentions. Chapter 9 performed a thematic analysis to determine the commonalities and differences across the four stories. In this chapter, I focus on providing answers to the research questions and I begin with the first sub-question:

1. What factors hinder refugee students to pursue their studies in higher education at a selected university?

The major barriers for refugee students in this study, as is evident and common from each of the four participants' stories, are located at different points in the three phases of pre-migration and post-migration experiences and their future progression intentions. It is also clear and evident that fear of political violence and instability, a disrupted education system, dysfunctional economy and unplanned migration are themes unique to the pre-migration stage and also contributed as barriers to refugee students accessing higher education in the host nation. The civil wars, political violence and instability coupled with problems in the civil service generated a kind of fear of experiences the four participants knew, hence the decision to embark on an unplanned migration without proper documentation. The migration itself also generated fear because of the uncertainties about fleeing to a country they did not know much about. This was worse with Olivier whose torturous and long journey had made him wonder if he was going to get to his destination. The countries of origin had shattered

their dreams and they had thought of fleeing to a country where they perceived their dreams would be realised. Little did they know that they would be faced with new kinds of challenges. I argue that the kind of experiences in their pre-migration had contributed as the sources of their challenges to their lived experiences in higher education and South Africa in general.

Contrary to what they perceived about the host nation, upon arrival they faced challenges of documentation. A kind of challenge which is linked to the manner in which they left their countries of origin and when not addressed would never allow them to access any other kind of social or institutional support within the host nation. However, even after they eventually got the legal papers to stay in the host nation, they faced challenges at country and institutional levels within the host nation. Fear continued and the kind of fear they had now was of the knowledge that they had failed to realise their dreams in the host nation. Country and institutional level challenges like accommodation, documentation and language barriers acted as major barriers for refugee students' access to higher education. Challenges like xenophobia, crime and lack of employment were presented as major national-level challenges that instilled fear as well as prohibited the participants from improving their lives in the host nation. Challenges persisted and increased even once they were accepted in the host nation's universities. The institutional level challenges such as funding, academic support and computer literacy were major barriers to accessing higher education.

These challenges and fears as manifested in pre-migration and post-migration contribute to the uncertainties of the future. Future progression intentions and uncertainties called for a kind of fear which is imagined. Although refugee students had their future intentions in place: striving to become employable as researchers and lecturers; rebuilding their homes using the knowledge acquired in higher education; become entrepreneurs in the host nations, the kind of challenges and uncertainties they face promised a different kind of future which is scary. Although they live with all the uncertainties, shattered and withheld dreams, they continue to hope for the better.

For this question, I conclude that the challenges across the three phases of pre-migration, post-migration experiences and future progression intentions came together and worked as a barrier for refugee students in navigating higher education in South Africa.

2. How and why do refugee students at a selected university cope in the challenging circumstances?

This question is answered into two parts starting with the how question, and ending with the why question. Whilst the first question has dealt with barriers to pursuing higher education in refugee students, this research question has presented resilience as an enabler to pursuing higher education. Three major dimensions namely absorptive, adaptive and anticipative resilience have shown how they cope in challenging circumstances. Moreover, the answers to this question have challenged the existing research which has only presented refugee students as passive victims. I have argued to say the participants for this study are survivors who persevered and were determined to pursue and succeed despite the odds.

How question: What enabled the four participants to pursue and continue with higher education is how they deployed their coping mechanisms. Throughout the three phases, they showed resilience which was exhibited in three ways, namely absorptive, adaptive and anticipative dimensions to resilience. Absorptive resilience is how they passively try to fit in the new culture despite the odds. In both pre-migration and post-migration, they tried to endure despite the hardships. This also manifests through their belief system that God would do something for them. As a result, they endured and remained strong amidst the challenges. In adaptive resilience the participants began to take the active role, gathering the courage to flee to the host nation and making informal social groups, friends and families in the post-migration stages that would support them in times of need. They also took active roles to source academic and funding support through private institutions and organisations. They also took menial jobs like gardening and security guarding for their families' upkeep. In anticipative resilience, the refugee students, despite the odds, had never given up in contemplating the imagined futures. They positively deployed their inner strengths of hope, imagination and ambition to acquire the power to remain focused on what they did. They also contemplated transformational change, a kind of resilience they think may only be very effective when deployed by universities and host nations, the kind of resilience that does not only improve individual resilience and their present experiences but would also make them realise their future dreams.

Why question: The reasons why the four refugee students cope are not far removed from how they cope. It is evident in this study that universities had failed to offer adequate support. As a result, deliberate action to overcome barriers to success became a critical requirement in

navigating higher education for refugee students. This could only happen through refugee students' intentional efforts to deploy coping mechanisms such as remaining stable in the presence of highly threatening events and positive adaptation to the institution despite challenges and uncertainties.

There appear to be four critical reasons why refugee students continue to defy the odds and these are related to four unflinching determinations:

- Determination to overcome the challenges
- Determination to extract or create value from the institution
- Determination to make a positive contribution in their host nation
- Determination to rebuild their home countries

With the realisation that the University could not do much to support them, the participants of this study took active roles to work towards the realisation of their dreams, even in the face of adversity.

3. In what ways do refugee students consider universities as facilitating or hindering the attainment of their future goals?

This question has been answered in two parts with the first part showing refugees' appreciation of the positive aspects they see as facilitating them, and second part showing the University's hindrances in attaining their unflinching determinations.

On one hand, although refugee students in this study bemoan the numerous challenges, they are at the same time grateful for the little support they get from the universities. With legal documentation, they did not pay the international students fees and this is one instance where they are not treated as international students. Another instance is that they are entitled to get medication free of charge at the University clinic once they produce their refugee papers. Another support is in terms of a bursary they get, though it is not meant for refugees only and they get it on a competitive basis with other privileged students. However, they felt the University is doing something, although it is not specifically meant for them and is not sufficient.

On the other hand, the four participants felt that the University and the host nation, in general, have to a large extent failed to support them in several ways. One way is how universities

have completely obscured their identity. Obscuring their identity means the group is invisible and not recognisable within the higher education institutions. Whilst on a positive note they felt that universities are doing this for precautionary measures against reprisals, they felt this has contributed to the University totally forgetting them especially in terms of providing them with the basic support needed. These students really require support unique to their needs as refugees.

Second, universities have hindered the attainment of refugees' future goals by not drawing up policies that speak to the needs and support of this group. Whilst the policy for refugees is available at a national level, Educare University and South African universities in general, lack policies for refugee students. Furthermore, the participants bemoaned that despite the availability of policy at a national level, it is not implemented, so the practices in the host nation make no difference to the practice within its universities.

Third, universities have failed to separate refugee students from international students. This all perhaps reverts back to the fact that they lack a comprehensive picture of what a refugee student is and what an international student is.

Overarching question: How might refugee students' biographical narratives contribute more to the knowledge of their circumstances at a selected university in South Africa?

With the biographical narratives, I have not only managed to gather the in-depth experiences, but I have also come to the realisation that three critical phases namely pre- and post-migration experiences and future progression intentions make a significant contribution to our understanding of refugee students' lived experiences. The three critical phases did not only offer a holistic view of the participants' lived experiences but they also render the relatedness of those experiences throughout the phases.

Second, researching post-migration experiences only is common in the extant literature, however, in this study I have come to the realisation that overlooking the critical stage of pre-migration is like being oblivious to the major reason why refugees came to be in the host nation. This as a consequence would leave us with a hazy picture of the lived experiences of refugees in higher education. Presenting refugee students' lived experiences as a three-staged journey has, therefore, made me discover that:

- There is an interconnection of experiences which united the three stages of pre- and post-migration experiences and future progression intentions with pre-migration and future progression intentions making us understand more their experiences at Educare University and South Africa in general.
- There are recurrent themes which might not be visible to the researcher but are only known, acted and felt by the participant and these are fear, dreams and resilience (Figure 10).
- Over and above the recurrent themes are after-effects of the visible and general challenges of refugee students and they manifest inwardly. General challenges are a dimension known and well researched in the extant literature and they manifest outwardly. What is new is that the exogenous dimensions breed endogenous dimensions of fear, shattered and withheld dreams and resilience in refugee students' lived experiences in higher education.
- The biographical narratives have therefore presented a connected and comprehensive two-dimensional understanding of refugee students' lived experiences which manifest through the exogenous and endogenous dimensions (Figure 11).

I, therefore, conclude that a comprehensive understanding of refugee students' lived experiences needs a framework that interrogates the three stages of their journey namely pre- and post-migration as well as the future progression intentions. Within the framework, we also need to understand the two dimensions of experiences, the exogenous and endogenous and their interconnectedness. The framework in Figure 11 thus helps us to understand more about refugee students' lived experiences in higher education.

10.3 Reflective summary

Among the many important discoveries in this thesis, three revelations are outstanding. The first has to do with the methodology. One thing I have learnt from writing this thesis is that understanding refugee students' experiences needs a kind of methodology that values the participants' voices. There might, therefore, be a crucial need to transform research about vulnerable groups from top-down researcher-led to bottom-up participant-led research. This might raise awareness to stakeholders because not all refugee students' experiences are visible and given. Some, as shown in the endogenous dimensions, are emotions and only felt by the participants and may only be told by the participants. Deploying the narrative inquiry

and biographical narratives have helped me come up with new knowledge to fill up the gaps which the existing theories could not in understanding the refugee students' experiences and that would help the stakeholders to come up with meaningful interventions for this group of students.

Second, narrative analysis in this study did not only provide an in-depth analysis of “data as a story” but has also contributed to detail and specificity which traditional data analysis methods like thematic analysis “has lost in favour of general statements about the phenomenon” (Silverman, 2016 p. 364).

The third outstanding feature has to do with the theoretical framework. Resilience as part of the eclectic framework of three theories has not only shown to be present in all three stages of refugees' lived experiences but has also proved to be a positive and critical factor brought by these students to help them pursue and accomplish their dreams. Despite the social justice issues also present in all three stages, refugee students persevered and were determined to pursue their studies notwithstanding the odds.

10.4 Contribution of the study

Contribution to the knowledge base for this study is contained within empirical, theoretical, and knowledge for policy and practice dimensions.

10.4.1 Empirical contribution

The study contributes to the existing research on refugee and higher education which seems to be focused more on developed countries such as Australia and the United States and less on the developing countries that have also attracted refugee students for a long time, such as South Africa. This study has therefore added to the growing research on refugees and education in the southern region of Africa, specifically South Africa.

Second, the extant literature on refugee students and education has to a large extent deployed quantitative methodology which of course is critical in providing the general idea about refugees but does not give the in-depth knowledge about the phenomenon. This study has gone beyond traditional qualitative methodology and deployed contemporary qualitative

methods of narrative inquiry and biographical narratives, something that is not common in existing empirical research but helps us gain deeper meaning from the participant's voice.

10.4.2 Contribution to theory

This study has deployed an eclectic theoretical framework of the push-pull, social justice and resilience theories. Although the push-pull has been largely used to understand international students and migration, it has also begun to gain its prominence in refugee studies and migration. Previous research has to a large extent disregarded the aspect of pre-migration on refugees, however, this study has discovered that there is an interconnectedness of their previous experiences to the present experiences in the host nation and the University in particular.

The social justice and resilience theories have to an extent been applied in refugee research. What is, therefore, new in the usage of these theories in this study is not only the combination but also the sequence in which they have been presented. The theories are put in a sequence that helped to understand the refugee students' three-stage journey of pre-migration which has to a large extent viewed through the lens of push-pull, social justice and resilience; post-migration, largely viewed through the lens of social justice and resilience; and future progression intentions, which are largely seen through social justice and resilience. As evident, the two theories social justice and resilience are not exclusive to single stages but appear in all stages in complex and non-linear ways. Furthermore, this study has moved away from the general meaning of social justice in the existing literature and took a specific stance of redistribution, recognition and participatory justice to understand how social justice is enacted in the lives of these students.

Equally important is how I have again moved away from the general meaning of resilience in the extant literature and have, in this study, viewed it in four dimensions of absorptive, adaptive, anticipatory and transformational resilience. Reducing these theories to specific dimensions has also been a major contribution in understanding specific aspects of the lived experiences of refugee students.

10.4.3 Contribution to practice

At the institutional level, the findings have created an opportunity for better understanding of the dynamics of refugee students in terms of their emotions and feelings, of

dreams/aspirations, fear and resilience. The study has also shown how some of the courses offered at the universities might be irrelevant to refugee students' needs but they only do them because they are the only courses available for them. Through this study, I have also discovered how pedagogical knowledge practised within universities may further hinder refugees from attaining their goals (Roxas, 2011). Such include the emphasis on academic writing and computer literacy without necessarily showing or helping the students to acquire such skills thus further hindering the attainment of their future goals.

10.4.4 Contribution to policy

This study has offered specific findings on challenges faced by refugees at the national level and institutional levels. The study has shown that a lack of support within the nation is caused by the misalignment between policy and practice. I have also gathered that there are numerous institutional level challenges and these are exacerbated by the fact that the University does not have a policy for refugee students. As a result, they do not get the unique support they need as refugee students. Important to note are the endogenous themes which help us to understand that refugees' challenges go beyond structural challenges and involve emotional challenges, as a result we need a policy that caters for both outward and inward experiences.

10.5 Implications and recommendations of the study

This study has wider implications which have manifested in four critical areas. The implication and recommendations evident are discussed below:

10.5.1 The implication for policy and practice

Following the evidence about the misalignment of policy and practice in the host nation and universities, there is, therefore, a serious need for the governments to make efforts to actively implement the policy. Whilst it can be argued that the government of South Africa is struggling to support its people, I think governments should start with very simple basics in supporting the refugees by creating safe environments free of xenophobia, racism and any kind of discrimination as the starting point. The evidence have also shown that the university does not have policies meant for refugees, as a result, I recommend the starting point for universities to be the drawing up of policies that are specifically meant for refugee students.

The findings concerning the refugee students of this institution have shown that refugee students meet several challenges including that of funding. The participants have argued that there is one bursary in the University, but one gets it on a competitive basis with all other students. This is so because refugees are invisible and I therefore suggest that meaningful intervention and support starts by understanding and acknowledging the refugees' presence in university spaces, then move on to draw up policies. It is only through deliberate effort to understand this group that universities might come to realise that they need unique support. For instance, they would realise there is need for financial aid that targets refugee students as a group. Unless Educare and all other university take active action to address barriers to learning in refugee education, the students would always struggle. I suggest an active role starts by formulating the refugee policies within higher education institutions.

The study has discovered three kinds of challenges, namely, country, institutional and emotional challenges evident in the refugee students' lived experiences. University stakeholders should acknowledge the constraints and work towards ameliorating them through policy and practice. I also suggest three kinds of support that may be taken into consideration when formulating refugee students' policy. The three kinds are social, academic and emotional support. Universities should take note of the following specifics in formulating their policies on refugees:

- Refugees are different from international students and refugees themselves are a heterogeneous group.
- Refugees should be treated as individuals capable of enriching the intellectual community and not as burdens.
- Refugees should not be treated as victims but as individuals with a survivalist attitude, so universities should aim at boosting their resilience.

Therefore, the results for this study would inform the formulation of the refugee policy, structural change, strategic plans and action plans designed to improve service delivery to refugee students. The study has to a large extent come up with evidence worthy of the attention of universities policymakers in understanding the unique concerns and needs of refugees as they study in South Africa.

10.5.2 Implications for creating value for refugees within higher education spaces

Firstly, given the numerous challenges faced by refugees, universities and host nations should confront structural barriers and systemic impediments in order to allow value creation in refugee students. Moreover as already discussed earlier, they should devise means to firstly leverage the refugee students' resilience, secondly challenge their fear and thirdly promote their dreams through policy, curriculum and other institutional mechanisms.

The stories of the refugee students have also revealed that they face numerous challenges within the universities concerning content and pedagogical knowledge. It seems curricula for education are more country-focused than internationally-focused. Refugees came with hopes to do some courses that they think would make them relevant back home but do not get opportunities to do such courses, in fact, they do some courses which only make them relevant in the host nation. Curriculum and pedagogy in universities should be championed in ways that make refugee students understand their countries. For instance, they may consider introducing courses such as Education in Crisis. These may be developed as elective courses in the universities and would enable refugees to be equipped with skills to rebuild their nations. Refugee students may also need entrepreneurial skills and universities should be in a position to offer courses that would again help them to be equipped with necessary skills. Such skills would make them relevant by establishing their own small businesses and that would reduce the problem of unemployment (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000).

In terms of pedagogy, the refugee students find it difficult to master content and skills because the way they are taught now is different from the ways they were taught at home. I suggest universities should impart Paulo Freire's framework on the education that liberates and emphasises problem-posing and problem-solving (Freire, 1972). Such skills would not only equip refugees with better skills of learning but would help them to engage in inquiry and eventually think about how they would go about rebuilding their nations.

10.5.3 Implications for ethical issues

One critical finding that has emerged from doing research with vulnerable people such as refugees is how it was difficult to engage with them on several levels. Firstly, although I deployed snowballing for reaching this group, it was still difficult to find them. Secondly, convincing them that the information was for research only was not enough for some of them to comply. The hardest part was conducting interviews with them because I did not have

sufficient know-how to handle sensitive issues and I also did not have skills to conduct counselling with my participants and I never intended to do it. I was also affected but tried not to cry in their presence.

Despite all this, my University had approved my ethics application as a way of proving that I was sufficiently equipped to go into the field to gather data. I feel the few guidelines I got in qualifying for the ethics certificate for conducting research are not enough, especially when one is doing research with vulnerable groups. I propose universities should do further training, especially with those researchers who will be doing research with vulnerable people and also provide support structures like counsellors in case the need arises. I also propose a course on how to conduct research with vulnerable people be offered to researchers.

10.6 Limitations and implications for further research

The first limitation for this narrative study was that it was a very small-scale study and therefore it could not be generalised. The data were collected and analysed from a single higher education institution. As a result, conclusions might not go beyond the boundaries of the study site.

The second limitation also concerned the snowball sampling technique which I deployed. Although this proved to be the most useful technique because I could not recruit the prospective participants through the university, it posed the challenges of maximum variation in the sample and that compromised representation as it relies on personal recommendation and again making generalisations would not be possible. For instance, I found a postgraduate student first and he recommended postgraduate students. For the one undergraduate I secured, she recommended other undergraduates but all of them denied that they were refugees and she also, at a later stage, withdrew her participation. I concluded that postgraduates were easy to recruit because they understand research more than the undergraduates did, but all these challenges seem to be by-products of the sampling technique.

Given an increasing growth in refugee migration, it is more critical than ever to consider directions for future research. There is, therefore, an obvious need for further research studies on a larger scale which consider the factors enabling refugees to navigate higher education. Much research looks exclusively at challenges and barriers to progression but we still know very little about what capacitates them to continue.

The findings of the study suggest that for further research, a more detailed investigation is needed to understand why universities are not offering sufficient support for refugees and why up until now they have not formulated policies for refugee students within the institution. Such questions need the inclusion of universities' stakeholders as study samples because students' perceptions of this aspect are not enough.

The refugee students interviewed in this study often referred to fear, dreams and aspirations throughout the three stages. Literature exploring the aspect of emotions and feelings in refugee students is scarce yet there is an understanding that continuous exposure, for example, too much fear breeds trauma. Therefore, it is recommended that research continues to understand fear and its effects and how it can be addressed more effectively within the institutions. Equally important is research on how resilience can be leveraged and how dreams can be promoted and encouraged within higher education.

This study was not country-specific (refugees' home countries) in its exploration, therefore, future studies might fill this gap by exploring experiences of refugee students from a specific nation or region. This would help university stakeholders be aware of a specific curriculum for a specific group of refugee students, all depending on the countries of origin and its needs.

A further and more detailed investigation of the interrelatedness of the external and emotional/internal challenges is needed in order for university stakeholders to gain a full picture of how the not-so-common internal challenges interweave with the common ones in refugee students' lived experiences. The framework in this study may be used as a starting point for this kind of in-depth exploration.

10.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, I recall my overarching research question: *How might refugee students' biographical narratives contribute more to the knowledge of their circumstances at a selected university in South Africa?*

I conclude that the biographical narratives of this study have added a number of significant factors to our knowledge of refugee students. Firstly, it provided a comprehensive view of refugee students' lived experiences in higher education through their three-stage journey of pre-migration, post-migration and future progression. It has clearly shown that pre-migration

has been disregarded in the extant literature, yet what happened to them in the country of origin plays a critical role in how they negotiate higher education in the host nation. Second, the biographical narratives in this study have gone beyond identifying the numerous external challenges of refugees in higher education. I discovered a new set of internal experiences that run across all three stages of the refugees' journey. Among those hidden experiences is fear. Continuous exposure to fear leads to trauma. Resilience is also another recurrent theme which showed how the participants were determined to succeed despite the odds and as a result contradicts the dominant scholarly narratives about refugee students as passive victims who need to be pitied. It has been proven beyond doubt in this thesis that the refugee students have coped and hoped for better futures despite the adversities. Equally important is for universities to be aware of the interrelatedness of the two groups of themes and develop holistic intervention schemes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION LETTER

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS)

PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION LETTER

Dear

This letter serves to introduce myself: my name is Otilia Chiramba and I am a full time PhD student with the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As my degree requirement I have to undertake a research project in the area of my specialisation namely higher education. I am therefore warmly inviting you to participate in this study. The topic of my research is *Biographical narrative study of the lived experiences of refugee students at a selected university in South Africa*.

The research intends to explore, through listening to your narratives, refugee students' lived experiences in higher education. The research will use an initial unstructured interview and then one or two follow-up semi-structured interviews to clarify and explore in more depth some of the issues raised from the initial unstructured interview. Follow-ups after each interview may continue until I reach data saturation. To assist me in the writing up of the information from the interviews, that is, in addition to note taking I will ask for your permission to use a voice recorder, but this will be entirely voluntary.

Your participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw your participation at any point without prejudice. All information obtained during the course of this study will be kept strictly confidential and interviews will be on a one to one basis in a private setting. The reporting of the data will not identify you or your University, as pseudonyms will be used. The data will be used to write up the thesis which will be published. Furthermore the data may be used for academic presentations or academic articles which may arise from the study in the future.

Your participation in this study will be highly appreciated and the results of the research can be made available for viewing at your request.

Thank you in anticipation of your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Otilia Chiramba
Student No. 904048
Contact No. 0733810580
otiliachiramba@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Research Topic: *Biographical narrative study of the lived experiences of refugee students at a selected university in South Africa.*

PARTICIPANTS' INFORMED CONSENT

I confirm that the researcher has personally informed me of the nature of the study.

I have also received, read and understood the information and consent letter regarding the study.

I am aware that all the information that I provide will be anonymously processed in the PhD thesis and in any related research work, academic journal articles or conference presentations undertaken by the researcher.

In light of the requirements of the study, I understand that the data collected during the study will be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.

I am aware that the raw data gathered by the researcher, including audio tapes and written notes and transcriptions will be kept safely and confidential by the researcher and will be destroyed three to five years in accordance with University's requirements.

I understand that I may at any stage withdraw my consent and participation from the study without prejudice to me.

Circle YES or NO

I give my consent to participate voluntarily in the study YES\NO

I give my consent to be interviewed by the researcher YES\NO

**I give my consent to audio- recording of the conversations between
me and the researcher** YES\NO

Name of participant

Date:

Signature:

APPENDIX C: NARRATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Unstructured interview

Tell me your story about your experiences as a refugee student covering the experiences before and after you arrived at this university. Begin your narration from wherever you want to. This type of interview is meant to induce narratives without any interruptions from the interviewer.

Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview will be a follow-up session to probe further some of the issues raised in the previous interview. This interview will therefore be determined by the gaps like unclear passages, too few details or vague descriptions in the initial unstructured interview.

The third semi-structured interview is provisional and it is based on the assumption that there might be further probings to be done even after the second interview.

APPENDIX D: LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

5 October 2017

Dear

My name is Otilia Chiramba. I am a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing a research on the **Biographical narrative study of the lived experiences of refugee students at your university.**

My research involves three interviews with each of the five students who will be participating. The first one will be an unstructured interview which gives the participants time to tell stories of their experiences before they joined the host nation and this university. The participants will also tell stories of their experiences currently as refugee students at your institution. The second interview is a follow up to probe further some of the issues raised. Provisionally, a third or fourth interview might be done based on the assumption that there might be further probings to be done.

The reason why I chose your university is that it has a centre for migration studies and it also holds a refugee clinic of which in both cases I am bound to assume that the University has a special kind of treatment for the refugee students. As a result, this prompted me to explore the lived experiences of refugee students at your university.

I am inviting your University to participate in this research so as to gain insights into the lived experiences of refugee students in different faculties.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the University will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,
Otilia Chiramba (904048)
otiliachiramba@gmail.com
0733810580

APPENDIX E: ETHICS LETTER

Wits School of Education



27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

31 October 2017

Student Number: 904048

Protocol Number: 2017ECE037D

Dear Otilia Chiramba

Application for Ethics Clearance: Doctor of Philosophy

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate, has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Biographical narrative study of the lived experiences of refugee students at a selected university in South Africa

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that **clearance was granted**.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Mabete".

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

cc Supervisor - Prof Felix Maringe