From home to host country: international students' experiences of academic and sociocultural transition in Nigeria

by

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Declaration

I, Olaide Agbaje, declare that this thesis, titled '*From home to host country: international students' experiences of academic and sociocultural transition in Nigeria',* is my own work. It has never previously been submitted by me or anyone for a degree or diploma at this or any other tertiary institution. Where the works of others have been used, sources have been identified and duly acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Olaide Agbaje (14275733)

October 2019

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Faculty of Education

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9 October 2017

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Dedication

To Michael and Joy – you both are a reflection of God's love to me.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, my sincere gratitude goes to my Heavenly Father, the one from whom all blessings flow. Thank you, Father, for helping me beyond my imagination. If all the strands of hair on my head are tongues, they would not be enough to praise you, Lord.

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Abstract

This study analyses the academic and socio-cultural experiences of international students in Nigeria, as they transition from their home countries to the host country. It highlights the challenges international students face while trying to adjust to a new environment. The study also provides an insight into the efforts made by higher education institutions towards the smooth transition of international students. Furthermore, this study argues that recruiting international students is as important as ensuring their smooth transition into the host country and the host institutions. While studies reporting on the experiences of international students abound, very little attention has been directed towards the transition experiences of international students in Nigeria. Thus, this study investigated one primary research question, "How do international students experience academic and socio-cultural transition in Nigeria and the institutions they are studying at?"

In answering the research question, the study adopted a mixed-method research approach carried out in two universities (one public and one private) located in South-West Nigeria. Quantitative data was collected through structured and tested paper questionnaires from 64 international students at both universities (42 from the public university and 22 from the private university). A subset of 20 students (10 from each university) was further interviewed for qualitative analysis through a semi-structured and one-on-one interaction. Schlossberg's theory of transition (1981) was employed to understand the phenomenon of transition in higher education, with regards to the international students in this study.

Key findings from the study reveal that language ranked as the highest cause of a difficult academic transition. Findings also show that international students from neighbouring countries in West Africa had a better sociocultural transition compared to those from other regions. More so, there were some significant differences in the demographic profiles of international students across the private and the public university such as first language, type of degree enrolled for and funding. Three topmost recommendations made by international students for a better transition experience are institutional support, orientation and English language support classes.

Based on the findings from this study, the researcher made a few suggestions that inform policy and practice with regards to international students' experiences. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on the internationalisation of higher education globally and specifically in the context of Nigeria.

Keywords: Internationalisation, international students' experiences, higher education, Nigeria

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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List of abbreviations

CBIE	Canadian Bureau of International Education
CORDESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
HEI	Higher Education Institute
ICEF	International Consultants for Education and Fairs
IOL	International Office and Linkages
JAMB	Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board
NUC	National University Commission
PAULESI	Pan African University for Life and Earth Sciences Institutes
PSPTN	Malaysia National Strategic Plan of Higher Education
QE	University of Queensland
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UC	Covenant University
UI	University of Ibadan
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UTME	Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination
WAAP	West African Agricultural Productivity Programme
WENSR	World Education News & Review
WES	World Education Services

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CHAPTER 1
SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Travelling to a new environment for study purposes can be exciting and filled with new expectations. However, challenges abound and may include anxiety, uncertainties and disorientation on how to fit into the new culture. This is because expectations, academic and socio-cultural backgrounds can greatly differ from one place to another. In the US, for instance, the three topmost challenges faced by international students relate to communication/ language, social/cultural and psychological/personal adjustments (Talebloo & Baki, 2013). It is known that students are the single most important stakeholder in a university; understanding the needs of international students towards meeting their expectations and overall satisfaction is therefore of high importance (Mukhejee, 2014).

Some questions that may arise from the perspective of an international student include; is having a high-quality education, good reputation, great facilities and highly qualified educators all that matter? What adds up to a pleasant experience and satisfaction from the various aspects and services received at an international university? Knowing fully well that students are consumers, if not the direct customers of any university (Mukhejee, 2014), these are salient questions that need to be asked to take proactive measures towards international students' experiences.

Some researchers such as Njuguna and Itegi (2013), Madichie and Madichie (2013), Lee and Sehoole (2015), Shield (2016) and Wei (2013) reported on the phenomenon of international student mobility; however, little information is available on the experiences of international students. More so, we know little about the academic and sociocultural transition experiences of international students; even less about the unique transition experiences of international students in Nigeria (Alemu, 2014). This study took a shift from the overall experiences of international students in most previous studies to focus on the transition of international students. The study investigated the phenomenon of international students in Nigeria to improve internationalisation strategies in the country.

In the context of the above shortcoming, the study was designed to explore in detail the transition experiences of international students in unfamiliar academic and socio-cultural

environments with a focus on international students in Nigeria as a case study. It aimed to critique and analyse the viewpoints of international students about their experiences while at the same time providing valuable insights into a review of strategies of enculturation and acculturation for the students in this context.

This chapter provides an overview of the entire thesis. It examines the rationales for this study, the statement of the problem as it relates to the Nigerian context, the main and sub research questions as well as the purpose of the study. It provides a brief overview of the methodology with regards to research approach and design, sampling, data collection and analysis. It concludes with the significance of the study and the structure of the thesis.

1.2   RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Competition exists amongst global academic institutions to attract international students. International students are attracted to institutions in certain countries based on academic, political, economic, social and cultural reasons (McMurtrie, 2011; Sehoole, 2011). These factors provide an advantage for institutions and their countries of domicile. Similarly, Nigeria needs to consider these factors to succeed in attracting international students. One way to achieve this is to ensure that international students are settled well in the Nigerian system as well as into their respective institutions. The literature records many reasons why international students choose a study destination (Agbeniga, 2016; Kritz, 2013; Lee & Sehoole, 2015; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2015). The most common reasons include a better quality of education than what is obtainable in the home country, scholarship opportunities and better conditions of living in the host country. In Nigeria, the experiences of international students are under-researched. Rather, reports on outbound student mobility to developed countries abound (Madichie & Madichie, 2015; Robert-Okah, 2015). Recent reform towards an increased capacity of university education in Nigeria has not succeeded in attracting measurable international students into the Nigerian university system (Agbeniga, 2016; Robert-Okah, 2015); and this could be a result of the lack of proper adjustment of current international students. For these reasons, this study is expected to contribute to the scarce body of knowledge on internationalisation, especially in the context of Nigeria which is seen as a regional hub to some other West African and neighbouring countries. More so, undertaking this study to explore how international students experience the transition into the Nigerian and institutional systems is considered meaningful to provide recommendations for a better transition experience of the entire international student body and the institutions to become an attractive study destination.

The personal rationale for this study emanated from the researcher's master's degree study, which investigated the reasons why international students studying in two selected Nigerian universities chose to study in Nigeria and their respective institutions. Findings revealed that international students chose to study in Nigeria for reasons ranging from scholarship opportunities to the quality of education offered by Nigerian institutions (Agbeniga, 2016). Even though the participating students were eager to relay their experiences in Nigeria and their respective institutions of study, the experiences of these students could not be explored due to the limited scope of the master's research. Thus, this study was further research following on to the master's dissertation.

Given the fast pace at which internationalisation of higher education is cutting across the 21st century, a study that brings the experiences of international students in Nigeria to light with the aim of understanding their academic and sociocultural transition seemed timely and essential. The main purpose of this study was, therefore, to analyse and critique the academic and socio-cultural experiences of international students in Nigeria to contribute to the body of knowledge on internationalisation of higher education.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite a long history of higher education in the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa, internationalisation in Nigeria has been on the periphery (Jaja, 2013). The phenomenon of the brain drain and a disproportionate one-way flow from Nigeria to more developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom are often associated with the country. For example, "two-thirds of the 36,134 faculty positions in Nigeria were vacant when compared with 10,000 Nigerian academics and 21,000 physicians working in the United States alone" as far back as 2000 (Alemu, 2014). A study conducted by Kritz (2013). showed that 25,000 Nigerians studied abroad; nevertheless, there is a paucity of research on the international students in Nigeria and more so their experiences. In spite of an upheld notion that international students are not attracted to Nigeria, a previous study showed that some international students found Nigeria as a viable study destination (Agbeniga, 2016). However, understanding the experiences of these students in the transition phase of their study is crucial in ensuring they have an overall positive experience and satisfaction. Needless to say, international students usually face challenges in relation to academic and socio-cultural integration (Schulmann & Choudaha, 2014; Yam, 2016). For instance, there is often a mismatch between the expectations of international students before arriving in a country and the institution of intended study and

the realities of events upon arrival at their destination. If unattended, this mismatch may negatively affect international students' overall experiences (Lee, 2010). Consequentially, international students' positive experiences are beneficial to a host institution and country as it is instrumental in attracting and retaining more international students. The problem, therefore, remains that the transition experiences of international students in Nigeria are not known; there is a scarcity of studies on how these students integrate into the Nigerian system, which could hamper their overall experiences. The perceived cultural distance between the home country and the host country has been attributed to the source of problems encountered in the form of socio-cultural adjustment. This implies that a larger distance often results in greater adjustment difficulties. Also, language differences between the home country of an international student and the host country could hamper a smooth academic experience. International students may also find classroom integration to be a challenge due to the difference in the tone of language.

From the preceding, Smith and Khawaja (2011) highlight that the onus lies on universities to play a significant role in the smooth transition process for international students but how will the universities achieve this if they are not aware of the level of difficulty experienced by international students? Hence, this research was deemed valuable to embark upon as it did not only contribute to the discourse of internationalisation but also provide recommendations for an improvement on the experiences of international students.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the views of international students in two selected Nigerian universities to document their transition experiences of the host country and institutions. As mentioned earlier, this study slightly shifted attention from the overall experiences of international students, as reported in most literature. Rather, it aimed to find out how international students in selected Nigerian universities navigate their ways into the system when they newly arrived. In essence, this study sought to investigate the academic and socio-cultural transition experiences of international students in Nigeria and their respective universities. In addition, this study sought to examine if there are significant differences in the experiences of international students studying at a private and a public university. Generally, the study contributes to the knowledge on internationalisation globally and more importantly, to the sparse knowledge of internationalisation in Nigeria. It is believed that the study would help the country and institutions to position better to improve the experiences of current international students while at the same time attracting prospective ones. Specifically, the findings from this study would be helpful to institutional academics, administrators and

policymakers by paving the way for alternative ways that would make the transition easier for international students and improve their overall study experience.

1.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question for this study was:

- How do international students experience academic and socio-cultural transition in Nigeria and the university at which they are studying?

    The primary question will be guided by the following secondary questions:

- What are the academic experiences of international students in Nigeria and the university at which they are studying?
- What are the sociocultural experiences of international students in Nigeria and the university at which they are studying?
- How do the transition experiences of international students at the private university differ from the transition experiences of those at the public university?
- What recommendations do international students suggest to the university for improved international students' experiences?

1.6   HYPOTHESIS

Based on the first two secondary research questions set above, the following table outlines the null hypothesis (H_0) and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) for this study.

Table 1-1; Different Hypotheses.

Research Question	Null Hypothesis	Alternative Hypothesis
How do the transition experiences of international students at the private university differ from the transition experiences of those at the public university?	There is no difference in the transition experiences of the international students at the private university and the experiences of the international students at the public university.	The international students at the private university will have better transition experiences than the international students at the public university

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Schlossberg transition theory explains explicitly the phenomenon under study explicitly. The theory which was first propounded by Nancy K. Schlossberg in 1981 has been developed in collaboration with other human development theorists (Schlossberg, Lynch & Chickering, 1989). Transition, according to Schlossberg, implies any event or non-event that results in changed relationships, assumptions, roles and routines. She asserts that it is important to consider the type, context and impact of the transition of an individual to understand its meaning to that individual fully. In view of this, she explains that students' experiences can be categorised into three types of transition, namely, anticipated, unanticipated and non-events. Anticipated transitions are those occurrences that are foreseen such as graduation from college; unanticipated transitions are those that are not expected to occur but which occur such as a drop out from college while non-events are transitions that are expected but do not occur such as failure to graduate with a distinction (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995). Context, on the other hand, refers to an individual's relationship with the transition and the setting or environment in which the transition takes place while the impact is the degree to which the transition affects one's daily life.

Higher education students come across different kinds of changes and experiences, especially when they decide to study in an unfamiliar context. Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson (2006) explore the complexity of the ability of an individual to cope with the transition by what they term the four factors of transition otherwise known as the 4S's which are situation, self, support and strategies. Examining these factors in the context of the proposed study, "situation" is the environment and the condition in which an international student finds himself. A student's situation may vary according to the circumstances surrounding the transition, the length of time, previous experience in a similar situation, the amount of control that can be exercised during the transition and the overall assessment of the transition process. The second 'S', which is "self" refers to a student's personal, demographic and psychological characteristics, which affect how they view life. These include age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, personal values, resiliency and spirituality (Sengupta, 2015). The third 'S', "support", impacts a student's ability to adapt to the transition. Schlossberg (1995) emphasises that social support is key in the way an individual handles stress; support can come from different sources such as family, friends, institution and community. Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn (2010) describe the features of support as "affect, affirmation, aid and honest

feedback. The fourth 'S', 'strategies', implies the ways individuals cope with transition. Coping responses could be in three forms: modify the situation, control the meaning of the problem or aid in managing stress" (Evans et al., 2010). According to Goodman et al. (2006), "individuals cope best when they are flexible and adopt multiple coping strategies".

Schlossberg's theory of transition is adopted for this study because it is a very useful and practical model to explain the transition experiences of international students in higher institutions as they move from the familiar environment of their home country to the unfamiliar environment of the host country (Nigeria). The concept of transition is a vital phenomenon in the institutions of learning and has been well explained by incorporating the four factors that describe the complexity of the transition, as adopted by this study. The theoretical framework is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

This study utilised the mixed-method approach, grounded in the pragmatism paradigm. The rationale for the choice of this approach was to have a rich understanding of the experiences of international students in Nigeria. The researcher deems it fit to use a mixed method because neither the quantitative nor the qualitative method was enough in itself to capture in detail the academic and socio-cultural experiences of international students in Nigeria, as well as their adjustment and adaptation strategies. The greatest strength of this approach is that qualitative and quantitative data when combined within a mixed-method approach complement each other and enable a better analysis of the research situation as well as give high validity to the findings (Creswell, 2014). In other words, this method was not only helpful in gaining an in-depth knowledge of the experiences of the international students, it also enhanced the validity of the findings.

The case study design was adopted for this study. The case study design allowed for the collection of detailed information from the target population for this study through the use of a variety of data collection procedures over a particular period. The case study design was most suitable for this research as it could blend both qualitative and quantitative data. It is a perfect example of mixed-method research, as it can "explain, describe, illustrate and enlighten" (Yin, 2009). Using a case study design will provide a unique instance of real people in real situations, "thereby allowing readers to have a vivid understanding of the phenomenon being studied, rather than just a presentation of abstract theories" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

To this end, the researcher was able to gather rich and detailed data from international students using varied data collection techniques.

This mixed-method research adopted both probability and non-probability sampling for the quantitative and the qualitative parts, respectively. In the quantitative part, total population sampling was used so that every international student in the population would be included for participation because the total number was relatively small. In the qualitative part, however, international students were purposefully selected through snowball sampling.

The research was conducted in two Nigerian universities (one private and one public) with the target population being international students. The two universities for this case study are the University of Ibadan (UI) and Covenant University (CU). Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Relevant institutional documents were also reviewed in corroborating the other sources of data. Thematic analysis was employed for the qualitative data while quantitative data was analysed using the SPSS software.

1.9   LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

One major limitation to this study is that the findings are not generalisable due to the qualitative part of the research. Although this study is not generalisable across a similar population, it provides an adequate understanding of the phenomenon being researched from the perspectives of the participants. What this implies, therefore, is that the findings from this study are specific to the participating country, universities and students.

A second limitation is that there is a paucity of data and scarcity of literature on the experiences of international students in Nigeria. The researcher had to rely on other sources of information such as specific information from the participating universities, to fully explore the topic.

A third limitation is the lack of concise institutional data on international students at both universities. The researcher was only able to get scanty past records on international students that would have further enriched the study. Particularly at the public university, there was no precise data on the number of international students enrolled, their countries of origin, disciplines, and so on. This implies that the researcher was not able to reach all the international students at the university because not all of them were registered with the international office, popularly known as the Office of International Programmes at UI. This is compounded by the fact that the majority, if not all of the international students at UI, are postgraduate students

who only come to the university premises as occasion demands. Hence, it was difficult locating them; however, some were sent questionnaires to complete through their colleagues. Although the researcher acknowledges that it would be almost impossible to reach all the international students to participate in this research, a larger sample would have enhanced the quantitative findings.

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The proposed research will grow the knowledge base on internationalisation across the globe in general and internationalisation in Nigeria specifically.

Findings from this study provide useful insights for universities and student administrators on how to improve the transition experiences of international students, which will be consequential to promoting the recruitment and the retention of both current and prospective international students.

Also, the results of this research will be of interest to all the role players in tertiary education including government officials, educationalists, policymakers, Heads of Departments, administrators, instructors, tutors and student leaders. The findings and recommendations will assist them in identifying the critical considerations in positioning the institution's policies and practices to support international students and market their countries or institutions to international students

Lastly, the researcher believes the findings from this study will open the door for further research. Even though there are caveats in extending the findings of the study to other geographies or other parts of Africa, the context of the study has been designed to provide detailed information about the issues affecting the international students and the universities. This study could serve as a framework and departure point for additional research into a very topical subject with growing importance in the tertiary educational arena.

1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1: Synopsis of the study – This chapter offers an introduction to the present study. It outlines the research questions and addresses the problem and rationales that necessitated this research. It also provides an insight into the methodology and theoretical framework.

Chapter 2: An appraisal of internationalisation through international students' experiences – This chapter reviews previous studies on internationalisation and international students' experiences. Several concepts emanating from the subject of internationalisation are discussed

in relation to the academic and socio-cultural experiences of international students. Globally, the chapter examines challenges confronting international students in higher education institutions. Furthermore, this chapter introduces a general discussion on higher education in Nigeria and internationalisation in Nigeria in particular. In essence, the arguments in the review of several literature studies strongly suggest that undertaking an international study is not without some transition difficulties.

Chapter 3: A mixed-methods study – In this chapter, the research gives a detailed account of the research methodology, approach and sampling, as well as the rationales for the choice of these. The chapter also gives an insight into the profiles of the universities that served as research sites. In addition, the researcher explains the mode of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis and discusses all ethical precautions taken for the research.

Chapter 4: Description of questionnaire respondents and interview participants – To fully contextualise the study, the researcher provides an analysis of the demographic characteristics of the international students that participated in this study. First, the researcher gives a detailed statistical analysis of profiles of the questionnaire respondents at the private and public university. This is followed by a summary of the interview of participants at the two universities.

Chapter 5: Academic transition experiences of international students in Nigeria – In this chapter, the researcher reports the quantitative and qualitative findings on academic transition. The findings in this chapter borders around how international students studying at the two Nigerian universities navigated through the academic situation at their respective universities at the start of their international study. Six academic-related themes were analysed in this chapter, namely; expectation versus reality, academic transition, language, teaching and learning style, curriculum and academic support. One of the key findings revealed language ranked the highest because of a difficult transition for international students in this study.

Chapter 6: Sociocultural transition experiences and recommendations from international students – In this chapter, the researcher presents both quantitative and qualitative findings on the socio-cultural transition of international students in Nigeria. Five sociocultural themes were analysed in this chapter, namely; socio-cultural transition, culture, food, loneliness and perceived discrimination. In addition, recommendations from international students for the improvement of transition experiences are reported in this chapter. One of the key findings in

this chapter revealed international students from other countries in West African had a smoother socio=cultural transition than international students from other regions.

Chapter 7: Towards improving international students transition experiences – This final chapter is a discussion of the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative findings, bearing in mind the similarities and differences between the two universities. It presents the findings around academic and sociocultural themes analysed in chapters 5 and 6. Moreover, the chapter discusses recommendations offered by international students as well as recommendations from the researcher towards the improvement of students' transition experiences. Lastly, this chapter offers suggestions for future research and draws a conclusion based on the findings.

1.12   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher offered a useful insight into the entire thesis. She explained the purpose for which this study was undertaken, the problem that necessitated undertaking the study and academic and personal rationales for undertaking this study. The researcher argued that the limited knowledge on the internationalisation of higher education in Nigeria, and especially the paucity of data on the experiences of international students in Nigeria makes this study relevant while also contributing to new knowledge. She outlined the research questions that guided the kind of information to be collected for this study. This chapter also gives a summary of the methodological approach adopted for the study, which includes the research approach, the data collection and data analysis procedures; all of which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. In addition, this introductory chapter gives a summary of each chapter in this doctoral thesis.

The next chapter discusses the review of literature on the internationalisation of higher education and the transition experiences of international students, as well the theoretical framework employed for this study.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Two important universal influences in higher education are globalisation and internationalisation (Ashton-Hay, Wignell, & Evans, 2016). Students from diverse socio-cultural and language backgrounds constantly seek higher education opportunities to guarantee career success that is competitive and international. More so, studying abroad is often motivated by students' expectation to acquire quality education and exposure to state-of-the-art facilities and experienced academics in their chosen areas of study (Urban, 2012; Wadhwa, 2016). In addition, international study experience provides opportunities to encounter new cultures and build social networks (Urban & Palmer, 2014); this transcends the benefits of income generation and economic boost derived from internationalisation. (Guo & Guo, 2017, Pherali, 2012; Urban & Palmer, 2014). Furthermore, the presence of international students impacts on home students socially and culturally (McMurtrie, 2011; Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2015).

The benefits of international study notwithstanding, international students encounter a number of challenges which include detachment from known and familiar languages, social and cultural association while adjusting to new culture and environment (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016; Bamford, 2008; Leong, 2015; Lillyman & Bennet, 2014; Yin, 2013; Zhang, 2016). This is in spite of university goals and mission, legal frameworks and government standards (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016). These challenges if unattended, negatively impact on students' general wellbeing and overall academic performance. For international students to contribute meaningfully to a host institution, there is a need for appropriate sociocultural integration (de Wit, 2011) in a process termed smooth transition (Schlossberg, 2011). However, in the Nigerian context, there is a dearth of information on the experiences of international students in their host (Nigerian) institutions (Agbeniga, 2016; Jaja, 2013). On the contrary, studies exist which have detailed suggested reasons why Nigerians prefer to study abroad (Madichie & Madichie, 2013; Robert-Okah, 2015). Hence, aside from providing baseline information to policy and decisions makers, this study will also contribute to the literature on international students, especially in the context of Nigeria.

International students have been widely defined as students who are studying outside their country of origin (Kritz, 2013; Lee & Sehoole, 2015; Zeleza, 2012). For this study, international students are regarded as students who are non- citizens of Nigeria but who are in

Nigeria for university education. In this study, higher education and university or university education will be used interchangeably as having the same meaning. This review of literature is centred around three main arguments; one, internationalisation has become an integral part of higher education globally; two, internationalisation of higher education contribute to the socio-cultural and academic diversity of host nations and its institutions; three, documentation of the academic and sociocultural transition experiences of international students across different countries provide a baseline of possible difficulties encountered by international students in Nigeria.

This chapter discusses the various aspects of transition, acculturation, socio-cultural encounters, academic difficulty, language and communication barriers encountered by international students. It explores the perceptions or expectations of students of their host country prior to studying in the country in comparison to the realities of studying in the country. In addition, this chapter examines internationalisation, student mobility and higher education in general as well as in the context of Africa and Nigeria with regards to history, strategy, challenges and development. It also features a comparative perspective on the strategies adopted by institutions in tackling the difficulties faced by international students to be better positioned to attract the world's best mobile students. Finally, this review of literature touches on recommendations for improving the transition experiences of international students.

2.2   INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

Internationalisation of higher education has become a growing concern for researchers since the 1990s (Teichler, 1999). It is one of the biggest terms used in the international education circle and has become one of the inevitable tools for evaluating the national objectivity, global relevance and innovation of a higher education institution. In other words, the world is a global village and internationalisation of education has become a crucial engine that drives international competitiveness, economic transformation, as well as an educational and social revolution. The result of this is that more and more higher education institutions are including an international and intercultural dimension into their curriculum, mission statements and strategic plans (Wei, 2013). For example, a survey of Canadian universities in 2014 reported that 82 per cent of responding institutions consider internationalisation as one of their top five priorities while 95 per cent of these institutions identify it as part of their strategic plans (Universities Canada [UNIVCAN], 2014). Authors of the discourse of internationalisation such as de Wit (2011) and Johnson (2012) opine that the number of international students enrolled at an institution is one of the strong performance indicators often used to measure global

engagement or internationalisation. Putting it more precisely, de Wit (2011, p. 39) says that "internationalisation has become an indicator for quality in higher education".

At this juncture, it is imperative to examine the actual meaning of internationalisation. Although, due to the dynamic nature of its actors as well as economic, sociocultural, academic and political rationales (de Wit, Hans, Hunter, Egron-Polak, & Howard, 2015); and the impacts of local and national traditions, the internationalisation of higher education has different definitions for different scholars of this phenomenon. Notwithstanding, Knight's definition has gained popularity for more than one decade. She defined the internationalisation of higher education as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2004, p. 11). Knight's definition suggests strongly that internationalisation is not just the existence of an international dimension in education; rather, it is an all-encompassing dimension to all aspects of higher education. With this established, internationalisation is not a cheap process; it is a painstaking attempt to imprint an institution's academic and research footprints around global issues, to promote an institution's presence, relevance and impact in international markets and ensure an institution's adoption of best practices in content, programmes and processes. The definition of Elkin, Devjee, and Farnsworth (2005) opines that the core objective of internationalisation should be the creation of values, beliefs and intellectual insights that will promote equal participation of and equal benefit for international and domestic students as well as faculty. Their definition is more student-driven and also fits the context of this study. Although internationalisation of higher education goes beyond students and faculty alone, it also includes curriculum, policymakers and other important players.

In spite of the efforts of scholars to define internationalisation, the core values and operations underpinning the subject seems to lack a universal identity (Yemini & Sagie, 2016). Knight (2014, p. 16) while pondering on internationalisation in the last decade lamented that "internationalisation has become a catch-all phrase used to describe anything and everything remotely linked to the global, intercultural or international dimensions of higher education and is thus losing its way." She, therefore, called for the fundamental values of internationalisation to be re-examined.

From the second half of the 1990s, the driving force of internationalisation witnessed a shift from the political to the economic (Guo & Guo, 2017). This could be seen from the operations of many institutions in developed countries such as the US, the UK and Australia where

international students and international activities served as means of income generation (Teichler, 2010). The academic aim of internationalisation was deemed to be a means of improving the quality of teaching and learning as well as preparing students for the globalised world (de Wit et al., 2015). The socio-cultural aim of internationalisation, on the other hand, was perceived as a means of enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation amongst people from diverse backgrounds through international mobility (Khoo, 2011). Over the past decade, attracting the world's top talent for the knowledge economy and preparing graduates for the competitive global market have become strong pillars of the internationalisation of higher education (de Wit et al., 2015).

Internationalisation of higher education is one of the most successful initiatives of the world's educational system (Hellsten, 2002). It has become expected that international students make up the student body of a higher institution of learning; the competition to enrol international students has therefore grown, not only within but also between countries (Schulmann & Choudaha, 2014). Internationalisation is not the mere presence of international students on campus. Besides the fact that it has to do with how well international dimensions are inculcated into the curriculum of higher education; it also has to do with how well international students are integrated into the academic, social and cultural aspects of their institutions. In a nutshell, internationalisation can be described as a two-way process of effecting positive change externally while also accepting positive change internally towards international standards.

According to Yee (2014), there are some common terms used about internationalisation which include international studies, transnational education, international education, internationalism and globalisation; each of these differs in accent and approach. Internationalisation is also seen as being influenced by the "activity approach" (De Wit, 2002) in the form of student mobility, study abroad, student exchange, international cooperation and partnerships, although there is a strong advocacy against internationalisation being a mere activity (Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Yemini & Sagie, 2016). The subject of student mobility is discussed later in this chapter, as it forms one of the core areas of this study. Another approach, according to De Wit (2002) is curriculum-based – "studies in education, intercultural education, international studies, multi-cultural education, cross-cultural education, language and global studies." Summarily, internationalisation is valuable for the future of higher education all over the world; thus, higher education systems need a proper response towards real internationalisation if they must create "global competency" or "global citizens" (Yemini & Sagie, 2016, p. 96).

2.3   INTERNATIONALISING THE CURRICULUM

As globalization and the rapid growth of information and communication technology permeate geographical boundaries, higher education is being constantly challenged to explore means of inculcating global views into local dimensions. In light of this, Agnew and Fox (2014) call for a reexamination of the "glocal" context – a contemporary phenomenon that promotes both the global and local dimensions of education. They advocate that higher institutions of learning need to provide students with learning opportunities at both regional and international levels to produce graduates who will be globally competent. Leask (2009, p. 209) defines internationalisation of the curriculum as the "incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of a program of study". Drawing from this definition, it can be inferred that all students could be exposed to developing global capabilities, even without studying in an international setting. In turn, this will facilitate new ways of thinking in not only local students but also international students, and afford them the requisite knowledge and skills required for global relevance (Agnew & Fox, 2014). Leask (2009) also views the development of intercultural capacities as one of the main benefits of an internationalised curriculum which promotes a rewarding institutional environment and aids positive interaction between home and international students. The argument of Leask is largely consistent with that of Ippolito (2007) who is of the opinion that an ideal international curriculum should meet the learning demands of all students in an equal manner, regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, gender and socio-cultural foundation. This phenomenon is otherwise referred to as "internationalisation at home" by de Wit (2013) – an idea geared towards equipping all staff and students to operate in an international and increasingly multicultural domestic setting (Ippolito, 2007). In achieving this, faculty may be required to be more critical in thinking and perhaps change their ways of thinking to acquire the required skills and experience needed to propagate global teaching and learning in the classroom while also encouraging intercultural experiences of home and international students. By so doing, universities. curricula will be more inclusive in ways that will harmonise massification among under-represented home and international students.

As important as internationalising the curriculum is, it does not occur without some challenges. These challenges, as pointed out by Ashton-Hay et al. (2016), are linked to pedagogical and curriculum design that promotes the socio-cultural and linguistic awareness needed to actualise the aim of internationalisation. Not until the desired outcome is achieved can one say that

internationalisation of the curriculum has truly occurred. Another problem with the internationalisation of the curriculum is the disparity between policy and practice. This is exemplified by the research of Guo & Guo (2017) where a Canadian institution emphasised the inclusion of internationalisation in their curriculum at the policy level, but in practice, Chinese international students complained of exclusion in the teaching and learning process.

2.4   STUDENT MOBILITY

The mobility of students across countries of the world have been in existence for a long time; indeed, it has a documented history starting in the Middle Ages, and its recent tendency to become widespread is traceable to both colonial ties and Westernisation (Barron, Baum & Conway, 2009). For example, McNair (1933) reported that the trend for overseas education for the Chinese was critically influenced by western Christianity. This led to three Chinese students migrating from Hong Kong to study Medicine in the United States in 1847 and by 1916, 300 Chinese students were already studying in the United Kingdom (McNair, 1933). Since the latter half of the 19th century, more and more international students from Asia, especially China, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore studied in Western higher education institutions (Chan, 1999), although some developments have seen a shift from these traditional source countries to mainland China and India (Barron et al., 2009). Knight and De Wit (1995, p. 22) refer to most students from Asian countries as "looking to the west as the gold standard for higher education." A similar trend is evident in Africa; the high value attached to international education in the developed countries of the world bring the negative effect of the brain drain to the continent. In recent time, however, globalisation has brought about an upsurge in the number of international students studying in various higher education institutions across the world. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2015) 5 million students studied outside their home country in 2015 while the International Development Programme (IDP Australia, 2003) forecast that "7.6 million students will be studying abroad by 2025". In the same vein, 13 per cent of non-European students make up the entire university student population in the United Kingdom (Preston & Wang, 2017). The UK foresees the number of international students in the country to be 800,000 by 2020 (British Council, 2004 cited by Barron et al., 2009). This phenomenon is similar in other countries. In Canada, international students make up about eleven per cent of national enrolment (Chira, 2017) and since the year 2000, the national enrolment of international students in Canada rose by 226 per cent (Sá & Sabzalieva 2016). There has been an 85 per cent surge in the enrolment of international students in American tertiary institutions as compared to a decade ago (Hua,

2015). International students account for about 26 per cent of student enrolment in Australian universities (Australian Government, 2016). Malaysia has also witnessed a rapid growth in its international student body from 18,242 in 2001 to 86,919 in less than ten years and a projection of 200,000 by 2020 (Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education, 2011). China is reportedly the leading source of international students in top countries –34 per cent of Chinese students are in Canada, 32 per cent in the USA, 31 per cent in the UK and 27 per cent in Australia (Preston & Wang, 2017). Acquiring Western education is regarded as a pathway to a good job with higher pay, resulting in a better quality of living. There are other benefits for this phenomenon of student mobility; these include enhancing the neighbourhood and inter-country relations, taking advantage of a more recognised study for a sustainable future career, exposure to another people's culture, to mention a few.

One prominent reason for international education that is common to source countries is the strong belief that a degree from a Western institution is higher in value and status than a degree acquired at home (Alemu, 2014; Barron et al., 2009; Kritz, 2015; Lee & Sehoole, 2015; Madichie & Madichie, 2015). The ongoing argument on the popularity of student mobility is further underpinned by a range of challenges facing higher education in the sending countries. The most-reported ones are poor educational standard, lack of quality teaching and learning resources and higher demand than supply in home-institutions (Agnew & Fox, 2014b; Barron et al., 2009; Townsend & Poh, 2008; Yemini & Sagie, 2016). As part of their higher education experience, students who study abroad have an increased motivation to become global citizens, develop personal skills and increase their employability access (Bavlı, 2017). The general trend in student mobility, however, is a one-sided movement. Students often move from less developed countries to more developed countries (Smith, Reid, & Petocz, 2009)

The benefits of international student mobility to the host countries cannot be overemphasised. Besides the socio-cultural and linguistic richness that international students add to their host countries and institutions, they serve as a major source of income (Davey, Grant, & Anoopkumar-Dukie, 2013). This explains why many countries and universities are keen on attracting and retaining international students through their strategic plans (e.g. The University of Queensland [QE] Strategic Plan, 2004-2008, 2005; Napier University Strategic Plan, 2005-2008:7; the Canadian Bureau of International Education [CBIE], (2015); Malaysia National Strategic Plan of Higher Education (PSPTN) Phase 1 (2007-2010). Nevertheless, it is not adequate to be strategic in planning, but there should be an agreement between the rhetorics of strategic plans and their practice. This implies that the monitoring and evaluation of these

policies, procedures and guidelines should be ensured (Hagenmeier, 2013). International students pay full tuition fees which are at least double what domestic students pay; they also contribute in no small measure to the host country economy through living expenses. For example, international students in the UK during the session 2015/2016 contributed £20.3 billion to the UK economy (Civinini, Dec 2018). In Canada, likewise, apart from enriching society with diverse ideas and perspectives, international students contribute almost $19 billion to the Canadian economy annually (Semotiuk, Nov 2018). Students who do not return to their country of origin upon completion of their studies and who decide to take up skilled jobs further contribute to the host country's economy (Ghazarian, 2014) and human resource, invariably replacing the ageing population.

2.5   STUDENT MOBILITY IN AFRICA

The continent of Africa is the second-most populous on earth, accounting for 15 per cent of the entire world population (World Population Review, July 2019). Student mobility in Africa dates back to the colonial era when colonial masters sent bright students from their colonies to the colonial metropoles to acquire knowledge in civil matters so that they could assist the colonial masters in administrative duties (Fafunwa, 2003). Colonialism, therefore, brought about the development of a specific but somewhat narrow international outlook in Africa, a focus that has not shifted fundamentally even after independence (Hagenmeier, Lansink, & Vukor-Quarshie, 2017). Ever since, there has been an influx of African students travelling abroad to study, even after the eradication of colonial rule. A variety of push and pull factors are responsible for the large flow of African students seeking international study. Push factors are those unpleasant factors that are inherent in the home country and which make a domestic education unattractive while pull factors are attractive features inherent in the host or receiving countries which serve as attractions to foreign students (Bohman, 2014). Previous studies record a strong tie between dissatisfaction with home education and a positive attitude towards studying abroad (Ghazarian, 2014; Kritz, 2013). The perceived low quality of education, overcrowded HEIs, lack of opportunities in the labour market (Levatino, 2017), low international ranking (even though in some cases, African students are not so keen about the ranking of an institution as long as it is a foreign one in a reputable country) of home institutions are major push factors. On the other hand, students are pulled to a foreign country and institution based on the prestige attached to the acquisition of a foreign degree, the perceived high-quality education and resources as well as the living conditions.

Student mobility in Africa is more outbound than inbound (UNESCO Institute of Statistics [UIS], 2017). With the exception of a few African countries such as South Africa, Ghana, and Kenya that receive internationally mobile students, especially from within their regions, most countries majorly send students abroad. Although data on international students studying within most African countries are non-existent (UIS, 2018); the outflow of students from the entire 54 countries of Africa is significant. African students made up 10 per cent of the world's internationally mobile students as of 2013, and between 2006 and 2014, there was a 24 per cent rise in the number of African students studying abroad from 343,370 to 427,311 (World Education News & Review [WENSR], 2017). Data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2018) shows that 71,351 Nigerians are studying abroad, making it the highest sender of international students, with the top destinations being the UK, Ghana and the US; mainly for the English-speaking advantage. About one-quarter of the African students enrolled in the US are reported to be Nigerians (UIS, 2018). After Nigeria, Morocco is the next highest sender of students abroad sending roughly 43,148 students with the top destinations being France, Spain and Germany. Morocco used to be the top sending African country but was overtaken by Nigeria between 2010 and 2012 (ICEF Monitor, 2016). Cameroon is the third-highest sender enrolling 23,131 students abroad with 69 per cent studying in European institutions in Germany, France, Italy and Belgium while some 5.5 per cent chose the US. Other high sending countries in descending order are Algeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Senegal, Angola. Ghana and Sudan (UIS, 2018).

The traditional destination countries for a long time have been the US and Europe; however, an interesting development is that new destinations are emerging in the Middle East (ICEF Monitor, 2018). A more interesting development is that some African students now choose to study within Africa, a phenomenon referred to as intra-Africa student mobility. Intra-Africa mobility is an effort geared towards higher education co-operation amongst African countries for the promotion of sustainable development in the continent, which will not only bring about quality education but also eventually reduce poverty. This shifting pattern in African mobility strengthens collaborations between African higher education institutions while also improving the skills and competencies of students and faculty. Internationally, mobile students across Africa now find it suitable to study in another African country and an African university, rather than traditional study destinations in the global North. A great percentage of mobile students from some African countries study on the continent - Lesotho (93%), Swaziland (89%), Namibia (83%), Zimbabwe (74%), the Democratic Republic of Congo (57%) – Campus France

(October 2016). South Africa reportedly has the greatest share of these mobile African students, hosting about 48 per cent of international students from other African countries (ICEF Monitor, 2016). This shifting pattern is a reflection of the conscious efforts of African nations and HEIs to recruit international students. It is also an effort geared towards curbing the brain drain and the further marginalisation of an already marginalised region (Teferra, 2014) These efforts are driven by diverse initiatives such as the establishment of Pan African Universities by the African Union, the establishment of African Centres of Excellence and the West African Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP) by the World Bank. Intra-Africa student mobility also takes a regional dimension such as the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). These regional dimensions are reflected through the agenda of regional university organisations such as the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) and the Southern Africa Regional Universities Association (SARUA).

The shifting pattern notwithstanding, there is an argument that African higher education should respond to globalisation differently (Hagenmeier et al., 2017). Similarly, De Wit raised a notion on the need to de-internationalise African higher education to make it stand out from the Western supremacy (Jowi, Knight & Sehoole, 2013). Even though de-internationalisation might not be straight-forward, developing an internationalisation pattern that will be a full reflection of the African identity and cultural substance is paramount. In line with this, Hagenmeier et al. (2017) advocate that the blueprint of the 21st century African higher education internationalisation programmes should be the intellectual property of Africa where the capacity-building content is specifically designed for Africa. This is otherwise known as Africanisation. A counter-argument that consequently arises is that Africanisation will limit the scope of internationalisation in the real sense of the latter. In other words, if African students are only exposed to the identities and trajectories of Africa, how then will they be prepared to be global citizens? It can, therefore, be proposed that the African higher education system should develop and adopt new and sustainable practices that can withstand the 21st-century challenges. This does not in any way mean to oppose Pan-Africanism, but it does mean that the 21st century higher education transcends regional and continental borders to include international dimensions. Undeniably, as opined by Hagenmeier et al. (2017), partnerships between universities in Africa can strengthen the higher education system in the continent, advance capacity-enhancement and help contribute significantly to the attainment of goals.

2.6 AN OVERVIEW OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Nigeria has one of the oldest, biggest and most comprehensive university education system within the continent of Africa (CORDESIA, 2005).

The National University Commission (NUC) is the government body in charge of all university (Federal, state and private) affairs in Nigeria. Its responsibilities include granting accreditation to universities and universities' programmes, maintaining the minimum academic standard, creating guidelines for the establishment of universities, sanctioning erring universities as well as the general monitoring of universities. As of 2018, there are 40 federal, 44 state and 68 private accredited universities in Nigeria. The Nigerian university sector witnessed a rapid expansion over time in response to demographic pressures. From one university in 1948, the University College of Ibadan which was originally an affiliate of the University of London, to five universities in 1962, namely, the UI, Obafemi Awolowo University (formerly known as the University of Ife), the University of Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello University and the University of Lagos. According to the NUC, the number of accredited universities in Nigeria grew tenfold from 16 to 51 between 1980 and 2005 and by 2017, the number had risen to 152 (World Education Services [WES], 2017). A dramatic expansion started in the late 1990s when the Nigerian government approved the establishment of private universities. Before then, the higher education sector was dominated by public universities under the control of the federal and state governments. From three in 1999 to 68 in 2017, private universities (about two-thirds of which are religiously affiliated) account for 45 per cent of the entire university sector (World Education Services [WES], 2017). The UTME applications show the enrolment into private universities to be a relatively low percentage compared to the overall HE enrolment in Nigeria, despite its swift growth. For example, CU, the largest private university in Nigeria, enrols around 9000 students as of 2019 out of the country's total tertiary enrolment of about 1,700,000. While the federal government is responsible for the financing and administration of federal universities, state universities are the responsibilities of the state governments while private universities generate their own funds.

From a global education perspective, the curricula content of the Nigerian university is characterised by mere theories and or what Iruonagbe, Imhonopi, & Egharevba (2015, p. 58) refer to as "traditional pedagogy and conventional curricular". This form of curricula is often criticised as lacking practical skills needed by university graduates to function effectively in the labour market. Employers often lament about the deficient training of university graduates and their poor productivity and quality input in the world of work.

In spite of the predicament of the Nigerian university and higher education system in general, the contrary reality is that Nigerians studying abroad are often outstanding in their academic pursuits with many others reportedly excelling in top professions around the world (Iruonagbe et al., 2015).

2.7 CHALLENGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The role of education in the economic and social development of a knowledge-driven society cannot be overemphasised. In response to this fact, many countries of the world are proactive in putting in place educational reforms and policies that will at least meet up with the growing international demands. Nonetheless, the efforts of the Nigerian higher educator system to match up with global education moves are often hampered by a long-standing problem of funding, quality, equity and governance. There are several other challenges facing the Nigerian higher education system, even though very few are documented. Over the years, the poor state and gross neglect of the education sector have been decried, but unfortunately, there has been no significant changes, and so, the situation still lingers. Iruonagbe et al. (2015) suggest that six major challenges require urgent and effective attention before quality education can become a reality in Nigeria. Three of these challenges are said to be primary and largely impacting the other three. The three primary challenges are underfunding, the negative effect of corruption and a valueless political system, and the problem of planning and implementation. These, in turn, lead to these secondary problems, namely, poor teaching and learning outcomes, diminishing research and consultancy traditions, and questionable service to the community. Some of the key challenges are discussed in detail below:

2.7.1 *Low Funding:* The Nigerian government constantly pledges its commitment to the education sector, yet, severe underfunding continues to rock the Nigerian higher education system. The enrolment rate in the country constantly outweighs the government's capacity to finance the HEIs. The sector has reportedly received far lower than the 26 per cent of the annual budget, as recommended by the United Nations. The annual budget proposal of 2017 allocated N448.01 billion to education, representing 6 per cent of the total budget of N7.30 trillion (Premium Times, Dec 2016). Again, this falls short of the budgetary benchmark of UNESCO which was put in place to ensure nations can effectively fund education. In spite of the growing student numbers, recent allocations to education by the Federal government has shown a marginal yearly increase, except for the 2016 allocation (N398.01 billion [$1.083 billion] representing 6.01 per cent of the total budget) that showed a decrease from the preceding years. The figures include N492.34billion ($1.3 billion) in 2015, N493billion ($1.34 billion) in 2014

and N426.53billion ($1.16 billion) in 2013, N400.15billion ($1.089 billion) in 2012, N306.3billion ($834 million) in 2011 and N249.086billion ($678 million) in 2010 (Premium Times, Dec 2016). The issue of underfunding plays out in the state as well as the federal universities. N653.53 billion (10.70 per cent) of the entire N6.1 trillion was allocated to education by 33 states in 2016.

Funding constraints have always impeded education delivery, monitoring and other quality assurance activities (Iruonagbe et al., 2015). This is exemplified by the incessant strike actions in public universities, both federal and state. The Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities went on strike in 2018 to demand an increase in the budgetary allocation to the education sector. Not less than 60 public universities went on strike for more than five months in 2013; this was in relation to demands for funding increase and better employment package for university staff (WENSR, 2017c). According to Pulse (2016), activities in 10 federal and state universities were also paralysed by strike actions in 2016. This distressing occurrence goes a long way in disrupting lectures, causing loss of income for university staff, delaying graduation (a four-year course is rarely completed in four years in a Nigeria public university); all these further diminish the already low trust in the higher education system.

The issue of funding has left most of Nigeria's public university in deteriorating condition; the decay of library resources, laboratory facilities, hostels and other university facilities cannot be overemphasised. Funding constraints also impact negatively on instructional quality such as excessive overcrowding of lecture halls, a rapid increase in student to lecturer ratio as well as severe shortages in qualified faculty members. Nigeria is reported to have the worst student to lecturer ratio in the world; Nigerian public universities have a high number of assistant Professors without a PhD, only 43 per cent of the entire Nigeria's academic staff have doctoral degrees (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2014). All this invariably play a huge role in the poor ranking of Nigerian universities among their world counterparts. It is worth noting that only one of Nigeria's universities – the UI ranking 801- made it to the top 1,000 international university rankings of 2018 according to the [Times Higher Education (THE) Ranking](). Other universities in other African countries like South Africa, Ghana and Uganda were ranked substantially higher.

Consequently, this problem exacerbates the issue of the brain drain in Nigeria as the country is continuously faced with a mass exodus of its experienced faculty members and bright students to countries with better education conditions.

How possible is it for a country to ensure sustainable growth and development without a significant investment in education? The answer is not far-fetched from the argument of Akinnaso (2012) that inadequate funding and clear direction will only leave universities with no option but to engage in routine activities. This is exactly what is obtainable in Nigerian public universities. Periodic development plans abound without any or a shabby form of implementation. Underachievement in both academic and administrative matters has, therefore, become the trademark of public universities in Nigeria.

2.7.2 *Academic corruption and fraud:* The 2016 report of the <u>Corruption Perceptions Index</u> puts Nigeria at 136th position out of 176 countries. Though measuring corruption might not be a straightforward task, the high ranking of Nigeria on the world corruption index largely speaks about the high level of corruption in the county in general and in the education sector in particular. Corruption in the Nigerian education sector is largely due to the limited space in public universities. This is made worse by the low funds allocated to education and even worse by the mismanagement of these funds by some top government and institution officials. Bribery and "personal connections" are employed in gaining admission, and some admissions officers reportedly work with agents to receive bribes from intending students while those who cannot afford to bribe are left with no admission (Osipian, 2013). Another common corruption practice in the Nigerian higher education sector is that the merited slots of some students who have no connection or bribe to offer are given to those who can meet the demands.

Academic fraud and corruption in Nigeria are not only at the admission level. As pointed out by Bretag (2013), it is endemic in all phases of the education system to include cheating during examinations, impersonation, buying of grades/certificates, falsifying academic records, terrorising and assaulting examiners/invigilators and forging results. Despite the efforts of some institutions to curb corruption that has been eating up the education system for decades, this menace seems to be on the increase. One of such efforts was brought to light when the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) introduced the use of biometric fingerprint in admitting students to the SSCE examinations. Further, an elaborate scratch-card system that requires an online pin-code verification was put in place to ascertain the genuineness of exam results. This was in response to the discovery made by WAEC in 2015 that Nigeria had the highest rate of cheating of all the five countries where the exams were being written. The council also cancelled the results of 30,654 candidates and abolished 113 schools that were involved in examination malpractice in 2012 (WENR, 2017c). Some higher education

institutions also engage in fraud and corruption by operating without the approval of the NUC and offering unaccredited programmes.

2.7.3   Admission crisis: Despite the fact that the economic crisis in Nigeria affects scholarship funds for international study, Nigeria remains a vibrant source of international students abroad. The reason lies largely on the unmet demands of higher education to deliver quality teaching and learning resources or seats in institutions and an increase in the number of middle-income families that can afford to send their children abroad, in spite of the rapid expansion of the nation's higher education sector in recent decades. This problem is further compounded by the burgeoning youth population, considering that most of the country's population are below age 24. A considerable number of students seeking admission into the Nigerian HEIs are turned down on a yearly basis since the number of applicants exceeds the available slots. In 2015, about two-thirds of applicants were unable to secure a space at a Nigerian university. Data published by JAMB on its website shows that out of the 1,428,379 candidates that applied to universities in 2015, only 415,500 were admitted. In 2016, 1,579,027 students wrote the UTME - 69.6 per cent applied to federal universities, 27.5 to state universities and less than one per cent to private universities. Although it is argued that there is a significant improvement in the admission ratio of applicants versus university seats from about ten to one a decade ago to two to one currently, an admission crisis still remains one of the biggest challenges of the Nigerian higher education system (ICEF Monitor, 2017). Yearly, over one million of those who are qualified in terms of age and admission requirement have no access to a higher education institution.

2.8   INTERNATIONALISATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and its higher education system has been connected to the Western system through the colonial ties of the 18th century (Alemu, 2014). With over 365 higher institutions of learning, universities inclusive, and an enrolment of 24 million, the Nigerian higher education system is one of the largest in Africa (National Universities Commission, NUC, 2015). Even though the number of international students in the country is meagre (Agbeniga, 2016), Nigeria remains a study destination option for some students, especially from other African countries. Suffice it to say that given the vast higher education system of Nigeria, research on the international student body in the country is almost insignificant. Scholars of student mobility pay little or no attention to internationalisation in Nigeria. There is a wide belief that Nigeria is not a viable study destination for internationally mobile students (Madiche & Madiche, 2015). On the contrary, international students from

some African countries, especially neighbouring countries, such as Cameroon, Liberia and Ghana find the quality of education and scholarship opportunities, inter alia, to be strong motivations to study in Nigeria (Agbeniga, 2016). This does not in any way suggest that students do not come from more developed countries such as the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom; interestingly, such students also find Nigeria to be a viable study destination. Yet, the mere presence of international students in institutions is not tantamount to internationalisation (Urban & Palmer, 2014). According to Urban, "reciprocal learning and the development of intercultural competencies are prerequisites for internationalising and diversifying the Nigerian higher education, thereby helping all students to function in an increasingly globalized society" (Urban, 2012).

Developing an internationalisation agenda is advantageous to promoting the Nigerian higher education brand both locally and internationally, increasing revenue generation streams towards sustainability, delivering social, academic and spiritual impacts on students while also building a graduate portfolio with competence and durable skills for employability in any part of the world (Odon, 2014). One popular way Nigerian higher institutions drive internationalisation is through international partnerships. The question, however, is whether these partnerships are strategic and functional. What happens to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) signed between Nigerian higher institutions and overseas institutions after the excitement and the media frenzy? A lack of knowledge and proactive measures on how to operationalize these MOUs seems to be an issue in the education sector. Nevertheless, a few universities in the country, through their international offices, understand the importance of internationalisation and are taking the right steps towards its implementation. An example of such universities is the University of Benin, which within a year of signing an MOU with Lancaster University in the UK, set up a co-developed Split-site PhD programme as well as an academic-industry forum, to mention a few. Besides internationalisation through partnerships with foreign universities, many private universities are promoting impressive academic and industry linkages with universities in more developed countries. These international linkages which involve exchange programmes involving faculty members and students is a viable way of boosting the education structure of Nigeria while also developing human resources. Together with other policies of the NUC, it is believed that these internationalisation efforts will advance meaningful international practices in the Nigerian higher education landscape.

Internationalisation of higher education in Nigeria is crucial enough to be a national agenda, and as such, there needs to be a holistic and strategic approach (Odon, 2014). It will not be out

of place if all higher institutions in the country are mandated to submit an internationalisation strategy at one time. An overhaul of the entire education system will also not be inapt to allow for international competitiveness in the country. One critical reason why Nigeria should be more proactive in embracing international students is that they contribute positively to the diversity of the society, campus and classrooms. In other words, as indicated by Wu, Garza and Guzman (2015), these students enhance divergent perspectives in the classroom and promote the appreciation and mutual understanding of the world differences, not forgetting that they also positively influence financial input, cultural exchange and academic excellence.

As the Nigerian higher education system makes an effort towards internationalising its institutions and increasing international student enrolment, the experience of these students is a key factor. Hence, it is paramount to understand the academic and sociocultural transition of international students studying in Nigeria, as this will be significant towards a shift from the peripheral to the core of internationalisation in Nigeria.

2.9   CHALLENGES FACED BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS GLOBALLY

A growing number of work explore and report on the diverse challenges faced by international students in their new study environment, irrespective of the host country (Chilvers, 2016; Chira, 2017; Rabia & Karkouti, 2013; Wu, Garza, & Guzman, 2015; Zhang, 2016; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008, Yee, 2014). Popular issues such as academic support, social and cultural integration and, communications are being raised. As opined by Davey et al. (2013), university education should transcend obtaining good grades or professional skill; it is ideal that students acquire a broad social and cultural experience that forms part of their personal growth. Considering the economic benefits international students bring to their host country and host institution in the form of tuition fees, accommodation, books, transportation, meals and other discretionary spending; and their sociocultural and knowledge contributions, the experiences of these students should be given utmost attention. Yet, these students are faced with a couple of challenges including marginalisation, isolation, alienation, racism and low self-esteem (Guo & Guo, 2017). These challenges are reported in Nigeria (Agbeniga, 2017) as well as in other countries such as Australia (Marginson, Nyland, Sawir & Forbes-Mewett, 2010; Ryan & Viete 2009), South Africa (Ralarala, Pineteh, & Mchiza, 2016), New Zealand (Campbell & Li 2007), Canada (Guo & Guo, 2017, Mainich, 2013), Singapore (McClure 2007), the United Kingdom (Chilvers, 2016; Lillyman & Bennett, 2014), and the United States (Heng 2016; Lee & Rice, 2007; Rabia & Karkouti, 2013). While some students only have a rough transition in their first year and have a smooth integration afterwards, others grapple with

difficulties throughout their studies. It is interesting to note that as international students experience a challenging transition, university staff also face difficulties in a bid to manage these students. In tackling these difficulties, institutions devise diverse methods. An example is the Code of Practice formulated by Yee for the Malaysian Ministry in dealing with internationalisation-related problems. These According to Yee, "the code has identified six major scopes in managing international students; (1) Information to international students, (2) Marketing and recruitment of international students, (3) Enrolment of international students, (4) Fees, (5) International student support services and (6) Grievances & appeals." These experiences are examined under the two subsequent headings.

2.10   SOCIO-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

It has been established in the literature on international students that both the social and cultural milieu are important in determining the success of international students in a host country (Adebanji & Gumbo, 2014; Pearce & Lin, 2007; Yin, 2013). These socio-cultural milieus, therefore, play an essential role in either engendering or hampering a smooth transition for these set of students as they negotiate a new way of life in a new environment. As noted by Adebanji and Gumbo (2014), the socio-cultural background of a student is formed by a combination of ethnic, linguistic, societal and chronological forces pervasive at a certain place and time. One of the major elements of a smooth transition into an unfamiliar learning environment is learning the culture of the host country and institution (McInnis, 2001). Research on campus culture and the experiences of Chicano students carried out by Gonzalez (2002) in a predominantly white university asserts that the culture of an educational institution is jointly created by the attendees of that institution. This assertion can be said to have stemmed from the contributions of the diverse cultural elements brought to play by both domestic and international students coupled with their co-existence in the same institution. Similarly, a study conducted by Hellsten (2002) with international students in Australia reveals that the cultural experiences of the students play a significant role in shaping their academic experiences. Substantiating the findings of Hellsten, a study conducted by Rusell, Rosenthal and Thomson (2010) among 900 international students in Australia likewise found that 41 per cent of the students experience stress which could basically be as a result of culture shock. While students often display an interest in the enculturation process of the host institution, they sometimes encounter some unfamiliar assumptions that lead to a perceived culture shock (Ramburuth, 2001). Yam (2016) opines that culture is central to the experience of studying abroad. What

these studies imply is that international students should be educated on what to expect in terms of culture from their host institution and country.

The sociocultural experiences of international students also refer to social interaction with peers, institutional leaders and others in the society. In other words, it relates to how well international students fit into the society in which they are studying. Social experiences include dealing with everyday problems such as buying groceries, taking the correct buses or asking for help. A study conducted by Talebloo and Baki (2013) with international students in a Malaysian university found that the students faced a problem with the English accent of staff; the accent was not comprehensive and clear enough to the students. This made learning and classroom interactions difficult for most of them. More so, the problem of communication engenders misunderstandings between the students and their lecturers, especially in the first year of study. This results in isolation by international students, who would rather keep to themselves than get entangled in an unpleasant web of interaction with locals. For example, Li, Nguyen and Choi (2019) carried out a study on the struggles of 14 international students with native speakers using the ethnographic method. The findings show that international students often pretend to understand the conversation content with native English speakers to avoid discussing any form of misunderstanding. In the Nigerian contexts, culture reflects the value of every Nigerian community, and it is therefore held in high esteem. International students may sometimes encounter values conflicting with their Nigerian counterparts. Although Nigerians are regarded as friendly and welcoming towards international students and foreigners in general, sometimes the cultural demands from the citizens, especially senior citizens, can be overwhelming. Irrespective of the level of preparedness of international students for their study destination, the experience of culture shock in Nigeria remains almost inevitable (Agbeniga, 2016). Ranging from the mode and tone of greeting, facial expressions, mode of dressing, and body language to food matters, international students might have difficulty adapting to the system. On getting to the country and relating with people as well as watching events unfold, international students are likely to have a feeling of disappointment on realising that what they have heard or seen about Nigeria is not a true representation of the country.

Some recurring topics in literature on the sociocultural experiences of international students include the following:

2.10.1 Culture shock: One of the common phrases that describe the dilemma of cultural differences is culture shock (Townsend & Poh, 2008). This is a term that is recurring in most

scholarly work that deals with international students experiences ((Bamford, 2008; Chilvers, 2016; Lillyman & Bennett, 2014; Pretorius & Small, 2007; Rabia & Karkouti, 2013; Ralarala, 2016; Vandeyar & Vandeyar, 2011; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008) Culture shock as described by Brown and Holloway (2008) is "anxiety that occurs from losing familiar signs and symbols of social interaction"; and according to Lillyman and Bennett (2014), "it is a period of mourning for one's cultural context."

From the aforementioned literature, it is evident that culture shock is an ever-present predicament confronting international students in many countries that embrace internationalisation, though it may vary in magnitude from country to country and institution to institution. Bamford (2008) and Mainich (2013) mention that international students in the UK and Canada respectively, amongst other things, suffered culture shock due to isolation – making friends with natives was difficult for these students.

2.10.2 Food: Food poses a major cultural challenge to some international students as they struggle to come to terms with entirely different food. Although the issue of food might not come across as strikingly important at first, research posits out that students find food to be emotional and physically important, and it is considered an aspect that is not likely to change (Taylor & Ali, 2017). Some Chinese students in Leong's (2015) study lamented on the difficulty they encountered in getting used to American foods, especially junk foods. Even in situations where these students were able to get Chinese foods to buy, the food was regarded as not being authentically Chinese and being "Americanised", having been loaded with sugar, salt and preservatives.

A similar complaint was recorded in the case of international students studying at one of Nigeria's foremost private universities (Agbeniga, 2017). The participants in the study, particularly those from East Africa, Europe and America, complained of how they felt homesick and experienced culture shock because of Nigerian foods. The food was regarded as too spicy, and to make the situation worse, these students had no other option but to endure the food as they were not allowed to cook their own foods in their dormitories. As one of the vehicles of maintaining their cultural identity, it is apparent that food is a key influence in determining the wellbeing and general comfort of international students in a host country (Mainich, 2013). The lack of access to familiar foods can cause a feeling of homesickness and nostalgic thoughts of home, based on international students' emotional attachment to home food (Taylor & Ali, 2017).

2.10.3 Loneliness/homesickness: Due to the absence of established family support and a social network in the first couple of months or weeks, as the case may be, international students may experience loneliness and homesickness (Yin, 2013). Data collected through a questionnaire by Barron et al. (2009) in their research with international postgraduate students at a Scottish university found that loneliness and homesickness were ranked as the highest living problem encountered by these set of students. This is consistent with the experiences of Chinese students at a Canadian university as reported by Guo and Guo (2017); these students complained of difficulties in connecting with domestic students. These difficulties were mainly due to linguistic, sociocultural and lifestyle differences, coupled with a lack of opportunities for interaction; international students also complained of the unwillingness from domestic students to form meaningful relationships with them. Worse still, some international students experienced neo-racism in the form of verbal insults and direct confrontation from local students (Brown & Jones, 2013; Lee & Rice, 2007). International students often perceive all these as outright discrimination and exclusion, which leave many of them feeling lonely and homesick.

2.10 ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

Academic experiences among international students have to do with classroom experiences, teaching and learning style, academic demands or workload, curriculum, academic support and student-faculty relationship. Because they came from different educational backgrounds, international students often find the academic and classroom experiences of their host countries to be different from what they are used to in their home countries. Language is considered one of the greatest issues that hinder a smooth academic adjustment for international students (Galloway & Jenkins, 2005; Zhang, 2016). For a long time, the English language has been regarded as a crucial pointer of internationalisation as well as an indicator for both professional and career development (Tsui, Yung & Ngo, 2017). Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) mentioned that the English language is regarded as the most crucial feature and yet the greatest area of concern in graduate employability in Australia. This is confirmed by a survey finding documented in the Australian Education International (AEI, 2010) which showed that 70% of employers believed that communications skills in general and English language, in particular, should receive a higher focus in the Australian education. This is particularly true about international students in the UK who are non- English speakers, as reported by Bamford (2008), even though these students are required to meet the minimum language requirement in the form of TOEFL and IELTS scores. Meeting this requirement, however, does not guarantee that these students

will be conversant with the technical terminologies used in their academic class and environment, particularly postgraduate students who had to engage mainly in an independent study. Notably, linguistic incompetence could lead to poor academic performance among international students. These students have different skills and different levels of English (Talebloo & Baki, 2013); hence, getting familiar with a new way of learning and thinking becomes a concern to them (Lin, 2010). Consequently, they face difficulties in terms of communicating in the classroom, dealing with the workload, relating to faculty and other unexpected academic situations (Alavi & Mansor, 2011). Some of these students encounter 'learning shock' (Gu, 2005) as a result of the host country's alien pedagogic academic methods resulting in confusion and frustration and in turn affecting students' learning in a negative way.

Some researchers refer to the academic difficulties encountered by international students. One such is the findings from the survey on staff's experiences of international students at the UQ in Australia administered by Probertson, Line, Jones and Thomas (2000). Responses show that the staff criticised international students for not making impressive academic progress; due to the students' poor language proficiency. Similarly, the experience of Liu (2011) as an international student in Canada exemplifies the struggles of language proficiency as a contributor to academic difficulty. She stated that her deficient English language abilities made her involvement in classroom activities and discussions and the absorption of the material covered difficult. This would cause the professor to form a negative impression of her, thinking that she was not sufficiently prepared for the class. Beoku-Betters (2004) observed a similar pattern in African female scientists who were following graduate courses in Western universities. The findings demonstrate that the abilities of international students to complete course tasks within the stipulated times and also take remedial classes were often criticised by their professors. This, in turn, led international students to perceive that the professors had a prejudicial attitude towards them and that they were not given the required academic support. However, in actual fact, faculty members also bear some frustrations in understanding and adjusting to the needs of international students who are undergoing a tough transition, as observed by Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) and Murray (2010). It can, therefore, be said that international students lack adequate academic support.

Bridging modules from one faculty to another has been suggested as one of the ways to alleviate academic tension for students (Winter & Dismore, 2010). In South Africa for instance, the foundation phase initiative was set up to bridge the gap between the secondary school curricula and that of higher education; this was particularly essential to boost the linguistic and

acculturation levels of French-speaking first-year students in a selected South African university (Adebanji & Gumbo, 2014). In addition to the foregoing, the following relevant aspects of academic experiences have been identified from the literature.

2.10.1 Accent: A survey conducted by Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) with 140 Asian students in an Australian university found that the colloquial expressions of the Australian accent and the fast pace with which natives speak compounded the English language difficulty of this set of students. These students also alleged that they would rather keep quiet during discussion than speak up and be laughed at because of their accent. Some of them, however, made friends with native speakers to get familiar with their accent or improve their English. Lecturers or tutors will, however, find it difficult to decipher the level of linguistic competence and general understanding if they refuse to speak up in class.

2.10.2 Teaching/learning style: Disparity in the teaching style from what an international student is familiar with could pose an academic difficulty. In some countries, the dominant teaching style is rote learning where the lecturer dishes out instructions while, in others, an interactive teaching style where the students also contribute in the form of class discussion is employed. For instance, research done with international visiting students at a public university in Turkey revealed the teaching style to be one of the problems faced by students (Bavlı, 2017). The participants of this research complained that lecturers adopted the lecture and rote teaching methods in place of the practical and experience-based method that could foster critical thinking in students. In contrast, the Asian learning approach focuses on memorisation and high achievement levels; it is teacher-centred (Yeoh & Terry, 2013). This approach is different from the Western-style, which is more student-focused. International students are left with no choice but to adapt to a foreign teaching and learning style, and also adjust to what Barron et al. (2009:9) term as a "narrowly defined set of classroom behaviours". These students consequently devise strategies of coping, which often translates into harder work to succeed. The unfamiliar teaching style notwithstanding, international students tend to be more academically successful than their domestic counterparts (Barron et al., 2009; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; Ralarala et al., 2016).

2.10.3 Classroom communication/Language of instruction: The language barrier is reportedly one of the top challenges faced by international students in their transition phase to their host institution (Leong, 2015). Bavlı (2017), in his interview with international students in Turkey, found that lecturers were prone to speaking Turkish in class instead of English

because of their deficiency in English, although the participants alluded to the fact that their English language competence had improved by the end of their programme. International students involved in research carried out by Davey et al. (2013) had their language problem compounded by the mix of Australian colloquialism and unfamiliar accents they encountered. Similarly, some international students in one of the prominent universities in Nigeria complained about how some lecturers had the habit of mixing their native language with English while they teach, not minding the fact that not all the students in a class are locals (Agbeniga, 2016). This is consistent with the findings of Teichler (2012) that one of the academic challenges faced by students is following lectures in a foreign language.

2.11 ACCULTURATION

Acculturation is an important subject in the discourse of the experiences of international students. It extends beyond learning and embracing a new way of life to the conscious ability of foreigners outgrowing their home culture and imbibing the culture of the host society. Broadly defined, acculturation is how an immigrant adapts to the social, cultural and psychological situation of the host country (Martinez & Colaner, 2017). Adebanji and Gumbo (2014), in their study on French-speaking students in a South African university, opine that while general communication is a cogent tool for daily interaction and information retrieval, verbal communication remains a major platform for the exchange of ideas. They note that the degree to which a student acculturate is an indicator of the degree to which that student intermingles with the host environment. Over two decades ago, Berry (1995) argued that acculturation is the manner in which international students negotiate the opportunities and challenges within their disposal. It is also argued that students who relate with the language and people of a host society are likely to be more successful than students who are keen on retaining their own unique identity.

A couple of factors affect acculturation; these include country of origin, social support and English language proficiency (Nasirudeen, Josephine, Adeline, Seng & Ling, 2014). These factors suggest why international students experience transition and overall satisfaction differently (Leong, 2015). For example, an international student in Nigeria from another West African country such as Ghana or Liberia might experience less acculturative stress than a student from outside Africa. While the former is familiar with the language, culture, social contexts of Nigeria and is more prepared to handle both institutional and societal demands, the latter is not. Likewise, Europeans studying in the US were seen to encounter a higher level of social support and overall satisfaction based on their familiarity with the American lifestyle

and English fluency (Lee & Rice, 2007; Yan & Berliner, 2013; Yeh & Inose, 2003). This contrasts with their non-European counterparts such as students from Asia who experienced acculturative stress, and even greater acculturative stress for those who associate mainly with co-ethnics (Lee & Rice, 2007; Yan & Berliner, 2013; Yeh & Inose, 2003). In the same vein, European and North American students in Norway reportedly experienced smoother acculturation than their Asian or African counterparts (Sam, 2001). The variance in their levels of acculturation depended largely on their countries of origin. Other notable reasons include friendship, perceived discrimination, finances and information received before studying abroad.

2.12 THE IMPACT OF TRANSITION EXPERIENCES ON ATTRACTION, RETENTION AND ATTRITION

From the preceding, one can say that institutions need to be aware that many international students regard studying abroad as an investment and as such are calculative of the outcome to see whether it pays off or not. This is based on what O'Neil and Palmer (2004) refer to as the service quality in higher education, which is the difference in the expectations of a student in comparison with his/her perception of actual delivery. The recognition of interdependency between recruitment and retention should spur institutions towards providing realistic expectations for international students and ensuring their needs are met. Further, a high rate of student retention can bring about a high rate of degree attainment (Rabia & Karkouti, 2017). According to Schulmann and Choudaha (2014), a disjointed recruitment approach that focuses on high enrollment rate alone is not sustainable for retention. There is pressure on higher education to uphold a balance between enrolling international students and retaining them for a sustainable internationalisation future of an institution (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016).

In the Nigerian context, however, there is a lack of tight coupling between attracting international students and retaining them. Many higher education institutions in Nigeria show laxity in their efforts to attract international students, and those that are successful in attracting a few of them do not demonstrate adequate knowledge to retain them; hence, there is a high attrition rate (Robert-Okah, 2014). Retaining them can only be possible if they pay attention to the experiences of international students and devise strategic ways of meeting their various needs.

A lot of factors are crucial in determining the retention rate. One of them has to do with the way students can cope with their transition experiences. Students who are homesick because

they do not have any form of social support or students who experience language and cultural barriers are unlikely to contribute to retention success. Another important but almost silent factor in the literature that contributes to the retention rate, as noted by Rabia and Karkouti (2017), is finance. According to these authors, finance goes hand-in-hand with retention; international students might drop out of school due to financial challenges, even if they are well adjusted into the system. An important aspect of the enrolment cycle is ensuring continuous improvement in the experiences of international students. Understanding how to meet the expectations of these students is dependent on understanding their unique and diverse needs. In other words, a detailed appreciation of the personal impressions of international students, as well as the associated investments in facilities and services, are requisite for a strategic and successful approach for enrolling and retaining them. The argument of Fernandes (2016) is consistent with that of Yee (2014), they see a correlation between the experiences of international students and the continuous success of an institution or country in attracting them. Fernandes (2006) is of the opinion that the academic and lifestyle experiences of students will inform their perception of their host institution and consequently determine the promotion of either positive or negative word of mouth. Word of mouth is a powerful tool engaged by international students in promoting or demoting an institution. Happy university alumni are involved in marketing the institution for active recruitment upon returning to their home country (Davey et al., 2013). This is buttressed by the findings of Chira (2017), where 40 per cent of international students interviewed commented that their decision to study in Canada was based on the testimony of relatives and members of their social networks that Canada is a welcoming country. In the case of Nigeria, a set of international students studying in the highest-ranked private university and the highest-ranked public university (according to Webometrics ranking of 2016) in the country are torn between encouraging their peers in their home countries to study in Nigeria or discouraging them from the decision (Agbeniga, 2016). While some of these students had a positive perception of the country as a friendly study destination, others had a negative perception. The decision to either promote or demote the country is largely dependent on the experiences of these international students. This highlights the importance of ensuring international students have a positive experience, although some had a positive country experience and a negative institutional experience, and vice versa; it still hinges on the fact that a smooth transition in both the country and the institution of study is non-negotiable.

2.13 BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN EXPECTATION AND REALITY: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES TO IMPROVE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' TRANSITION EXPERIENCES

Students' expectations play a vital role in determining their transition into the host institution's academic, social and cultural contexts (Rabia & Karkouti, 2017). Tinto (1975) proposes that a likely framework adopted by students in checking and cross-checking their higher education experience is the appraisal of how the institution meets their expectations. This suggests that a strong relationship exists between students' expectations and their reality, and consequently, determines how they will handle a transition. Institutions that have a well-grounded knowledge of the challenges encountered by students, as well as the unpalatable experiences that could lead to attrition, will be well-positioned to address the matters that lead to dissatisfaction, and at the same time prevent a future enrolment decline (Schulmann & Choudaha, 2014).

According to Schulmann and Choudada (2014), Griffith University in Queensland, Australia, embarked on a comprehensive study to find out the problems related to retention and attrition after being rated the second-worst Australian university in terms of student retention in 2005. The university discovered that factors such as personal problems, academic challenges and a misfit between international students' expectations and school life were responsible for the high rate of attrition. On realising the significance of interactions between international and local students, Griffith University embarked on the "Student Linx" programme; an event aimed at uniting both groups of students through entertainment such as the Global Network BBQ and the International Trivia. The university also found that attrition issues were traceable to inadequate English language abilities. To combat this, the university instituted the Griffith English language enhancement strategy, a program that encompassed English HELP and the English language enhancement strategy. This helped to attain an increase in admission standard for English. Similarly, based on the research and theories of Vincent Tinto (1975), Curtin University in Perth came up with some guidelines for retaining students. As much as the guidelines provided some frameworks for understanding student retention, it also provided some practical steps to follow to curb student attrition. More so, most Australian universities realise that even though English as a Second Language (ESL) students may meet the minimum requirement to gain admission into the university, a considerable effort in English is required for the successful completion of their degree (Birrel & Healy, 2008). Inadequate English skill or the lack of English resources will frustrate both students and faculty (Bretag, 2007). The universities, therefore, offer different ways of academic support to international students such as the implementation of academic language assessment tests to recognise those that need

additional specialised support (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016). Also, the UQ in Australia, in a bid to combat the sociocultural issues faced by students, include some practical issues in their orientation sessions such as how to open a bank account (Barron et al., 2009).

One finding made about the United Kingdom is that the experiences of international students are characterised by a feeling of negativity and isolation caused by a lack of social integration. While one-third of the international students studying in the UK agreed that the institutions were only concerned about the exorbitant amount of money they would get from them, more than half of the students expressed that they felt unwelcome (Schullman & Choudaha, 2014). At the University of East London, for example, it was found that international and local students have different ways of integrating into the system. The university then commenced giving pre-departure briefings where students can have a one-on-one meeting with representatives from the university who will tell them of what to expect and bring along, while also answering the students' basic questions. The university also renders an airport pick up service and a five-day welcome programme where vital information on adjustment to the UK lifestyle is shared. All these actions are geared towards making sure the students are well integrated into campus life right from the first week of school. Similarly, the University of Hull kicked off a programme tagged "Go Connect", which runs 35 events per annum. Since its inception in 2009, the programme, which provides networking, learning and cultural exchange amongst students, has recorded an average growth of 71 per cent per year and 15 per cent participation from its total student population. So far, it encourages internationalisation on campus and helps to develop participants' skills with a focus on employability.

According to World Education News and Reviews (2014), the recruitment of international students in Canada has gained significance at both governmental and institutional levels. The government regards the presence of international students in the country as a way of attracting highly skilled immigrants from around the world; and as such, international students are retained beyond graduation from their respective institutions. More so, international education in Canada has taken on a federal policy approach. A study carried out at the University of Windsor reveals that international students encounter a series of difficulties relating to learning, cultural adjustment, academic support issues, language difficulty, financial issues and isolation, to mention a few. To combat these issues, two recommended practices emerged. One, recruiters must ascertain that they provide adequate information about the university to intending students to bridge the gap between expectation and school life reality. Two, support services must be widely advertised to students, faculty and staff to ensure they are maximally harnessed.

Moreover, Canadian universities adopted diverse approaches aimed at improving international students' experiences. For instance, the University of British Columbia launched an international student initiative that enables both local and international students to embark on a weekly tour for the purpose of integration and connecting recruitment and retention efforts. Apart from this initiative, there are joint efforts within and across the various departments of the university to provide assistance programmes to international students to ensure they are not overwhelmed by the challenges they face at the institution. In the same vein, the University of Toronto Scarborough created the Green Path programme for the acculturation of its growing Chinese student population. The goal is to ensure Chinese students are well adjusted into the university system through research skills development, active participation, understanding academic integrity and learning. In addition, the programme features acculturation measures such as a 12-week summer residential experience programme and a 12-week summer academic preparation programme.

Despite an increased focus on international student recruitment in the United States, inadequate knowledge about the rate of retention and attrition in its higher institutions of learning remains an issue, with research often limited in scope or specific types of institutions. This led the Association of International Educators (AIE) to conduct a study to expand the current knowledge on international students' retention in the United States. It was found that institutional types are pivotal to the issues affecting international students' retention. For example, while 39 per cent of students at Baccalaureate institutions were not satisfied with affordability, only 32 per cent of students at doctorate-granting institutions were dissatisfied. Also, 46 per cent of undergraduate students at the master's awarding institutions expressed dissatisfaction with access to jobs and internship, compared to only 27 per cent of students at Baccalaureate institutions. Findings also revealed that institutions and students have varying reasons why students leave before graduation. The top three reasons cited by students have to do with internships, affordability and availability of scholarship whereas the top-three reasons cited by institutions for student attrition are transfers to a better institution, academic difficulties and financial challenges.

Just as in the case of Canada, international students in the US also experience a mismatch between expectation and reality. As suggested by Wu, Garza and Guzman (2015), it is therefore important for institutions to sincerely orientate the students on their academic expectations and financial commitment prior to enrolment to ensure that students do not end up in an institution that does not meet their expectations; while at the same time coordinating internationalisation

efforts across various departments of the institution. To restructure their international student orientation, the Office of Global Programs at the Pennsylvania State University partnered with the Office for Student Orientation and Transition Programs and other related departments. This orientation programme is a three-day immersive programme where international students are divided into small, intimate groups while domestic and international campus stakeholders get involved in their lives and assist them in integrating faster into campus life. At the University of Chicago, on the other hand, the committee on the International Student Experience discovered that international students are faced with funding challenges. The committee then came up with the strategy of providing and improving a transparent central information system on student finances and funding availability as well as eligibility. Binghamton University goes a step further by fostering integration and retention before enrolment. This is done through unique online services such as the e-buddy programme in connection with students already on campus. In turn, the gap between expectation and reality is bridged to a considerable degree as international students already have access to vital information through the search process.

2.14 INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' TRANSITION EXPERIENCES

Diversity contributes to a dynamic and vibrant institutional environment; international students are great stakeholders in bringing a colourful atmosphere to a campus; hence, their experiences cannot be ignored. While it may be natural to experience stress in a bid to succeed academically, this stress could be compounded by socio-cultural challenges for international students (Martinez & Colaner, 2017). A pro-active approach is required by higher education institutions and its stakeholders in responding to the needs of international students to ensure that they not only have a smooth transition but also have a positive overall experience. Precisely put, Volet and Ang (1998, p. 21) mention that "Tertiary institutions have a social responsibility to design learning environments which foster students" developments on intercultural adaptability." It is worth noting that the challenges faced by international students could be an entirely new experience as some may not have encountered such programmes in their previous educational context.

The discussions on how host countries and academic institutions benefit from international students are indeed relevant. However, a more balanced and relevant discussion would be how host societies and institutions could support international students for a smooth transition and overall wellbeing. It might not be possible to relieve international students completely of their stress, but some measure can be put in place to assist these students in reducing their stress

levels considerably (Lillyman & Bennett, 2014). The following ideas drawn from the literature have been proposed as part of the measure for the smooth transition of international students from their home to the host country and institution.

2.15.1 Orientation: One of the uses of orientation is that it gives international students an initial sense of belonging in their new environment. It prepares students early enough on what to expect and this, in turn, has the capability of leading to positive academic outcomes, guarding against negative experiences of discrimination (Martinez & Colaner, 2017) and alleviating culture shock. Students are prone to encounter challenges in their transition phase that they may not know how to deal with; orientation, therefore, should not be a one-off exercise (Guo & Guo, 2017). It should be an on-going exercise for a considerable duration or at least until international students have settled in. appreciably. Barron et al. (2009) argue about the importance of providing students with essential information and support sessions on learning and living in a foreign country not only before arrival but also throughout their studies. Orientation could also be in the form of students' engagement in academic and social activities on campus. This will make them integrate better and faster as they realise their institution's commitment to their wellbeing. An example of how orientation provides transitional assistance to international students is noted in the study of Kovtun (2011). The international students who took part in the first-year orientation classes (i) gained an understanding of social diversity in the US, (ii) enhanced their psychological development, (iii) improved their writing skill, oral presentations and research, and (iv) developed self-confidence and positive attitude. Preston and Wang (2017) point out a different view from the traditional view of orientation. They posit that not only international students should attend orientation activities, but local students should attend as well, as this will promote intercultural competence and bring about rich international versus local students' interaction.

2.15.2 Peer mentoring/support: Due to the overwhelming feeling that accompanies studying in an unfamiliar context, being mentored by a peer could help international students settle in quickly into their new environment. In such a case, the peer will be a student who has successfully navigated the transition phase and who provide guidance and support to assist the new student also to have a smooth transition. The question may arise as to whether the peer should be a home student or a fellow international student from the same country or another. Whatever the case may be, each instance has its advantage. While peering with a home student will boost socio-cultural diversity, peering with a fellow international student will make the

new student feel more at home. It will also be important to consider a peer who has passed through the academic path the new student is about to begin. Peer mentoring as advocated by Bamford (2008) and Taylor and Ali (2017) could help in the area of language difficulty, study skill, course content, sociocultural adjustment and assessment approaches. Chilvers (2016) refers to peer mentoring as PASS, i.e. Peer Assisted Study Sessions, where second and third-year students are trained to assist new international students through a course-based learning community aimed at developing confidence, study skills and understanding of course material as well as friendships. The introduction of PASS in a UK university facilitates social integration amongst students of different nationalities, increases a communal sense of belonging and aids a smooth socio-cultural transition into the UK HE (Chilvers, 2016). Martinez & Colaner (2017) suggest the dual function of peer mentoring – while it reduces acculturative stress for international students, it also aids the cultural competence and language skills of both international and domestic students.

2.15.3 Language support classes: It has been reported in literature spanning international students' experiences that language is one of the key factors that impair adjustment (Rabia & Karkouti, 2017; Ralarala et al., 2016; Taylor & Ali, 2017; Yeoh & Terry, 2013). The role of language support classes in making adjustment smooth for international students, especially English as a Second Language (ESL) students, goes a long way in impacting positively on their adjustment. Joining a language support group is a great way for these students to improve their communication skill, make friends with local students, feel more confident academically and feel less frustrated about quitting school. The input of language support classes proved successful to Chinese students studying in the United Kingdom (Bamford, 2008), Arab students in the United States (Rabia & Karkouti, 2017) and Asian students in Australia (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016).

2.15.4 Classroom interaction: This will break the cultural and language barrier while also promoting the same between home and international students. Jackson (2003) reiterated the importance of class interaction as an essential way of building "considerable rapport" among diverse groups of students; this is effective for teaching and learning. Also, promoting interaction among students will help them understand one another's accent. Interaction, it is believed, will not end in the classroom; it has a tendency also to encourage social networks among students from diverse backgrounds. In his article on international students at a UK university, Chilvers (2016) builds on the work of Lave and Wenger's learning theory of 1991

which posits learning to be a social process that takes place within a given context. This is termed Communities of Practice (CoP) – a concept which has been adopted in exploring various levels of higher education, including student transition. The implication of CoP for this study is that it could foster interactions amongst students from diverse backgrounds as they identify friendship groups and learning communities they could join upon arrival at a university, within and outside the classroom. Hence, building steady relationships with course mates has a positive impact on integration and transition and consequently, retention.

2.15.5 Faculty support and follow-up: Faculty members are part of the major drivers of the internationalisation effort of an institution (Santhi, 2010). They play an essential role in determining the transition of international students through maintaining a stable student-faculty relationship. Lecturers and professors are in a good position to encourage and assist international students in adjusting to their host environment if they understand the challenges faced by these students. One of the findings from the research of Rabia and Karkouti (2017) revealed that Arab students studying in the US found the support and cooperation of faculty members very helpful in their academic adjustment.

2.15.6 Administrative support: The first few weeks or months of arrival in a foreign environment is reportedly the most crucial time of adjustment for international students. These students are often faced with accommodation issues, visa problems, finding their way around campus and town, where to shop, etc. (Cremonini & Antonowics, 2009). Support from university administrative staffs on arrival and till the students settle in considerably into the new environment is therefore non-negotiable. This kind of support will help ease acculturative stress while also enabling international students to become familiar with the hitherto unfamiliar environment. The presence of a functional international office that responds promptly to the needs of international students will be a great asset in the transition process.

2.15.7 Staff development/competency: Bamford (2008) maintains that it is essential to educate staff members on cultural diversity, expressions and expectations, and to disabuse their mentality from some preconceived stereotypical patterns of some culture as this will help in improving the learning and transition experiences of international students. Both academic and non-academic staff will benefit from this form of development as they all play important roles in the different dimensions of the internationalisation of higher education (Yee, 2014). Part of this development will make staff aware of the importance of inculcating knowledge from various cultures into their course content and teaching styles (Preston & Wang, 2017). In

addition, it will increase their sensitivity towards cultural diversity and make them pay more attention to even the non-verbal communications displayed by students. Institutional support in the form of curricular and non-curricular activities that enhance international students' learning and development is important towards the success of students (Martinez & Colaner, 2017). Staff development will, in turn, relieve university staff of the stress they undergo in dealing with the unusual needs and characteristics of international students (Yee, 2014)..

2.15.8 Financial considerations: One of the arguments that surfaces in the discourse of internationalisation is whether countries and institutions are actually embracing the phenomena for the purpose it is meant to serve or merely for the financial gains derived from it (Yee, 2014). Financial considerations largely influence international students' study destinations (Davey et al., 2013). Students, especially those who cannot afford huge fees and who have no scholarship offer, choose to study where they can afford the tuition fees and living expenses. Financial considerations can be offered to students in the form of reduced tuition fee, lower cost of living, subsidised textbook prices and part-time job opportunities (Leong, 2015). For example, 70 per cent of the participants in a study conducted by Chira (2017) chose Atlantic Canada as the top study destination mainly due to the comparatively low tuition and living expenses. In the same vein, 38 per cent of African students enrolled in a US institution suggested the availability of scholarships or financial aid as the reason for the choice of the institution (UIS, 2018). Institutions with competitive tuition fees or scholarships are therefore well-positioned to attract international students. This migratory trajectory also plays out when students prefer to study in their region rather than go to a distant country.

2.15 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts the Schlossberg's Transition Theory. This theory was first propounded by Nancy Schlossberg in 1981 and has since undergone some developmental stages over the years. Scaffolding from the work of a number of other researchers such as Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) and Neugarten (1979), Schlossberg's theory originated out of the need to develop a systematic framework that would serve as a vehicle through which human adaptation to transitions in life can be analysed. Schlossberg, Lynch and Chickering (1989) explain how the transition theory can be used to "support higher education students' experiences through a variety of responses needed to accommodate the heterogeneity of learners at the various levels they find themselves in the transition process." Often referred to as an Adult Development Theory, Schlossberg's theory of transition is also relevant to

traditionally aged students as they cross from college to the university (Evans et al., 2010). Schlossberg (1981) expresses that transition can be said to take place if an event or non-event brings about a change in assumption about oneself or the world at large, which in turn necessitates a reciprocal change in ones' behaviour and relationships. Non-events have been included in Schlossberg's description of a transition to make it inclusive of not only obvious life changes such as school graduation and marriage but also subtle changes such as the loss of a career. In her collaborative work with other authors, a transition is defined as "any event or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions and roles" (Goodman, Schlossberg & Anderson, 2006, p.33). According to the theory, students can experience three types of transition, namely, "anticipated", "unanticipated" and "non-events." An anticipated transition is an event that happens expectedly, as expected, such as graduating from the university. An unanticipated transition is an event that was not scheduled to happen, but which happened unexpectedly, such as being expelled from school. A "non-event" transition is one in which an individual expected something to happen, but it never happened, for example, not graduating with a distinction as expected.

According to Schlossberg (2011), it is not the transition itself that is of the utmost importance; rather, it is the way a student adapts to the four aspects of transition in a new environment. These four aspects are regarded as the 4S's, and they influence the way individual copes with the transition. They are: 'Situation', 'Self', 'Support' and 'Strategies'. The first 'S', "situation" refers to the variables that trigger transition such as timing, role change, previous experience with a similar transition, the duration of the transition (permanent, temporary or uncertain), personal assessment of the transition as well as other forms of concurrent stress one might be going through (Evans, Forney & Guido, 1998). For international students, a transition can be triggered by any of these variables, and so, the way they handle the situation will determine how well they cope with it. For example, the way a previous similar transition was handled will most likely have an implication on the coping mechanism of an international student in a current similar situation. The second 'S', "self", has to do with a person's personal and demographic features coupled with psychological resources. Personal and demographic features include gender, age, country of origin, cultural heritage, socio-economic status, phase of life and health condition. Psychological resources include personal values and beliefs, level of spirituality, ego and self-esteem. All these affect international students' view of life and consequently, their transition process. The aspect of "self" could also be employed in explaining why some international students cope with transition better than others. The third

'S', "support", influences an individual's ability to cope with a transition based on the level of support received from family, friends, institution, community and intimate relationships. Support could come in the form of affirmation, aid and honest feedback. Being away from home for the first time, the level of support received from the host society and host institution could go a long way in helping international students settle faster and experience an easy transition. For example, a study conducted by Taylor and Ali (2017) depicted the successful academic transition of Asian students in the United Kingdom through language support classes. The fourth 'S', "strategies" refer to the means adopted by individuals in coping with a transition. While some persons cope by modifying the situation, some control the meaning of the problem while others adopt methods of managing stress (Evans et al., 2010). As advocated by Goodman et al. (2006), the best way one can cope with stress is to adopt multiple strategies and be flexible.

Although some studies allude to the fact that the experiences of international students differ across countries and universities (Roberts & Dunworth, 2012), this can be regarded as a normal phenomenon, considering that these students are from diverse sociocultural backgrounds. The similarities or dissimilarities of international students notwithstanding; language, academic and sociocultural support are requisite to help students navigate effectively through their transition experience. Based on the argument of Schlossberg and Chickering (1995), the perception of students of their transition process determines the positivity or negativity of their overall experiences. Having established this, institutional authorities can use the knowledge of students' circumstances to help them transform their experiences into positive ones as much as possible (Schlossberg, 2011), especially during the early months of adjustment, also regarded as the transition phase. More so, the transition theory provides necessary information at an institutional level to ensure students get effective support through their various experiences and eventually move out as students who have developed valuable life skills for a bright future (Sengupta, 2015).

Similarly, Evans et al. (2010) use the Schlossberg's Transition Theory to explain the many challenges students face in a multicultural institute, which have either a short or long-term effect on their lives. Using this theory, they also detail how students enrolled in higher institutions of learning can experience a smooth transitioning from a familiar environment to an unfamiliar one. Some studies (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011; Lin, 2010; Urban & Palmer, 2014; Yam, 2016) have also explored the hurdles international students studying in various higher

institutions of learning across the world have to cross. Some of these hurdles are language difficulty, social experiences, cultural adjustment, misunderstanding in communication with faculty, staff and peers, financial problems and feelings of loneliness, among others (Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2014). As much as there is a uniqueness about these students' experiences across different countries and institutions, similar experiences also exist. For example, it is reported that international students in Australia encounter problems with language, culture and adjustment in their host institutions (Ashton-Hay, Wignell, & Evans, 2016). Similarly, Agbeniga (2016) found that international students studying in selected Nigerian universities are often confronted with socio-cultural challenges. Gale and Parker (2014, p. 737) define transition as "the capability to navigate change" while also arguing that the concept of transition has been properly theorised and has been dependent only on three different approaches. These include "induction" (T_1) which has to do with sequences of adjustment; "development" (T_2) which focuses on the transformation of student identity, and "becoming" (T_3) which is a proposition that is not yet given full expression in higher education policy and practice. The authors propose that in future research, students' lived experiences in addition to institutional concern should be properly investigated.

The value of international students in any institution goes beyond monetary benefits. As argued by Mukhejee (2014), having a good mix of international students contributes to the rich cultural context of the institution. Needless to say, they provide an opportunity for domestic students to have a feel of the diverse world. International students speak more highly of some universities than others based on their experiences. As a result, taking efficient measures to ensure that this set of students have a positive experience at their host universities cannot be overemphasised. The transition experience could have either a positive or negative influence on students, and some feel the brunt more in their first year when culture shock is more significant (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016), others grapple with it throughout their study. Although Schlossberg's theory posits that transition is best defined by the person experiencing it, suffice it to say that a higher education institution will be able to decipher if international students are experiencing a positive or negative transition through an appraisal of annual enrolment rates. Some of the determinants/resultant consequences of the transition experiences of international students will include their enrolment, retention and attrition rates, as discussed in the review of the literature.

In summary, studying outside one's country of origin can be accompanied by an overwhelming feeling. Hence, to understand the transition experience of international students in Nigeria, it will be beneficial that this study adopts the proposition of Goodman et al. (2006) by considering the type of transition these students undergo, the context of their transition, Nigeria, and the institution of study, as well as the impact of the transition on their academic and sociocultural lives.

2.16 CONCLUSION

This review of the literature argued that internationalisation has become an important aspect of higher education globally, as different countries and higher education institutions compete for their share of the best talents. The discussion in this chapter maintained that the internationalisation of higher education contributes to the socio-cultural and academic diversity of any host nation and its institutions. Furthermore, the review of literature establishes that challenges are not peculiar to the international students in Nigeria, as the documentation of the academic and socio-cultural transition experiences of international students across different countries provided an understanding of the possible difficulties encountered by international students across the world. This chapter also discussed the various kinds of academic and socio-cultural challenges that international students experienced in the transition phase of their study and presented some institutional strategies for alleviating international students' challenges. This chapter concluded with a discussion of Schlossberg's theory of transition, a theoretical framework that helped to understand the phenomenon of transition in higher education students.

The next chapter focuses on the methodology and all methodological procedures and considerations adopted for this study.

CHAPTER 3
A MIXED METHOD STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of conducting this research was threefold. The first purpose was borne out of the desire to investigate how international students studying in selected universities transition from their home countries into Nigeria and into their university where they were enrolled. This transition was limited to their academic and sociocultural experiences. The second purpose was to examine if the transition experiences of the international students at the public university differ from those of the international students at the private university. The third purpose was to critique internationalisation efforts in Nigeria and at the same time, contribute to the discourse of internationalisation in Nigeria and beyond. To achieve this, the researcher aimed to acquire meaningful and detailed information about the experiences of international students studying at two selected universities in Nigeria; this informed the choice of methodology for this study as will be seen later in this chapter.

This chapter discusses the chosen methods and approaches adopted for this research, supported with rationales. It details the description of sampling, data collection strategies and data analysis. Further, it discusses how the researcher ensured ethical compliance quality measures with regards to the research.

3.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology can be defined simply as the way we come about what we know. The epistemology of this study is located in "pragmatism". Pragmatism derives from the work of Peirce, James, Mead and Dewey (Creswell, 2014). The chosen epistemology is considered ideal for this study because of its features align to a very large extent with the chosen approach – mixed-methods. The choice of the mixed method was driven by the questions that this research sought to answer as against being driven by mere philosophical assumptions, (Biesta, 2010); in the typology of Tashakkori and Teddlie, "dictatorship of the research question" (1998, p. 20). One of such features is that the study adopts a mixed-method approach, and according to Ivankona and Sticks (2007), in a mixed-method approach, knowledge is built on what works. Also, this study delves into the worldview of international students in terms of their situations, actions and the consequences of their experiences, as advocated by pragmatism. This study is practical rather than idealistic in line with the assertions of pragmatic

researchers such as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011). Feilzer (2010) argues that pragmatism waves aside the division that arises from the quantitative/qualitative paradigm war by suggesting that the most important thing is for the research method to answer the questions to which the researcher seeks answers. Similarly, this study adopts the research technique that the researcher considers best in answering the research questions for this study; a technique that makes use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches for data collection and analysis. As opined by Creswell (2014), the pragmatic paradigm is open to different worldviews and assumptions, a phenomenon that is beneficial to this study.

One significant tenet of pragmatism, which holds a high value for this study, is that both quantitative and qualitative data are compatible (Ivankoka & Sticks, 2007). This implies that using both numeric and narrative data collected concurrently as in the case of this study helps to understand the research problem better, answer the research questions and meet the need of the researcher. There is an argument to be made about not only achieving a better and more precise understanding through pragmatism but also having a more detailed engagement with the question on the relevance of pragmatism for mixed methods research. That notwithstanding, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) maintain that the justification for the use of pragmatism in "mixed methods research is fairly unproblematic as it relies on the utility of research means for research ends" (p. 3). For this study, pragmatism addresses problems rather than build systems.

One of the strengths of pragmatism for this study is that it helped the researcher ask more precise and better questions about how the international students experience academic and socio-cultural transition in Nigeria and their respective institutions.

As with other philosophical views, pragmatism has some limitations. One is that knowledge based on pragmatic view is about actions and consequences, and not about world reality (Biesta, 2010) and in the context of this study, it is the reality of the international students in question. Another is that pragmatism lacks the capability to provide a philosophical foundation for mixed methods research.

3.3   THE RESEARCHER'S ONTOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Ontology, according to Biesta (2010), has to do with the assumptions and beliefs held about reality, especially the reality that forms the objective of the research. For transparency and credibility, this sub-section describes the pre-conceived assumptions held by the researcher

about higher education and internationalisation in Nigeria before the commencement of data collection and analysis. As Ansari, Panhwar and Mahesar (2016:135) argue "humans, unlike objects and animals, assign meaning to the phenomenon around them". Two major factors influenced these assumptions. First, the researcher is a Nigerian who comes from the South-Western part of the country, where the two participating universities are located. Secondly, the researcher is an international student currently studying in South Africa. Having been an international student for about five years, it becomes somewhat natural to have developed some notions about a host country and host institution in relation to international students' experiences. The researcher assumed that the standard of higher education in Nigeria was of low quality and that international students in Nigeria would also have the same view. This assumption was influenced by some of the reports in the literature which capitalised on the failing state of education in Nigeria, including higher education. Secondly, the researcher expected that international students would majorly express difficulty about their academic and socio-cultural transition experiences in Nigeria and the institutions at which they were studying. More so, that the international students would report a high stress level with regards to studying in Nigeria. Thirdly, the researcher assumed that the international students at the private university would report more positive experiences than their counterparts at the public university. Due to the higher fees paid by the international students at the private university and the pre-conceived notion that these students are from wealthy or at least fairly wealthy homes, it was presumed that they would receive better services and treatments from the university authorities than those at the public university. Lastly, the researcher supposed that Nigerians are welcoming and friendly, and as such international students would find it easy interacting and making friends with local students, which would eliminate or reduce maximally any feelings of loneliness and homesickness on the part of the international students.

In this mixed-method study, the researcher's ontological perspective was positioned in between objectivity and subjectivity. Ansari et al. (2016) opine that it is possible for a researcher to assume an intermediate ontological position in a mixed methods research, considering the usefulness of both subjective and objective views of reality in social science research. As much as possible, the researcher minimised the influence of her assumptions on the research. She avoided bias by withholding assent and dissent, especially while conducting the interviews; a phenomenon referred to as bracketing (Wertz, 2005). In addition, she created a distance between her assumptions and the reality of the research.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach for this study is the mixed methods approach. In this mixed-methods research, the researcher integrated both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis to best understand the aim of this study (Plano & Ivankova, 2016). This is consistent with the argument of Seidman (2013) that the mixed-methods research is a way of collecting, analysing and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative data within a single study to have a full understanding of a research problem. While quantitative research collects, examines and analyses numeric data in the form of numbers or scores using standardised measurement instruments, qualitative research collects and analyses narrative or text data in the form of words or images to explore a phenomenon by using open-ended or semi-structured questions (Plano & Ivankoka, 2016). In simple terms, this study combines both numbers and scores through questionnaires and text through interviews within the same research. As opined by Biesta (2010) and as it regards this study, numbers and texts are two forms of information or even so, two models of representation, which when combined do not raise philosophical or practical concerns.

The timing for this mixed-methods study was concurrent. This implies that the researcher collected and analysed both quantitative and qualitative data independently and at the same time. Quantitative data in the form of questionnaires and qualitative data in the form of semi-structured interviews and data from documents were collected and analysed simultaneously. Results arising from both methods were critically reviewed and integrated into the discussion of findings and guided by the research questions. The essence of employing the concurrent timing was to provide room for a complimentary and a more comprehensive understanding of the academic and sociocultural transition experiences of the international students. Even though quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed concurrently, a higher priority was given to the analysis of the qualitative data collected through interviews. This is because the narratives of the participants obtained through semi-structured interviews and substantiated by documentary analysis and evidence from the literature provided more detailed and richer information about their transition experiences, which better informed this study.

3.5 RATIONALES, STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES OF MIXED METHODS

The rationale for the choice of the mixed-methods approach was based on its advantages. The mixed-methods enabled the researcher to have a richer understanding and enhance the clarity of the transition experiences of international students in Nigeria. The researcher deemed it fit

to use a mixed-method research because neither the quantitative nor the qualitative method was enough to investigate the academic and socio-cultural transition experiences of the international students that participated in this study in detail. The different methods each have their own strengths and weakness; hence, they were combined to harness the advantages of their differences. On the one hand, the quantitative method allowed for the collection and analysis of data from a larger sample of participants; and even though the results could be generalised, it lacked the details of their transition experiences. On the other hand, the qualitative method only allowed for interviews with a smaller sample, whose narratives provided a detailed description of their transition experiences, even though the results were not generalisable. Hence, combining both methods and integrating the results compensated for their weaknesses and jointly gave way to a better understanding of the research problem (Plano & Ivankova, 2016). Rather than using a single research approach, the mixed methods approach helped to address the research problem in detail while also providing answers to both qualitative and quantitative queries within a single study. More so, adopting a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was useful in reaching a more reasonable and more comprehensive study conclusion than either of the methods alone (Greene & Caracelli, 1997). The qualitative and quantitative data, when combined within a mixed-method approach, complement each other and enable a better analysis of the research situation as well as give high validity to the findings (Creswell, 2014). In other words, this method was not only helpful in gaining an in-depth knowledge of the experiences of the target population, it also enhanced the validity of the findings by reaching a conclusion from the comparison of the statistical results obtained through the questionnaires and the thematic results arising from the qualitative interviews. This is referred to as triangulation (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). More so, the use of mixed methods helped to answer the research questions, as it offered a practical and outcome-based method of inquiry.

The mixed-methods approach adopted for this study is not without some disadvantages. As pointed out by McMillan and Schumacher (2006), one is that the researcher needed to be competent in both the quantitative and qualitative methods to be able to use mixed methods. Suffice it to say that before undertaking this doctoral research, the researcher was only competent in the qualitative method. However, taking up a challenge to conduct a mixed-method doctoral study necessitated her to learn about quantitative methods through self-learning and a statistical training workshop organised by the university. Secondly, the mixed methods required broad data collection and resources, unlike the use of either a qualitative or

quantitative method. The use of the mixed method is also more time consuming as opposed to the use of a single line of enquiry. The extra time spent in compiling questions, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data for this study and analysing them would be useful in pursuing other research tasks. This is not to say that it was not a worthwhile endeavour; it was indeed worthwhile as it expanded the researcher's knowledge of research methodology beyond the comfortable confines of a qualitative approach. Nonetheless, the mixed methods demanded more time from the researcher than the use of a single approach.

Nevertheless, the use of the mixed methods approach holds more advantages for this study than disadvantages. Drawing from the strength of both qualitative and quantitative methods, the researcher was able to produce a stronger and more credible study that yielded complementary and corroborating evidence regarding the research aims and problems. Furthermore, the choice of mixed methods was instrumental in providing the much-needed data in fully understanding the academic and sociocultural transition experiences of the international students in this study. Personally, the skill attained from conducting this mixed-method study cannot be overemphasised.

3.6   RESEARCH DESIGN

I selected a case study design for this research. A case study was appropriate as it is a design of inquiry in which allows the researcher to develop and undertake in-depth analysis and study a case, which could be a programme, an activity, an institution, an event, a process or even a group of people. (Creswell, 2014). Creswell further argues that cases are time and activity bound. The case study design allowed for the collection of detailed information from international students studying at two universities selected for the case study, using multiple data collection procedures over a particular period of about eight months. The case study design was most suitable for this research as the researcher chose to blend both qualitative and quantitative data. More so, it is a perfect example for mixed-method research, as it explains, describes, illustrates and enlightens (Yin, 2009). Using a case study design provided a unique instance of real people in a real situation, i.e. the experiences of international students in Nigeria and their institutions, thereby allowing readers to have a vivid understanding of the phenomenon being studied; rather than just a presentation of abstract theories (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). To this end, the researcher was able to gather rich and detailed data from the international students using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews supported by documentary evidence.

A benefit of selecting a case study design for this study is that it was highly instrumental in understanding the situations of international students in the two selected universities in relation to their academic and sociocultural transition experiences. More so, this design had a major benefit in that it furnished the amount of data required to explain the research topic and respond to the research questions. Although, one of the criticisms of this design is the question of validity (Lindergger, 2002); the researcher avoided biased views and ensured consistent monitoring of interpretations, as a way of overcoming this challenge of validity while at the same time providing a rigorous study. Given this, two universities regarded as reputable for attracting international students were considered for this case study. The rationale for the choice of these universities is discussed in the sampling section below.

3.7   SAMPLING

According to Maxwell (2013), sampling is a decision about where and from whom to collect data. This mixed-method research adopted both probability and non-probability sampling for the quantitative and qualitative methods, respectively. A probability sampling is a sampling technique in which the subjects of the population get an equal chance of being selected for the population to be well-represented while a non-probability relies on the judgement of the researcher in the selection of participants. With regards to the quantitative method, total population sampling was used so that all the international student at both universities would possibly complete the questionnaire. This is because the total number of international students at each university was relatively small. In the qualitative phase, however, international students were purposefully selected through snowball sampling; that is, the researchers asked already interviewed international students to identify fellow international students who might also be willing to participate in the interview; this was done until the desired number of interviewees were attained at both institutions. It would have been difficult for the researcher to identify all the participants for this study; hence, employing snowball sampling was useful in the sense that a few international students helped to introduce other international students to the researcher for interviews.

Three major criteria guided the selection of participants thus: (1) participants must have come from another country to study in Nigeria and must be registered as international students in their institutions (2) participants must be enrolled in a full degree programme as an undergraduate or a postgraduate student (3) participants must be able to converse in English. (4) participants must have successfully completed at least one semester at their university.

This research was conducted at two Nigerian universities with the target population being international students. For the sake of having different perspectives of the research focus, two universities, one private and one public, were carefully chosen based on the strength of their international student body and institutional ranking. This enabled the researcher to have a substantial understanding of the experiences of international students in the country. The two case universities for this study are the University of Ibadan (UI) and Covenant University (CU). They are both located in South-West Nigeria, and one of the topmost rationales for the choice of these two universities as the research sites is the fact that they are Nigeria's best public and private universities, respectively. The profiles of the two universities are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection strategy has to do with the way the researcher collected the much-needed data in answering the research questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). For this mixed-methods study, quantitative data and qualitative data were collected through different instruments. As explained previously, quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently with the aim of having more comprehensive data needed to answer the research questions. The data collection process at the two selected Nigerian universities lasted eight months, from August 2018 to March 2019, although the researcher took a few breaks in-between. The field experience was a fairly a smooth one, unlike the daunting experience the researcher had during the data collection for her master's degree research. This is most likely linked to the good relationship she had built with the international office at each university based on her previous research. For example, the former director (who was the director at the time of the previous research) of the international office at the UI, was instrumental in linking up the researcher with the new director. At both universities, she met with supportive and receptive members of staff in charge of international students' affairs. These staff members were helpful in contacting international students and encouraging them to participate in the research. In spite of this, collecting data at CU was a bit exhausting. The researcher went from one hall of residence to another in the evenings to find the desired number of international students to be interviewed unlike UI where all the interviewees walked into an office allocated to the researcher to get their interviews done. Notwithstanding, with the help of a staff member at CU who accompanied the researcher to all the halls and liaised with the hall wardens, coupled with a letter from the Dean of Students Affairs requesting that the researcher be granted access into the halls to interview international students, the interviews were made possible. The interviews

had to be done in the students' halls of residence at night because most of the students attended lecturers till 7 pm on most days. Notwithstanding these challenges, the researcher was happy she was able to collect the much-needed data for this study.

For further explanation on data collection, the two data collection methods are discussed under two separate sub-headings below.

3.9   QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The quantitative data for this study was collected through paper questionnaires. A questionnaire is a set of questions collated for the purpose of assessing the current status, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of a known population (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2014). A questionnaire that did not take more than 20 minutes to complete was specifically designed based on a variety of literature the researcher had previously reviewed for this study. The questionnaire consisted of three distinct categories. Category A captured the demographic characteristics of the respondents while categories B and C collected data relating to their academic and sociocultural experiences, respectively (see Appendix G). Dichotomous and scaling questions were mainly asked in sections B and C of the questionnaire. A combination of closed-ended and a few open-ended questions were also adopted in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was piloted with ten international students studying at two universities in the United Kingdom. These students were from three African countries, namely, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda.

A pilot study is recommended for testing the research instrument on a small scale with respondents similar to the main research sample to identify any potential design issues before embarking on the main research (Bille, 2010). The essence of the pilot study was to check for ambiguity, misunderstanding and errors in the research questions, as well as enhance the overall validity of the questionnaire. Minor confusions regarding the phrasing of the questions were recorded from the pilot study. This led the researcher to rephrase some of the questions and remove a few outright. Before proceeding to the field for data collection, the questionnaire was evaluated by the researcher's supervisor and a lecturer at the University of Benin in Nigeria who was skilled in quantitative research. At both universities, it was difficult having access to all the international students, mainly due to the students' busy schedule and nature of their academic programmes. Hence, the researcher identified some international students with the help of staff members at the international offices of both universities. These students were invited to complete the questionnaire; after which they served as representatives and helped to administer the questionnaire to their colleagues and retrieve them. The members of staff at the

international offices of both universities were also instrumental in administering and retrieving some of the questionnaires.

A paper questionnaire was considered based on the experience of the researcher with an online survey in previous research. In the previous research, sending an online survey to international students in Nigeria recorded a very low response rate of less than five per cent. Cohen et al. (2011) similarly noted a low response rate as one of the problems associated with online surveys. With paper questionnaires as one of the data collection tools for this study; therefore, an appreciable response rate was received from the international students at both universities, which helped to obtain reliability and credibility of data. That notwithstanding, employing the use of a paper questionnaire was time and money consuming. A lot of time and money went into printing, arranging and photocopying the questionnaires, many of which ended up either not filled in or returned by the participants. The researcher had planned to administer the questionnaire to all the international students at the two universities; unfortunately, that was not realistic. At CU, all the questionnaires administered to 22 international students out of a total population of about 30 international students were completed and retrieved. At the UI, 42 questionnaires were completed and retrieved out of the 80 that were administered. In total, 64 questionnaires were completed and retrieved out of the 102 questionnaires administered at the two universities. The total population of the international students at the UI could not be ascertained by the international office as the time of this research.

Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) argue that one of the features of this form of data collection is that the researcher will be physically removed from the respondent, thereby avoiding bias and enhancing objectivity. The purpose of data collected through the questionnaire was to provide background information of a larger number of participants than the qualitative method allowed, and to get a general picture of the academic and socio-cultural experiences in response to the research questions. Moreover, the quantitative data helped to enrich and corroborate the qualitative data.

3.10 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative data for this study was collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews with international students. A semi-structured interview is a data collection method in which the researcher has in mind a set of pre-determined questions that the interviewees are asked (Maree, 2010). The interview questions aimed to find out how international students experience the transition from their country to Nigeria and the university at which they were studying. As

suggested by Dicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), the questions were not too many, for manageability. The researcher also avoided boring the interviewees with too many questions while also being considerate of their time. Twenty international students, ten from each university, were interviewed. Each interview lasted for 30 to 60 minutes and was recorded with the consent of the participants. As much as possible and to the satisfaction of the researcher, the interviewees were open and expressive during the interviews. The interviews were conducted in English. The researcher also took notes to support the recordings for easy transcription. Similar to the questionnaire, the interview questions were grouped into three categories, namely; academic experiences, socio-cultural experiences and recommendations (See Appendix F). The recommendations were those of the participants for better international students' transition experience. Interviews at the UI were conducted in a quiet, unoccupied office allocated to the researcher by the Office of International Programmes while the international students at CU were interviewed in the office of the hall officers at the halls of residence, with written permission from the Dean of Students Affairs.

The use of semi-structured interviews held some benefits for this study. As stated by Grix, it "allowed room for flexibility and allowed for the pursuit of unexpected lines of enquiry that are relevant to the research", that is, as the researcher I had the opportunity to probe further (Grix, 2010). Two, it enabled the researcher to have personal and direct verbal encounters with international students, paying detailed attention to their language tone and body language (Coleman, 2012). Three, the pre-determined interview questions guided the researcher and the participants and minimised digression from the research focus. Lastly, the questions provided an in-depth insight into the experiences of international students.

In addition to the interviews, qualitative data was also assessed through relevant institutional documents such as policy documents, recruitment materials, student handbooks, in hard copies, electronically and online. The researcher agrees with the assertion of Wells, MacLeod and Frank (2012) that educational institutions rely on various documents to keep a track of their activities and accomplishments. Given this, the data from documents was useful in corroborating data from the other sources.

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data through interviews was collected concurrently with quantitative data using questionnaires. The two data collection methods corroborate each other and provide a rich description of the findings. Qualitative data and quantitative data were analysed separately, as

they both required different analytical techniques. The analysis of the combination of numbers and texts data gathered for this study was done through statistical measurement and interpretation, respectively.

3.12 ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) is a method of identifying and analysing patterns within a data. First and foremost, the researcher grouped the interviews from CU and the UI into different folders for easy identification. This was followed by a manual transcription of all the interviews by the researcher herself. Doing the transcription manually and by oneself was helpful in getting familiar with the data, which made reporting easier. The transcribed data was sent to each participant by email for verification and affirmation. For examples, the participants were asked to read through their individual transcripts and confirm if they agreed with all that was written therein. The essence of this was to ensure the researcher did not misquote the participants due to the difference in accents. The researchers received feedback from the participants; while many of them affirmed they agreed with the content of the transcript, others pointed out a few misquotes. The misquotes were corrected accordingly, and afterwards, the researcher analysed the qualitative data by identifying patterns within the data and assigning themes to them. The researcher further looked out for similar patterns in the experiences of the international students and apportioned themes to them for easy analysis. Themes were derived from the careful examination of the data as it relates to inductive evidence from the literature on the research topic. The responses of the participants were reported, explained and substantiated with relevant verbatim quotes. In using thematic analysis, Mouton (2006) believes that it is important to juxtapose findings with existing theories to determine whether there is an alignment. While this was done, suffice it to say that the researcher was also flexible in identifying emerging ideas, theories and themes from the data that were not entirely consistent with those in the literature. This form of analysis was helpful in the organisation and detailed description of the data.

3.13 ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

The information from the questionnaires, the quantitative part of the study, was captured in Excel. The data was checked by manually comparing the data in Excel to the data in the questionnaires. After corrections were made, the Excel data was imported into a statistical computer package, IBM SPSS Statistics version 24, for further statistical analysis.

The first step of data analysis was to describe the data. In most instances, the data was categorical, and the descriptive statistics consisted of frequencies and cross-tabulations. For data on a continuous scale, such as the time a person has stayed in Nigeria, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviations were computed.

The inferential statistics included Fisher's exact tests to test whether there existed associations between two questions, for example, between the ethnicity of the participants and whether they were studying at a private or public university. Where a significant association was found, the standardised residuals were checked, and for cells, in the cross-tables with standardised residual values close to two (2) the observed and estimated counts were interpreted to show where the differences occurred.

For questions on the interval scale, such as the length of time the participant has stayed in Nigeria, or the number of semesters attended at the university, independent t-tests were performed to test whether the mean number of semesters differed across type of university, for example. Before performing a t-test, the assumptions of normality and equal variances for the test were evaluated.

3.14 QUALITY MEASURES

This study was guided by some quality measures in all stages of the research process to ensure validity. These quality measures are discussed as follows:

3.15 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

This relates to the richness and accuracy of the findings as opposed to the amount of data gathered" (Creswell, 2014). The trustworthiness of this research is the acid test used in the data analysis, findings and conclusion (Huff, 2009). In essence, it checked if it was consistent or dependable and neutral or conformable. To ensure all these, the researcher kept notes of every detail of the research process, avoided generalisation, maintained confidentiality and took cognisance of the limitations upfront. The credibility of this research establishes that the findings are believable. The researcher ensured the credibility and trustworthiness of this study thus:

- Member Checking: Upon transcription of the interviews, each participant's response was saved as different files and sent to them individually by email. They were asked to go through their transcripts and confirm if their narratives were rightly captured, clarify any

possible misunderstandings in the transcript and provide additional information if necessary. The researcher afterwards received useful feedback from the participants on the accuracy of the interview responses. For instance, some of the participants noted a few instances where they were misquoted. They made corrections, which were affected by the researcher in the transcripts. Carrying out member checking was not only helpful in reporting the accurate intentions of the participants, it also provided an assurance that the participants were satisfied with the transcripts.

- Triangulation: According to Maree (2007), triangulation is the process of using data from multiple sources and/or methods for the clarification of meaning and interpretation. In this study, qualitative and quantitative methods were used to obtain corroborative evidence. These methods engaged the use of multiple sources as well, namely; questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Findings from the questionnaires were used to enrich and validate findings from interviews, to ascertain triangulation. This quality measure helped to minimise the risk of systemic errors that could arise from collecting data from many individuals and institutions (Meyer, 2013). Further, triangulation helped the researcher minimise bias, as she used both methods to cross-examine the responses of the participants.

- The researcher provided a rich and thick description of the research findings, coupled with a detailed explanation of the sampling precedures. This helped to facilitate the possibility of transferability of the research. For example,Chapter 4 provides an analytic description of the international students and the profiles of the two participating universities. Chapters 5 and 6 report the findings from this researcher, corroborated by quotes from the participants, documentary analysis and evidence from the literature. All these will provide a useful baseline for anyone interested in conducting similar research.

3.16 RELIABILITY

Drawing from the definition of Zohrabi (2013), the reliability of this research has to do with its dependability, consistency and replicability. In increasing the reliability of this study, the researcher has detailed the purpose of this study, the research approach and design adopted for this study, as well as the rationales for the choices made. The different phases of the study were also elaborated upon as much as possible. In other words, she provided an audit trail of the data collection, data analysis and reporting of findings. Moreover, the stability of the test-retest reliability of the questionnaires was obtained through a pilot study. Needful to say, the

triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods was also a means of enhancing the reliability of this study.

3.17 VALIDITY

This refers to "the ability of a research instrument to measure what it is intended to measure" (Zohrabi, 2013). To ensure the content validity of the questionnaire, it was assessed by the researcher's supervisor and a skilled quantitative researcher; they both provided feedback and useful ideas on enhancing the validity of the questionnaire. This led to the researcher rephrasing questions that appeared unclear or ambiguous and the outright removal of questions deemed unnecessary. This way, the researcher was sure that the questionnaire was capable of measuring what it sets out to measure before setting out to the field.

3.18 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Maxwell (2014) asserts that "it is the duty of researchers to protect their participants, build trust with them, promote the integrity of the research and guard against any form of misconduct." The researcher ascertained that attention was paid to ethical issues at the start of the research, during the data collection and data analysis stages, as well as during the reporting of the findings, sharing and storage of data.

An application for ethics approval was submitted in May 2017 to the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria. An ethics approval (EM/17/06/01) was granted in October 2017 by the Ethics Committee, which enabled the researcher to commence fieldwork. This is in line with the Helsinkin Declaration of 1972, which states that clearance must be obtained from an ethics committee before carrying out any kind of research involving humans or animals (Maree, 2014). The researcher ensured compliance with the requirements and rules of the Ethics Committee for this study.

The researcher sent out consent letters to the two participating universities through an email attachment detailing the purpose of the research as well as ethical protocols to be observed. Permission to conduct the research at both universities was granted through email communications as well. The collection of data then commenced four months after permission was granted

As paper questionnaires were used, the first page contained detailed information about the research and a consent form through which the informed consent of the participating

international students was sought before getting them involved in the research. Similarly, before the commencement of the interviews, consent was obtained from the interviewees for the interviews to be tape-recorded. The researcher ensured all participants of anonymity and confidentiality. They were informed that no personal details including the identities of the participants would be disclosed to any third party and their rights to privacy would be protected, hence, pseudonyms were used in the reporting of findings. Regions were also used in place of participants' individual countries of origin to avoid easy identification. Participants were assured that any information they give would not be used for any other purpose other than research. More so, the participants were assured that their participation in this research was voluntary, it would not affect their relationship with their university and that they were free to withdraw from participating in the research at any time without any consequences whatsoever, should they wish to do so.

Data obtained for this research will be safely kept for fifteen years with the researcher's supervisor, after which it will be destroyed, according to the University of Pretoria's policy.

3.19 CONCLUSION

In this methodology chapter, the researcher gave a detailed description of the rationales for the choice of the chosen method, she explained the mode of data collection and analysis as well as all procedures adopted to ensure ethical compliance and quality research measures. Besides, she described the chosen epistemology and how it fits into the scope of the mixed methods research. She also explained her ontological stance as a researcher and how she guarded against the influence of her assumptions on the research process. The next chapter,Chapter 4, focuses on the analysis of the profiles of the two participating universities and the questionnaire respondents. Chapter 4 also presents a description of the interview participants and their countries of origin.

CHAPTER 4
PROFILES OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THE TWO PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents the profiles of the two participating universities, the demographic information of the international students that completed the questionnaire as well as the information of those that participated in the interviews. Two university types were involved in this study, one private (CU) and one public (The UI). The profiles of these universities are first discussed in this chapter to shed some light on the character of the institutions concerning the background information of their international students. This is followed by an analysis of the demographic information of the questionnaire respondents and the interview participants. Section A of the questionnaire collected the demographic data of the respondents such as race, gender, discipline; degree enrolled for, etc. Section B collected data on the academic experiences of the respondents, while section C collected data on their sociocultural experiences. However, only the demographic data collected in section A of the questionnaire is reported in this chapter. Analyses were done per university, and in comparison, between both universities.

Moreover, this chapter includes a general description of the international students that participated in the semi-structured individual interviews. Data collected through the questionnaire corroborate data from the interviews to provide a rich and detailed description of the findings. In addition, data from the questionnaires gives an insight into the narratives elicited by the qualitative data.

4.2 THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

Popularly referred to as the first and the best, the UI is Nigeria's oldest university. UI has maintained its position as the overall best university in Nigeria in the Webometrics ranking of World Universities for at least three consecutive years (2017 – 2018); and also, it was ranked the 15th best university in Africa in the 2019 Webometrics ranking. The university began in 1948 as the University College of London and attained the status of a fully autonomous university in 1962. As of 2017, UI had a total number of 5,746 staff members in its workforce which included 1,524 academic staff. Over 60 per cent of the academic staff possessed a PhD while 410 were professors. The university runs 76 undergraduate and 478 postgraduate programmes in 13 faculties and has 11 specialised centres and institutes, as well as professional

courses and distance learning programmes. International students at UI are mainly enrolled for postgraduate programmes. Internationalisation at the UI is at the core of the University, with the establishment of the Office of International Programmes (OIP) in 2009. Amongst several internationalisation engagements, the OIP is tasked with the responsibility of attracting international students and scholars to the university and ensuring their adjustments, while also securing international partnerships for the university to maximise the benefits of global engagement. The university has recorded noteworthy developments in collaborations and partnerships. These include hosting the Pan African University for Life Earth Sciences (PAULESI); partnering with the University of Swansea in English for a sponsored professional master's degree in Biomedical Education with UI as a hub for students from five other universities in West Africa; and also offering a joint master's degree in Project Management with the University of West England. UI leverages on PAULESI to increase the number of international students at the university. PAULESI offers four programmes with options in Reproductive Health Science (Reproductive Health and Reproductive Biology options); Geosciences (Petroleum Geoscience and Mineral Exploration options); Plant Breeding; Environmental Management; Veterinary Medicine (Avian Medicine, Vaccine Production and Quality Control); Medicine Plant Research and Drug Development as well as Sport Development and Policy Management. These programmes are offered at both master's and doctoral levels. In addition, UI attracts a considerable number of international students from other West African countries. These students are studying on postgraduate scholarship platforms such as those offered by The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP).

The university also runs some internationally funded Centres of Excellence and postgraduate programmes which have grown in both quality and quantity over the years. As a research university, UI attracts international funds and partnerships involving student and staff exchanges based on its high calibre of staff and academically bright students. Overall, UI has over 170 collaborations with institutions and agencies all over the world. The UI continues to thrive as an aspiring world-class institution for academic excellence.

4.3   COVENANT UNIVERSITY

Covenant University was established in 2002 by Bishop David Oyedepo, the founder of Living Faith Chapel Worldwide, the church with a 50,000-seat capacity renowned as the largest in the world. (CU) is the best private university in Nigeria as of 2019. CU has maintained its lead in

the league of private universities in Nigeria for at least five consecutive years (2015 to 2019), according to Webometrics Ranking. CU also ranked number one in Web of Repositories in Nigeria and West Africa from 2013 to 2017. CU was ranked the best West African university and the 6th best African university by the THE World University Ranking (WUR) for 2019. In addition, Covenant University made it to the THE subject rankings in Business, Economics, Engineering and technology in the 501 – 600 range globally as the only ranking Nigerian institution. Globally, CU ranked as 151 in the THE Emerging Economies Ranking as well as 301+ in the Inaugural THE Impact Ranking for 2019. CU was founded on Christian ethos with the aim of becoming a world-class university that will be the pride of Africa while also competing for a place among Ivy League institutions globally. The university's commitment to excellence is driven by seven core values, namely; Spirituality, Possibility Mentality, Capacity Building, Integrity, Responsibility, Diligence and Sacrifice.

The student population has grown from the first batch of 1500 students in October 2002 to over 9000 students as of 2019. Academic programmes at CU run in four colleges and boast of about 1,120 staff members. The colleges are the College of Business and Social Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Leadership Development Studies and College of Science and Technology.

So far, CU has achieved some rare feats. Apart from being the leading private university in Nigeria, it was the first private university in Nigeria to get the fastest approval for its operating license and the accreditation of its 16 programmes by the National Universities Commission (NUC). CU was the first in the history of tertiary institutions in Nigeria to commence full academic and administrative activities at its permanent site right from inception, with full facilities in place. The university has also received several awards and recognitions from within and outside Africa. These include the National Model United National Awards for Outstanding Performance in 2018, National Association of Foreign Students Affairs (NAFSA's) Global Dialogue Fellows Award in 2108, the best university at the Nigerian Technology Expos 2018 as well as receiving Patent Rights for eight inventions in 2018 (Covenant University Portal, June 2019). CU is one of the World Bank Centres of Excellence (ACE-Impact) host institutions in Applied Informatics and Communication (ACE-ApIC).

A drive towards internationalisation at the university brought about the establishment of the International Offices and Linkages (IOL). The IOL commenced operations in October 2007, five years after the establishment of CU. This was necessitated by the rapid and global

expansion of the university. By acting as the central coordinator, the IOL has been leading the development of internationalisation at CU by facilitating all internationally related initiatives and activities. The International Office and Linkages promotes international collaborations between CU and renowned institutions around the world through several internationalisation activities including faculty and student exchange, exchange of materials, research participation and involvement, and shared conferences. With only 14 international students at inception, the IOL has witnessed a rapid growth in the number of international students registered at the university till date. Through the office of the IOL, CU has established multiple collaborations with various institutions around the world while also driving a visible presence on both local and international scenes through partnerships. More so, the IOL directs all programmes of the university through global community service, institution building and networking. So far, the IOL has been able to facilitate collaborations between Covenant Universities and over 32 foreign universities and organisations.

4.4 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

Valid questionnaire responses were collected from a total of 64 international students at both universities, of which 22 were from CU and 42 from the UI. For a proper contextualisation of the study, the demographic profiles of the respondents discussed in this sub-section include gender, first language, country/region of origin, length of stay in Nigeria, residence, number of semesters attended at the university, funding and the type of degree fo which the student has enrolled. These variables are important in understanding the characteristics of international students at each university. They are also useful in the analysis of the transition experiences of the international students reported in chapters 5 and 6, as well as the discussion of findings done in chapter 7. These demographic features are represented in tables and discussed accordingly.

4.4.1 Gender

The total population of the international students that completed the questionnaire consists of 67.2% males (n=43) which was twice the percentage of female students, 38.2% (n=21). A further breakdown of the total population reveals seven females and 15 males at the private university compared to 14 females and 28 males at the public university. Fisher's exact test showed that there was no association between gender and university type because the p-value was greater than 0.05, the level of significance.

Table 4-1: Gender of international students who completed the questionnaire

Gender * University Cross tabulation

| | | | University | | |
			Private university	Public university	Total
Gender	Female	Count	7	14	21
		Expected Count	7.2	13.8	21.0
		% within University	31.8%	33.3%	32.8%
		Standardised Residual	-.1	.1	
	Male	Count	15	28	43
		Expected Count	14.8	28.2	43.0
		% within University	68.2%	66.7%	67.2%
		Standardised Residual	.1	.0	
Total		Count	22	42	64
		Expected Count	22.0	42.0	64.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing the gender of international students who completed the questionnaire per university

4.4.2 First language

There was diversity in the first language of the participants as 13 different languages were reported. At both universities 39.1% (n=25) of the respondents speak French, closely followed by 37.5% (n=24) who speak English, and then 7.8% (n=5) Swahili speakers while the remaining 15.6% (n=10) reportedly speak ten different first languages. See Table 4.2 below:

Table 4-2: **First Language * University Cross tabulation**

			Private university	Public university	Total
First Language	Amharic	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.4	
	Bemba	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	4.5%	0.0%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	1.1	-.8	
	Boze	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.4	
	English	Count	16	8	24
		Expected Count	8.3	15.8	24.0
		% within University	72.7%	19.0%	37.5%
		Standardized Residual	2.7	-2.0	
	Fon	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.4	
	French	Count	2	23	25
		Expected Count	8.6	16.4	25.0
		% within University	9.1%	54.8%	39.1%
		Standardized Residual	-2.2	1.6	
	Kiprigin	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.4	
	Kirundu	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.4	
	Rukiga	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.4	
	Somali	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.4	
	Sonrhai	Count	0	1	1

					Total
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.4	
	Swahili	Count	2	3	5
		Expected Count	1.7	3.3	5.0
		% within University	9.1%	7.1%	7.8%
		Standardized Residual	.2	-.2	
	Tswana	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	4.5%	0.0%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	1.1	-.8	
Total		Count	22	42	64
		Expected Count	22.0	42.0	64.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing a cross-tabulation of the first language between a private and public university

A Fisher's exact test was performed to test whether there existed an association between first language and university type. This helps to establish if some first language speakers are more attracted to one university than the other.

Table 4-3:Difference in the first languages of the respondents

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.882[a]	12	.008	<0.001
Likelihood Ratio	31.146	12	.002	<0.001
Fisher's Exact Test	26.788			<0.001
N of Valid Cases	64			

Fisher's Exact Test showing difference in the first languages of the respondents

From the above table, the Exact Sig. (2-sided) is smaller than 0.05. So, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and conclude that there is a statistical difference in the first language of the respondents at the two universities.

At the private university, more respondents than were expected had English as a first language (observed 16, expected 8.3 under the null hypothesis of independence) while fewer respondents than were expected were French speaking (observed 2, expected 8.6). At the public university, fewer respondents than were expected had English as a first language (observed eight, expected 15.8) while more than is expected had French as a first language (observed 23, expected 16.4).

4.4.3   Country of origin

With regards to the country of origin, again there was diversity. A total of 23 countries were reported by the respondents, with the Benin Republic standing out as the country with the highest number of respondents (23), followed by Cameroon (6) and Kenya (5), other countries were recorded by one to three respondents each. In total, 59 out of the 64 respondents were from Africa. This strongly suggests that intra-Africa mobility is becoming a popular pattern in student mobility, a situation where African students find it suitable to undertake an international study in another African country. As will be seen later in the subsequent chapters, intra-Africa student mobility is further encouraged by some organisations such as the African Union and the World Bank which offer scholarships to African students to study in Africa and in an African university.

 It should be noted, however, that an international student in CU is defined as any intending student applying to the University for consideration for admission who is not a citizen of Nigeria, or a Nigerian who will be attending the University from a foreign land. With regards to country of origin, a few of the international students at the private university indicated they came from Nigeria, Europe and the USA; these students are also black Africans who were of Nigerian descent and were either born and bred abroad or have been residing abroad for a long time, and have decided to return to Nigeria for a higher education. They, therefore, have dual citizenship and are registered as international students at the private university. Given the premium ascribed to quality in the choice of study destinations, this is a significant point that sheds new information on international students in Africa. It brings to light that children of the diaspora choose African countries as their study destinations. It could also be linked to issues of culture where parents in the diaspora may want their children to be exposed to the Nigerian culture. The details of the countries of origin of the different students are reflected in Table 4.4.

Table 4-4: Countries of origin of all international students at the two universities

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Botswana	1	1.6
	Burkina Faso	1	1.6
	Burundi	1	1.6
	Cameroon	6	9.4
	England	1	1.6
	Ethiopian	1	1.6
	Gambia	1	1.6
	Ghana	2	3.1
	Italy	1	1.6
	Kenya	5	7.8
	Liberia	1	1.6
	Mali	3	4.7
	Niger Republic	1	1.6
	Nigeria	3	4.7
	Republic Benin	23	35.9
	Senegal	1	1.6
	Somalia	1	1.6
	South Africa	1	1.6
	Tanzania	1	1.6
	Ugandan	2	3.1
	USA	3	4.7
	Zambia	3	4.7
	Zimbabwe	1	1.6
	Total	64	100.0

Frequency showing countries of origin of all international students at the two universities

Due to the heterogeneity of the countries, they were further grouped into regions as seen in the table below. From the table, 42 international students were from West Africa, 11 were from East Africa, six were from Southern Africa while the remaining five were from outside Africa (two from Europe and three from the USA). Again, the regions of these students point to intra-Africa student mobility and even so, having 42 international students from West Africa points vividly to regionalisation as one of the aspects of student mobility.

Table 4-5: Countries of origin grouped by regions

Region * University Crosstabulation

			Private university	Public university	Total
Region	West Africa	Count	10	32	42
		Expected Count	14.4	27.6	42.0
		% within University	45.5%	76.2%	65.6%
		Standardized Residual	-1.2	.8	
	East Africa	Count	2	9	11
		Expected Count	3.8	7.2	11.0
		% within University	9.1%	21.4%	17.2%
		Standardized Residual	-.9	.7	
	Southern Africa	Count	5	1	6
		Expected Count	2.1	3.9	6.0
		% within University	22.7%	2.4%	9.4%
		Standardized Residual	2.0	-1.5	
	Europe	Count	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.7	1.3	2.0
		% within University	9.1%	0.0%	3.1%
		Standardized Residual	1.6	-1.1	
	USA	Count	3	0	3
		Expected Count	1.0	2.0	3.0
		% within University	13.6%	0.0%	4.7%
		Standardized Residual	1.9	-1.4	
Total		Count	22	42	64
		Expected Count	22.0	42.0	64.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing countries of origin grouped by regions

From the Fisher's Exact Test performed, the Exact Sig (2-sided) showed a p-value < 0.001, therefore, the differences between regions and the two universities were highly significant (see Table 4.6 below).

Table 4-6: Difference in regions between private and public university

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.278ᵃ	4	.001	<0.001
Likelihood Ratio	20.424	4	.000	<0.001
Fisher's Exact Test	17.078			<0.001
N of Valid Cases	64			

: Frequency showing countries of origin grouped by regions

From the above Table 4.6, more respondents from Southern Africa (observed 5, expected 2.1), Europe (observed 2, expected 0.7) and the USA (observed 3, expected 1) than were expected under the null hypothesis of independence attended the private university. Similarly, fewer respondents than expected attended the public university from Southern Africa (observed 1, expected 3.9), Europe (observed 0, expected 1.3) and the USA (observed 0, expected 2).

4.4.4   Length of stay in Nigeria

It was observed that the international students at the private university have been staying longer than those at the public university. Those at the private university had stayed for an average of about four years while those at the public university had stayed for an average of a little over one year. Perhaps their length of stay in Nigeria would impact on their experiences and views of transition into Nigeria, as will be seen in the subsequent chapters.

Table 4-7: Average length of stay of the respondents at both universities

Group Statistics					
	University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How long have you stayed in Nigeria?	Private university	22	3.77	4.396	.937
	Public university	42	1.29	.708	.109

Statistics showing the average length of stay of the respondents at both universities

An independent t-test was performed to compare the average length of time (number of years) the respondents have been staying in Nigeria across public and private universities (see Table 4.8).

Table 4-8: Difference in the length of stay in Nigeria across public and private university

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
									Lower	Upper
How long have you stayed in Nigeria	Equal variances assumed	11.697	.001	3.603	62	.001	2.487	.690	1.107	3.867
	Equal variances not assumed			2.636	21.573	.015	2.487	.944	.528	4.446

Test, the difference in the length of stay in Nigeria across the public and private university

The test has an assumption that the two groups must have equal variances. However, the t-test (Sig. [2-tailed]) showed a p-value of 0.015, and since it was less than 0.05, there is a statistically significant difference in the length of stay of the two groups.

4.4.5 Residence

The respondents were asked whether they resided on-campus or off-campus. Out of the valid 63 responses for this question, a total of 54 reported they resided on-campus while the remaining nine resided off-campus. It was observed, however, that all the 22 respondents at the private university resided on campus whereas 33 out of the 42 respondents at the public university resided on campus, while the remaining nine resided off-campus. An analysis of the student handbook at CU (p. 35) revealed it was compulsory for all undergraduate students to reside on campus, in the halls of residence provided by the university. CU has ten undergraduate halls of residence (five female halls and five male halls) with the capacity to accommodate 9,236 students. The cost of accommodation in the halls of residence is included in the tuition fee of the students. At the UI, high admission demands, and limited funds hamper the concept of a residential university. The university has ten undergraduate and two postgraduate halls of residence with a total capacity of about 9000 students. The available halls are unable to meet the accommodation needs of all students; hence, married and older students are encouraged to live off-campus while priority is given for first-year students to reside on campus (UI Calendar, 2018, p. 48, p. 425)

Table 4-9: Residence of respondent at the private and the public university

Where do you live in Nigeria * University Crosstabulation

			University Private university	University Public university	Total
Where do you live in Nigeria	On campus	Count	20	33	53
		Expected Count	17.7	35.3	53.0
		% within University	95.2%	78.6%	84.1%
		Standardized Residual	.6	-.4	
	Off-campus	Count	1	9	10
		Expected Count	3.3	6.7	10.0
		% within University	4.8%	21.4%	15.9%
		Standardized Residual	-1.3	.9	
Total		Count	21	42	63
		Expected Count	21.0	42.0	63.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing the residence of the respondent at the private and the public university

Based on the above crosstabulation, the Fisher's exact test performed showed no statistical difference (p-value = 0.144) in the residence of international students between the two universities.

4.4.6 Number of semesters

It was observed that respondents at the private university had attended more semesters than the respondents at the public university (see Table 4.10). The respondents at the private university have attended an average of about five semesters compared to their counterparts at the public university who have attended an average of two semesters.

Table 4-10: Statistics showing the number of semesters attended by respondents at the private and the public university

Group Statistics

	University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How many semesters have you attended at this University (including this current semester)	Private university	22	4.91	2.287	.488
	Public university	42	2.29	.805	.124

An independent t-test was performed to compare the average number of semesters the respondents have attended across public and private universities (see Table 4.11).

Table 4-11: T-Test showing a difference in the number of semesters attended across public and private university

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
									Lower	Upper
How many semesters have you attended at this University (including this current semester)	Equal variances assumed	53.478	.000	6.721	62	<0.001	2.623	.390	1.843	3.404
	Equal variances not assumed			5.214	23.764	<0.001	2.623	.503	1.584	3.662

From the above table, the t-test showed a very small p-value of <0.001, which means there was a statistically significant difference in the number of semesters attended by the international students at the private and the public university. This finding corroborates the finding on the number of years international students at the private and the public universities have spent in Nigeria as reported in Tables 4.7 and 4.8 above.

4.5 FUNDING

The question of funding sought to find out if the international students were studying on scholarships or self-funded. From the total population, 50 of the respondents were studying on scholarships while 14 were self-funded. A cross-tabulation of funding (Table 4.12) across the two universities further showed the percentages and counts per university.

Table 4-12: Funding type across the private and the public university

Are you on a scholarship or you are self-funded * University Crosstabulation

			University		
			Private university	Public university	Total
Are you on a scholarship or you are self-funded	Scholarship	Count	8	42	50
		Expected Count	17.2	32.8	50.0
		% within University	36.4%	100.0%	78.1%
		Standardized Residual	-2.2	1.6	
	Self-funded	Count	14	0	14
		Expected Count	4.8	9.2	14.0
		% within University	63.6%	0.0%	21.9%
		Standardized Residual	4.2	-3.0	
Total		Count	22	42	64
		Expected Count	22.0	42.0	64.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency – funding type across the private and the public university

From the Fisher's exact test performed, the Exact Sig (2-sided) showed a high significant difference (p-value < 0.001) in the funding type when both universities were compared, as shown in Table 4.13 table below.

Table 4-13 Difference in funding between public and private university

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.211[a]	1	<0.001	. <0.001	<0.001
Continuity Correction[b]	30.589	1	<0.001		
Likelihood Ratio	38.400	1	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Fisher's Exact Test				<0.001	<0.001
N of Valid Cases	64				

Fisher's Exact Tests – statistical difference in funding between public and private university

At the private university, fewer students (n=8) than were expected (n=17.2) under the null hypothesis of independence, were studying on scholarships while more (n=14) than were expected, (n=4.8) were self-funded. At the public university, more students (n=42) than were expected, (n=32.8) were studying on scholarships while fewer (n=0) than expected (n=9.2) were self-funded. The significant difference in funding between the private and the public university is important in the characterisation of the two universities as well as the type of students these universities attract. From the profile of the public university, it can be deduced

that the majority of the international students at the university are beneficiaries of various scholarships offered to promote intra-Africa student mobility.

4.6 DISCIPLINE

The respondents were enrolled in different disciplines at both universities and due to the diversity of the disciplines, they were categorised into faculties. All the respondents were undertaking disciplines in five different faculties, namely, Engineering (26.6%), Humanities (3.1%), Medicine (1.6%), Sciences (43.8%) and Social Sciences (25%). The details are depicted in Table 4.14 below.

Table 4-14: Enrolment in faculties at private and public university

Faculty * University Crosstabulation

| | | | University | | |
			Private university	Public university	Total
Faculty	Engineering	Count	8	9	17
		Expected Count	5.8	11.2	17.0
		% within University	36.4%	21.4%	26.6%
		Standardized Residual	.9	-.6	
	Humanities	Count	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.7	1.3	2.0
		% within University	9.1%	0.0%	3.1%
		Standardized Residual	1.6	-1.1	
	Medicine	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.7	1.0
		% within University	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
		Standardized Residual	-.6	.4	
	Sciences	Count	5	23	28
		Expected Count	9.6	18.4	28.0
		% within University	22.7%	54.8%	43.8%
		Standardized Residual	-1.5	1.1	
	Social sciences	Count	7	9	16
		Expected Count	5.5	10.5	16.0
		% within University	31.8%	21.4%	25.0%
		Standardized Residual	.6	-.5	
Total		Count	22	42	64
		Expected Count	22.0	42.0	64.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing enrolment in faculties at private and public university

Table 4.15 below shows a significant difference in the disciplines of the respondents between the two universities. According to Fisher's exact test, the Exact Sig (2-sided) showed a p-value of 0.031 (see table 4.14).

Table 4-15: Difference in faculties at private and public university

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.564[a]	4	.048	.030
Likelihood Ratio	10.652	4	.031	.029
Fisher's Exact Test	9.105			.031
N of Valid Cases	64			

Chi-Square Tests – statistical difference in faculties at private and public university a. 4 cells (40.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .34\.

It was observed that more respondents (n=2) than was expected (n=0.7) studied Humanities at the private university, while fewer (n=5) than was expected (n=9.6) studied Sciences. It was also observed that there no respondent was studying Humanities at the public university and there was no respondent studying Medicine at the private university. In addition, the majority of the international students at the public university were enrolled for disciplines under Sciences. A documentary analysis of the public university shows that the university offers more courses in Engineering, Medicine, and Sciences than they offer in Social Sciences and Humanities, whereas, the private university offers more courses in the Social Sciences and Humanities than they do offer in Engineering and Science related courses. It is also worth noting the private university offers no courses in the medical field.

4.6.1 Type of degree programme enrolled for

As mentioned previously, one of the criteria for the selection of respondents is an enrolment in a full degree programme at the university. One of the demographic questions sought to find out if the international students were enrolled for a bachelor's degree, master's degree or a PhD. The details are reflected in Table 4/16 below.

Table 4-16: Type of degree enrolled for at private and public university

In what type of degree program are you enrolled at this university * University Crosstabulation

| | | | University | | |
			Private university	Public university	Total
In what type of degree program are you enrolled at this university	BA/BSc/B.Ed. or equivalent	Count	22	0	22
		Expected Count	7.6	14.4	22.0
		% within University	100.0%	0.0%	34.4%
		Standardized Residual	5.3	-3.8	
	MA/MS or equivalent	Count	0	37	37
		Expected Count	12.7	24.3	37.0
		% within University	0.0%	88.1%	57.8%
		Standardized Residual	-3.6	2.6	
	Ph.D.	Count	0	5	5
		Expected Count	1.7	3.3	5.0
		% within University	0.0%	11.9%	7.8%
		Standardized Residual	-1.3	.9	
Total		Count	22	42	64
		Expected Count	22.0	42.0	64.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency – type of degree enrolled for at private and public university

From the statistical analysis of the type of degree based on university cross-tabulation, the Fisher's except test revealed an Exact Sig (2-sided) of as p-value < 0.001 indicating a highly significant difference in the comparison of type of degrees enrolled for between the two universities, as seen in Table 4.17 below.

Table 4-17: Difference in the type of degree enrolled for between private and public university

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	64.000[a]	2	<0.001	.000
Likelihood Ratio	82.367	2	<0.001	.000
Fisher's Exact Test	73.000			.000
N of Valid Cases	64			

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.72.

Chi-Square Tests showing a statistical difference in the type of degree enrolled for between private and public university

More (actually all 22 respondents) than expected (n=7.6) at the private university were enrolled for a first degree, while fewer (actually 0%) than expected (n=14.4) studied towards a first degree at the public university. On the other hand, more (37 respondents) than expected (24.3 respondents) at the public university were enrolled for a master's degree and fewer (actually

0%) than expected (n=12.7) at the private university were enrolled for a master's degree. It was further observed that none of the respondents at the private university was enrolled for a PhD while five of the respondents at the public university were enrolled for a PhD. In a nutshell, all respondents at the private university were undergraduate students while all those at the public university were postgraduate students. Although the private university offers postgraduate (master's and PhD) programmes; none of the international students in this study was enrolled in this programme. The public university also offers undergraduate programmes, even though these programmes are few compared to the numerous postgraduate programmes offered by the university.

4.7   A DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

In total, 20 international students (10 from each university) participated in the interviews for this study. The participants were spread across 12 African countries. Seven of these countries are in West Africa (Mali, Ghana, Cameroon, Benin Republic, Niger Republic, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire), three are in Southern Africa (Zimbabwe, South Africa and Zambia) while two (Kenya and Algeria) are in East Africa and North Africa respectively.

The length of stay of the participants in Nigeria ranged from one year to about four years. The participants are a mix of Anglophone and Francophone countries. Fifteen of the interview participants were males while five were females. All the participants at the UI are postgraduate (master's and doctoral) students, with the majority enrolled in Science based courses. The UI participants are all under one scholarship scheme or the other, especially Pan African University (PAU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP). While a few of them reside on campus, the majority of them live off-campus. On the other hand, all the participants at CU are undergraduate students enrolled in Engineering, Sciences and Social Sciences disciplines. While some of the participants at CU are self-funded, others are beneficiaries of the David Oyedepo Foundation (DOF) scholarship, a foundation funded by the Chancellor of the university, Dr David Oyedepo. The CU participants all reside on campus. Table 4.18 below provides a concise picture of the interview participants and their countries of origin.

Table 4-18: **Total number of interviewees and their countries of origin**

Country of origin	Number of interviewees
Mali	3
Zambia	3
Kenya	2
Benin Republic	2
Cameroon (Anglophone)	2
Ghana	2
Algeria	1
Niger Republic	1
South Africa	1
Cote d'Ivoire	1
Togo	1
Zimbabwe	1
Total	**20**

4.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an analysis of the demographic profiles of the questionnaire respondents and the interview participants. It also offered a description of the two participating universities in terms of not only their profiles, but also their unique characteristics and internationalisation efforts. The chapter further highlights the differences in the attributes of the international students at the private and the public universities. The findings showed significant differences in first languages, regions of origin, types of degree enrolled for, residence, funding, number of semesters attended and the length of stay in Nigeria. These differences provide an insight into the characterisation of the two universities, the programmes they offer and the types of students they attract.

The next chapter analyses the academic transition experiences of international students at both universities.

CHAPTER 5
THE ACADEMIC TRANSITION EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter argues that some academic elements contribute to the overall academic transition experiences of international students in Nigeria. These elements include language, teaching and learning styles, academic demands or workload, curriculum and academic support. The presentation of this argument takes a different turn from the popular mode of presenting an analysis of results, as found in most literature. In other words, findings from the quantitative analysis and findings from the qualitative analysis are reported within this chapter to provide an immediate and logical flow on how findings from the two methods substantiate each other. The reporting of academic findings is first done quantitatively and then qualitatively, using the themes that emanated from the qualitative analysis as guides. Data collected through the questionnaire substantiate data from the interviews to provide a rich and detailed description and analysis of the findings. In addition, data from the questionnaires gives an insight into the narratives elicited by the interviews. In the interviews, 13 questions relating to academic experiences were asked, and from the responses of these, six major themes emerged. Sub-themes were identified from some of the major themes, based on the coding and interpretation of data. These themes and sub-themes are analysed in the light of the review of the literature and through the lens of the theoretical framework guiding this study – Schlossberg's (1981) theory of transition. The researcher also maintained open-mindedness in the analysis of the data with regards to the emergence of new ideas.

Qualitative quotes from the interviewees further substantiate the findings. With the consent of the participants, some of the quotes have been slightly edited by the researcher for grammatical correctness to make sense to the reader. In keeping to the ethical protocol of anonymity and confidentiality in reporting the qualitative findings, codes are assigned to each participant in place of their names and regions are used in place of countries of origin. To this end, the ten interviewees from CU are assigned code C1 to C10 while the ten interviewees from the UI are assigned code U1 to U10.

The interview questions were grouped under three headings namely, academic experiences, socio-cultural experiences and recommendations (see Appendix F), while the questionnaire also contained questions on the three groups (see Appendix G). For the sake of convenience and easy reading, this chapter mainly discusses the analysis of academic experiences while the

analysis of socio-cultural experiences and recommendations are discussed in the next chapter. Thus, the academic themes analysed in this chapter are as follows:

- Expectation versus Reality
- Language
- Teaching and learning style
- Curriculum
- Academic support
- Overall academic transition

5.2 ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY

The questions from which this theme originated were asked to determine whether expectations before studying in Nigeria and the actual realities of studying in Nigeria impact on the academic transition of the international students. The review of relevant literature such as Schulman and Choudaha (2014) establishes a relationship between students' expectations of their host institutions and the realities of their experiences, which consequently determines their transition process. In line with the argument of O'Neil and Palmer (2004), international students regard studying abroad as an investment, and as a result, they compare their expectations and actual reality to determine the success of this venture. O'Neil and Palmer refer to this phenomenon as service delivery in higher education. In the same vein, the framework of Tinto (1975), suggests that students often check and cross-check their higher education experience against the evaluation of how their institutions have met their expectations. Hence, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of this theme gives an understanding on the extent to which the expectations of international students in Nigeria matched actual realities.

5.2.1 Findings from the questionnaire

Out of the 64 respondents that completed the questionnaire at both universities, 40.6% (n=26) reported that their expectations were met by reality as opposed to 59.4% (n=38) who reported a mismatch between their expectations and reality. Concerning the findings per university, 50% of the international students at the private university had their expectations met while the expectations of the remaining 50% were not met. At the public university, only 35.7% of the international students had their expectations met while 64.3% had their expectations not met. In a nutshell, the number of those who experienced a mismatch between their expectations and reality exceeded those whose expectations matched reality. However, Fisher's Exact test

showed no significant difference between the two universities (p-value = 0.296).

5.2.2 Findings from the Interviews

International students in Nigeria had prior expectations, but to what extent did these match actual realities?

With regards to the interview participants, 15 had expectations, while five participants had no expectations before studying in Nigeria. For those that had expectations, diverse responses were elicited. There were those that had their expectations met, there were those whose expectations were not met, and there were some who had their expectations met but not fully.

The most prevalent expectation was English language proficiency, as indicated by international students from Francophone countries at the UI. These participants explained that apart from obtaining a degree, they were studying in Nigeria with the hope of improving or perfecting their English language skills. For example, participant U3 from a francophone country in West Africa said, "*I was expecting that on getting to Nigeria, I would be able to perfect my knowledge of Geography and also to be able to converse in English.*"

Moreover, while some had more general expectations about their university, others had more specific and personal goals. Similarly, Urban (2012) and Wadhawa (2016) noted some expectations which serve as motivations why students seek international study, these include, acquiring quality higher education, exposure to high standard teaching and learning infrastructure, learning a new culture and building social networks. In this study likewise, some of the participants decided to study abroad to have a different academic experience from what was obtainable in their home countries. Others, especially the postgraduate students at the public university expected accessibility to research materials. The students who enrolled in Science courses were studying in Nigeria because of the availability of resources and infrastructure, a better learning environment and more qualified lecturers than what they had in their home countries. While their motivation agrees with one of the most popular reasons for student mobility recurrent in the literature; (Kritz, 2013; Lee & Sehoole 2015), the availability of resources and infrastructure refutes the claim of Iruonagbe et al. (2015) that Nigeria's public universities are plagued with poor infrastructure as a result of underfunding. In addition, a salient but unpopular response implies that a few students studying at CU had their expectations tied to spirituality. They had expected to develop their spiritual lives alongside their academics, and that was one of their strong motivations for studying at CU, a religious institution. Some

participants had personal expectations of attaining academic achievement in the form of high grades. However, only a few participants had their expectations met, some had their expectations not met while others had their expectations met but not fully; as discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Only three international students at the two universities expressed that their expectations were met. These students seemed to be happy with the appraisal of their expectation and the realities of studying in Nigeria. Conversely, Rabia and Karkouti (2017) advocate that institutions should not only provide realistic expectations for international students but also ensure their needs are met. One of the few participants, U4, whose expectation matched reality was from a French-speaking country; she chose to study in Nigeria to learn the English language. When asked if her expectation was met, she answered; "*I am experiencing what I expected"*. She reiterated that she could not converse in English at all before studying in Nigeria and that her current ability to communicate in English was attributed to studying in Nigeria. Her experience is consistent with one of the findings made by Agbeniga (2016) in her study with international students at a public university in Nigeria. Some of the international students from French-speaking countries interviewed in that study were studying in an English country for the first time and therefore attributed their English language proficiency to studying in Nigeria. Moreover, the expectations of participant U4 above matched reality because she had expected that there would not be much difference between the mode of lecturing in her country and that of Nigeria, which was exactly what she found. Her response was somewhat consistent with that of Participant C9 from Southern Africa. Although in the case of Participant C9, he alleged he was expecting an entirely different experience from his country because he knew there are rarely similarities between his country and Nigeria; and this is exactly what he found out. Another student, U1, from West Africa, also expressed that his expectation matched the reality of studying in Nigeria. He was impressed by the level of administrative support he received, and expressed his satisfaction thus:

"*Yes, so far the integration has been good. [The Office of International Programmes] OIP has been helpful. The administration has also been good because they help us to understand many things about UI" (U1).*

The expectations of the above international students being met is synonymous with what Schlossberg (1981) refers to as an anticipated event – a situation whereby a person expected something to happen and it actually happens. In the analysis of Schlossberg, an anticipated

event could bring about a smooth transition. Although in this study, an agreement between prior expectation and actual reality is not enough to conclude if the participants had a smooth transition into Nigeria and their respective universities, as other factors are also examined.

Seven international students, one from the UI and four from CU, reported that their expectations were not met in any way. These students include three participants from West Africa, one from Southern Africa and one from East Africa. They stated that they were disappointed with their academic experience of Nigeria, similar to what Schlossberg refers to as non-event transition which implies a situation whereby an individual expected something to happen, but it never happened (Schlossberg, 1981). In the same vein, a study conducted by Griffith University in Australia also found a mismatch between international students' expectations and school life (Schulman & Choudada, 2014). Participant C4 had a personal goal to graduate from his university with a first-class pass, but unfortunately for him, he was already in his final year and on a second-class lower division. He blamed this on the late admission offered by the university and also on the difference in English accent between Nigeria and his East African country, as he struggled to understand lecturers when he resumed. When asked if his expectations matched realities, he replied:

"No, I expected better but in reality, I am currently on a second class lower. This is my final year and I am trying to get on a second class upper. My expectations and the realities are not the same" (C1),

Participant C10 also lamented about the negative effect of his unmet expectations on his grade. In his case, he blamed it on the lack of a cordial environment for international students at the CU:

> *I was expecting better situations than I found here [Covenant University]. For example, a welcoming environment for international students wasn't really there. When you go to a place, you have to feel free so that you can really express yourself, but I didn't really find that here. So, it gave me a little bit of challenge academically to really do my best, it even affected my Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) that right now I'm really fighting to raise. (C10)*

The two quotes above highlight the extent to which an unmet expectation affects the academic performance of international students. This was also similar to the experience of Participant U5 from West Africa. Like some other students, he expressed his disappointment in the way of teaching in his institution. The nature of his course requires some practical and technological

training which he says is "non-existent" at his university, and they only get exposed to the theoretical aspect of the course. This is in spite of a statement in the 2018 institutional documents (pg. 458) that indicates that the OIP has the responsibility "to promote the establishment of up-to-date facilities required in UI for international collaboration" and the fact Participant U5 mentioned that the university sometimes invites facilitators from the relevant industry for hands-on training on the use of software required for their study, they end up not getting practical knowledge because of the unavailability of facilities. This does not only frustrate the students but also the industry facilitators. The experiences of some of these students correspond with the argument of Wadhwa (2016) that exposure to state-of-the-art facilities, or at least functional teaching and learning facilities, is one of the reasons why students seek international study. In the case of Nigeria, however, authors on the subject of higher education in Nigeria such as Iruonagbe et al. (2015) often describe the curricular content of Nigerian universities as consisting of mere theories, in what they term 'traditional pedagogy or conventional curricular' (p.. 58).

> *Seven of the participants expressed that their expectations prior to studying in Nigeria were not fully matched by realities. In other words, their expectations were partially met. A popular complaint from these students points to disappointment with the level of technology and the availability of infrastructure at their institutions. They had expected that the institutions would be at par with the wave of technological advancement and the teaching styles of the 21st century. Nevertheless, some of the participants mentioned that they are were impressed with some realities such as the great improvement with the English language; this was especially the case for students from Francophone countries. For example, Participant U3, a doctoral student from a Francophone country in West Africa was happy about his improvement in English but disappointed by the teaching method of his lecturers, which he likened to the method used during the second world war. He explained extensively:*

> *Some of my expectations matched the reality while I was disappointed with some. Ok, let's start with the ones that match. For instance, you are doing this interview in English, I never knew I would be able to converse in English; even though my English is not perfect, but I can at least communicate. Another area that matches is that we have the same courses in Geography. Another area that matches is that there is no loss of academic year. I am disappointed that there are no special classes for those from French-speaking countries so that they can be able to cope well alongside Nigerian students. I*

am also disappointed in the way lecturers come to deliver lectures, the lecturers do all the talking and leave. It is not like that in my country, lectures are interactive, you can disagree with your lecturer. Everyone contributes in my country, everyone talks but in Nigeria, when the lecturer comes into the class, nobody can talk, this was the method before the Second World War. Now, a lecture needs to have an interactive session. In Nigeria you cannot disagree with a lecturer. There was a day I told one of my lecturers that I did not agree with his submission and my colleagues all told me to keep quiet. Education in the 21st century should not be like that. Students should be able to challenge lecturers but in Nigeria, it is not so. Also, in my country, there are fewer opportunities for MSc graduate to get a place for PhD because student to supervisor ratio is too high, unlike Nigeria where there are more opportunities and spaces for PhD students. For example, in my department, we are just four studying Geography, this gives us a greater access to our supervisors, and we have better results. (U3)

This student (C3) mentioned that there is no loss of the academic year at UI, this is contrary to the general notion that incessant strike actions often impede the academic calendar of Nigerian public universities (Iruonagbe et al., 2015). Also, while some participants, such as Participant U3 were happy with the support they get from their supervisors, Participant U2 from West Africa lamented that his supervisor was not supportive. Although he did not elaborate on the kind of support he was expecting from his supervisor, he clearly was not happy with his overall supervision experience.

It is worth noting that three international students reported they had no expectations before coming to Nigeria. According to them, they had come to Nigeria with an open mind and were prepared to be receptive of whatever the institution had to offer them. These students attested they had no expectations because they had no prior knowledge of the academic structure in Nigerian universities.

5.3   LANGUAGE

Language and its impact on the experiences of international students is a predominant subject in the literature on academic student mobility (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016; Galloway & Jenkins, 2005; Lillyman & Bennet, 2014; Zhang, 2016). For instance, the experience of Liu (2011) as an international student in Canada typifies the struggles of language proficiency as a contributor to academic difficulty. She expressed that her lack of English proficiency contributed to a negative academic experience. Also, during the coding of the qualitative data,

language was a recurrent factor in the theme of academic transition. It therefore became imperative to find out about the impact of language on the academic experiences of the international students in this study, more so because many of the UI participants are from French-speaking countries. It was found that while English-language in totality was a problem for international students from Francophone countries, English accent was more of a problem for the international students from Anglophone countries at the private university.

5.3.1 Findings from the questionnaires

In the questionnaire, three questions were asked pertaining to language/accent. Firstly, to get an insight into their English language abilities, the respondents were asked to rate the level of their English language proficiency to be one of Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor or Very Poor. In total, 43.85% (n=28) rated their English language proficiency as Excellent, 42.2% (n=27) rated it as Good, 14.1% (n=9) rated it as fair while there was no rating recorded for poor or very poor. A comparison between each university revealed that the majority (59.1%) of respondents who rated their English language proficiency as Excellent were studying at the private university compared to 35.7% at the public university. A higher percentage (45.2%) of respondents at the public university reported a good proficiency than those at the private university (36.4%) whereas, 19% reported a fair English proficiency at the public university compared to only 4.5% at the private university.

Secondly, the respondents were asked whether they were required to attend English language classes at their universities. Overall, 43.8% (n=28) responded they were required to attend English classes while 56.3% (n=36) responded they were not required to attend English classes as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5-1: International students who were required to attend an English language class

| | | | University | | |
			Private university	Public university	Total
Were you required to attend English language classes at your university	Yes	Count	4	24	28
		Expected Count	9.6	18.4	28.0
		% within University	18.2%	57.1%	43.8%
		Standardized Residual	-1.8	1.3	
	No	Count	18	18	36
		Expected Count	12.4	23.6	36.0
		% within University	81.8%	42.9%	56.3%
		Standardized Residual	1.6	-1.2	
Total		Count	22	42	64
		Expected Count	22.0	42.0	64.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing international students who were required to attend an English language class and those who were not

Consequently, the Fisher's Exact test performed showed a p-value of 0.004 (< 0.05), that indicates that there exists a significant difference in the requirement for an English proficiency class between the two universities as shown in Table 5.2 below:

Table 5-2: Attendance of an English proficiency class between the two universities

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.905[a]	1	.003	.004	.003
Continuity Correction[b]	7.393	1	.007		
Likelihood Ratio	9.494	1	.002	.004	.003
Fisher's Exact Test				.004	.003
N of Valid Cases	64				

2 Fisher's Exact test showing significant differences in the attendance of an English proficiency class between the two universities

From Table 5.1 above, fewer (n=4) than was expected respondents (n=9.6) under the null hypothesis of independence at the private university were required to attend an English proficiency class. The reason for this could be linked to a higher number of international students from francophone countries at the public university than at the private university.

Thirdly, a question was asked to know if the respondents' English accents affected their participation in the classroom. Those whose accents affected classroom participation were fewer than those whose accents did not affect classroom participation. Altogether, the accents of 41.3% (n=26) of the respondents affected their participation while the accents of the remaining 58.7% did not affect their participation. No statistically significant difference was observed in the responses between the two universities (p-value = 0.589). The researcher elaborates on the issue of accent in the interview findings.

5.3.2 Findings from the interviews – language and accents challenges

Four sub-themes emerged from the qualitative theme of language namely; availability/attendance of English language classes, the impact of language on academic performance, impact of accents on classroom participation and language of instruction in the classroom. These will be analysed one after the other in the subsequent paragraphs.

One, attending English language classes was a function of the availability of such classes at the two universities. Eight out of the ten participants at UI and one at CU from francophone countries had their previous education in French in their respective home countries and were only exposed to English for the first time in Nigeria. Unlike their UK, US, Canadian and Australian counterparts who were required to pass an English efficiency test such as TOEFL and IELTS before proceeding to study in their host institution (Bamford, 2008; Guo & Guo, 2017), international students in Nigeria were not required to undergo any form of language test or examination prior to admission. Although the admission policy of the two universities states that "a credit pass in English language is compulsory for all courses" (UI Calendar, 2018, p. 2) and CU student handbook (p. 54); it is not stated if international students are exempted from this requirement. Perhaps international students from francophone countries would have made up for their 'English language deficiency' by attending English classes at their host institution but then, the length of time for learning English was reportedly too short. The UI participants stated that there was availability of English classes which they were required to attend upon arrival at the university. Nevertheless, there was no uniformity in the length of English classes; while some indicated they had three months of English classes; others quoted two weeks, but they all agreed that the timing was too short to acquire the required English language skills. Meanwhile, there was no availability of special English classes for international students from Francophone countries at CU. The only English class available for CU students was a general one attended by all (Nigerians and international students) in their first year. A quote from Participant C8 from Southern Africa on behalf of French speakers explains thus:

> *For international students from French-speaking countries, I don't know how they adjust because I don't think there is any such structure put in place for those kinds of students, except they just learn on their own. There is only a general English course for everyone, both Nigerians and international students, not specifically for international students. C8*

The unavailability of English language classes at CU, a university that drives a vision (Vision 10:2022) to be one of the best ten universities in the world by 2022, seems inconsistent with international best practices. Drawing examples from South Africa (Adebanji & Gumbo, 2014) and Australia (Birrel & Healy, 2008), universities offer English language support classes to international students who are not first English speakers. This, in turn, helped the international students to attain considerable English language skills and enhanced their academic adjustments.

Two, language has an impact on the academic performance of international students in Nigeria. More than two-thirds of the participants at both universities decried the negative impact of language on their academic performance which translated into low academic grades for them, especially in the first year. Even though the situation seems to have improved for most of them, they recounted the struggle they encountered with language vividly. As stated earlier, French-speakers were the most affected while English-speakers from other countries mainly had an issue with the accent.

A great similarity was noted in the responses of the doctoral students at the UI. Their ordeal had to do with finding journal articles published in French, making sense of English journal articles and writing their theses in English. They made it known that there were limited journal articles in French, hence they had to rely on English journals which was a difficult task. Although one could argue if finding copious journal articles in French was a legitimate expectation, given that they were studying in an English environment. These international students also reported that they wrote in French before translating into English with the help of Google translator or a professional editor. They claimed all of these required more time and hard work from them to be at parity with their colleagues who are English speakers. Beoku-Betters (2004) equally observed that African female Scientists who were graduate students in Western universities experienced difficulty completing research tasks within stipulated time as a result of language differences. One of the participants (U3), a doctoral student from a francophone country in West Africa who was on the ECOWAS mobility programme scholarship, lamented about his experience with the English language. This is summed up in his quote:

> *It [language] is affecting my academic performance. For example, I am writing my thesis in French and afterwards use Google translator to translate it into English. I will also try using my little knowledge of English to correct as much as I can and then give to an editor. To be honest, if I am to write my thesis in English, I can use the same word all through and it will end up as rubbish. The thesis is for everyone to read, so I have to be serious about it. I am supposed to show them a French version when I get back to my country, so it is better for me to write it in French. So, it is really affecting me because I cannot move at the pace that I like. Also, it is easier for me to download the articles I need in French, although my supervisor always complains about all my authors being French. Another problem is that there are not many scholarly articles in French, most are [written] in English. I also use the dictionary to check for the meanings of words and*

to understand abstracts, which can be very time-consuming. So, it is not easy to be honest. (U3)

An initiative by ECOWAS in promoting intra-Africa mobility is the exchange of students between French-speaking countries and English-speaking countries. The initiative supports scholarships for students from member countries to undertake international study in another member country. One feature of the scholarship is that students do not entirely have control over their study destinations. They are made to choose from a list of countries whose official language is not the same as theirs. The essence of this exchange is to prepare students to be able to undertake work in any of the member countries without a language barrier. This is attested to by Participant U7 from West Africa who was also undergoing his doctoral programme at UI. He explained that he did his master's degree in Algeria (an Arabic country where French is widely spoken and used in education due to colonial ties with France) and had applied to pursue his doctoral studies in Senegal, another French-speaking country, but ECOWAS called him to move to an English-speaking country, and that was how he ended up at the UI in Nigeria. The quote of participant U3 above highlights some possible criticisms of the conditions of student mobility scholarships. One of such criticism would be whether the scholarship providers take the language difficulties students have to face while studying in a different linguistic context into cognizance and how these difficulties could be alleviated. Furthermore, it can be deduced from the quote of the above participant and the claim of another participant from North Africa that as much as language difficulty affects international students, it also does affect faculty staff. Supervisors are also frustrated by the communication barrier between them and their students (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016; Murray, 2010). For example, findings from the survey on staff's experiences of international students at the UQ in Australia reveal that staff criticised international students for not making impressive academic progress as a result of the students' poor language proficiency (Probertson, Line, Jones and Thomas 2000). In addition, Participant C10, an undergraduate student from West Africa, also commented on the impact of language on his academic performance. He referred to acquiring his primary and secondary education in French and studying in Nigeria as his first experience in an Anglophone country. Hence, he struggled to understand lectures and write examinations in English, which in turn affected his grades in the transition phase. However, he was able to improve his English language skill because he did not travel back home after his first year in Nigeria. He stayed back to work on his English, and because there was nobody to converse with in French, he was forced to speak English all the time, which really helped him.

Three, language/accent impact on international students' classroom participation. The majority, who were studying at CU, reported that their inability to communicate effectively in English or the difference of their English accent hampered their participation in the classroom. Even though the majority of these students were from English-speaking countries, language affected their academic performance in terms of accent. They found the English accent of Nigerians different from that of their respective countries and had a problem understanding it at the beginning of their study in Nigeria. They would rather keep quiet and avoid being laughed at than answer a question or make contributions to a topic of discussion in class. Similarly, a survey conducted by Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) with 140 Asian students in an Australian university found that the colloquial expressions of the Australian accent and the fast pace with which natives speak compounded the English language difficulty of this set of students. This was the case for Participants C4 and C6 (both from Southern Africa), when asked if language affected their participation in the classroom, they replied respectively:

> *It does, there are times I want to answer a question but because I know what I want to say might sound strange to them, they might laugh; so, I would just keep it to myself and not answer the question. That really affects my interaction. There are times I feel shy to ask the lecturer to explain a concept if I don't get him, I'd rather ask the person beside me who understands where I'm coming from. (C4)*

"Yes, after I say something, my course mates laugh because I say something differently or I use a word in a different context. So, most times I choose to keep quiet to avoid that" (C6).

In a way, the two quotes above highlight the attitude of home students towards linguistic and cultural diversity brought about by international students. It points to the level of awareness given to home students on the presence of international students on campus, and the need to be receptive rather than laugh at them. Besides keeping quiet for fear of being laughed at, the international students also would not talk in class because some lecturers found it difficult understanding their accent. Two international students from East Africa explained that some lecturers often get impatient with them whenever they talk. Unaware that these students are non-Nigerians, the lecturers thought they were disguising their accent. This led to the international students being scored poorly in class and during oral academic competitions. This is exemplified by the words of participant C7:

> *Not most people know that I am an international student because it is not written all over my face, so, anytime I am asked to answer a question or speak, some people think I am*

trying to pretend or form an accent. They'll say, "Why is she talking like that?" I had a recent experience where the lecturer gave me a zero because she thought that I was trying to pretend with accent; she was like she could not understand the way I was speaking. It really lowered my confidence in class, and I tend to keep quiet most of the time instead of speaking out. (C7)

The experience narrated by Participant C7 above is a serious issue that the researcher never came across in literature; perhaps it highlights how international students in Nigeria experience some issues differently and deeply within the Nigerian context. The above quote also questions lecturers' international skills and awareness. Some of the participants in this study reiterated how their self-esteem was affected by the reaction they got towards their accent, either from lecturers or peers. These reactions are sometimes perceived as stigmatisation, and once these students made a few initial attempts to talk in class, they afterwards "retired to their shells". These three students quoted above were in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th years respectively, and according to them, they were yet to get over the mockery that accompanied their classroom participation. This is slightly different for participant U3 whose class participation was hampered by a lack of English proficiency, having come from a French-speaking country. His answer to the question was:

Yes, it was affecting my participation in the classroom when I newly came. There were times I did not agree with the approach of my supervisor, but I was always shy to let him know because I did not know how to communicate in English. During seminars, even my colleagues used to discourage me from making contributions due to my bad English. Whenever I had anything to say, I would start by saying, 'sorry for my English'. Though my English still affects my participation but not as before, there has been lots of improvements. (U3)

Four, some lecturers do not adhere to the language of instruction in the classroom. As a former colony of Britain, the official language in Nigeria is English. This is also the language that is generally being used at all levels of education across the country. The English language was one of the reasons why the majority of the participants chose to study in Nigeria. With regards to language, the international students were asked if they found the language of instruction in the classroom suitable. In order words, the researcher sought to know if lecturers engage in the use of vernacular in the classroom or if they adhere strictly to the use of English. The number of those that found the language of instruction suitable was almost the same as those that found

it unsuitable. Some of the international students in Nigeria criticised the use of the Yoruba language for teaching. Yoruba is one of the three major Nigerian languages, spoken in the South-West where both CU and UI are located. In the same vein, an interview conducted by Bavli (2017) with international students in Turkey found that lecturers were prone to speaking Turkish in class instead of English because of their deficiency in English, although the participants alluded to the fact that their English language competence had improved by the end of their programme. Similarly, international students involved in research carried out by Davey et al. (2013) had their language problem compounded by the mix of Australian colloquialism and unfamiliar accents they encountered. Participant U3 also alluded:

> *I am always complaining. They sometimes use vernacular in the classroom, but I notice that it has become a part of the people. UI is a federal university, which means it is not for anybody but for the government but because UI is in Yoruba land, must we then say it is for Yoruba? But Yoruba people do appropriate UI as their property, which is not good. The official language in Nigeria is English, so people ought to communicate in English in a Federal University. Some professors do speak Yoruba in the classroom, which I do not understand; it is not good. In my country, never will a prof speak a native language in the classroom, but in UI, it is not so. (U3)*

Perhaps, some lecturers infuse the Yoruba language into their teaching because they were unaware of the multicultural nature of their class. There were however some students who stated that lecturers engage the use of Yoruba language in teaching to better explain a concept and are also quick to interpret in English once international students complain of being "lost". Some students even stated further that they like the use of Yoruba language by some lecturers because it promotes "Africanisation", adding that lecturers in their home countries also do the same. Africanisation, in this context, implies the promotion of the African heritage, including language. On a similar note, authors such as De Wit (2012) and Jowi, Knight & Sehoole (2013) raised a notion on the need to de-internationalise African higher education to make it stand out from the Western supremacy, that is, developing an internationalisation pattern that will be a full reflection of the African identity and cultural substance. In line with this, Hagenmeier et al. (2017) advocates that the blueprint of the 21st century African higher education internationalisation programmes should be the intellectual property of Africa where the capacity-building content is specifically designed for Africa. Conversely, some students expressed that their lecturers adhere strictly to teaching English. For instance, Participant C9 from Southern Africa said: "It's strictly English, I've never heard vernacular in class."

5.4   TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

The question pertaining to the teaching and learning style at the host universities was asked in comparison to the participants' host countries. Divergent and overlapping views emerged from the responses of the participants, which suggest different classroom experiences. Due to the diversity of teaching and learning experiences of the international students, only the qualitative findings of this theme are reported. While some of the participants' teaching and learning experiences in Nigeria agree with the notion put forward by Iruonagbe et al.(2015) that Nigerian higher education is characterised by poor teaching methods, the experiences of some participants do not support this notion The qualitative responses of the participants elicit that some found teaching and learning styles in their home countries to be better than those in Nigeria, some found teaching and learning styles to be better in Nigeria than in their home countries while others alluded to the same or almost the same style, as discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Some of the international students at the two universities alluded to better teaching and learning styles in their home countries than in Nigeria. One of the aspects referred to was in terms of class interactions and engagements. International students from both universities decried the teaching and learning method in Nigeria where the lecturer assumes dominance of the class and cannot be opposed by students. Thus, these students encountered what Guo (2005) described as "learning shock" arising from the host country's alien pedagogic academic methods which result in confusion and frustration and in turn affecting students learning in a negative way. As noted earlier in the theme of expectations versus reality, Participant U3 from West Africa likened the teaching and learning style at the public university to the method used before the Second World War. He expressed disappointment that such a method where students cannot challenge a lecturer's argument is still being adopted in the 21st century. With many similarities to the view of participant U3, participant C7 from East Africa echoed:

"From my observation, it [teaching and learning] is not really interactive because it is very difficult to oppose what a lecturer is saying or comment on it. They tend to take it as disrespect. So, it's not really interactive. It is better in my country" (C7).

In terms of practical engagements, a set of students at CU prefer the teaching and learning style in their home countries. Participant C3 from West Africa described the style of teaching at CU as too theoretical and lacking practical engagement which is a pre-requisite for his Engineering discipline. In his words:

I had expected that there would be some high level of laboratory engagement. Perhaps it is my department, I don't know but I have not seen any high level of engagement in the laboratories here [CU]. It is more theoretical in the sense that the teacher comes and hands out the slides and the notes; and the students go back to read and come back for the exams. We do more practical in my home country and I can say the practical I did back then in high school are far better than what we currently do at CU. (C3)

Likening the level of laboratory and practical engagement in his home country high school to that at CU, he explained further that a group experiment back home would have two students to an apparatus, unlike CU where groups are overcrowded with over ten students to an apparatus. He acknowledged that group work is good but stated that only two or three students actually do the work in an over-crowded group of more than ten students, while others copy. A prevalent report in the literature on the state of higher education in Nigeria is the deteriorating condition of facilities and overcrowding in public universities as a result of inadequate funding received from the government. It is therefore interesting to find that a private university like CU which generates its own funds through considerably high tuition fees (compared to public universities in Nigeria) is also reportedly plagued with overcrowding and inadequate laboratory facilities. The quote of Participant C3 also refutes a claim in the CU student handbook (pg. 25) that "the workshops in the [Engineering] departments are equipped."

The international students also referred to academic workload as an aspect of advantage in their home countries. For instance, participant C6 from Southern Africa described the teaching and learning at her university as too cumbersome with too many subjects and topics to learn at the same time. Participant C10 equally maintained that the teaching and learning style in his West African country is better than what he experienced at CU, even though "[*we] don't have this kind of standard university [like CU] in my country, and the private universities there cannot match up with Covenant University, so on that note, I give it to Covenant University; they are really trying with the revolution in education in Africa.*" The international students in this category are left with no choice than to adapt to a foreign teaching and learning style, and also adjust to what Barron et al. (2009, p. 9) term as "narrowly defined set of classroom behaviours". These students consequently devise strategies of coping, which often translates into harder work, to succeed.

As opposed to the views of the participants in the preceding discussion, a few participants at both universities regard the teaching and learning style to be better and more interactive in

Nigeria than what is obtainable in their home countries. They, therefore, experienced no "learning shock" as opined by Guo (2015). For example, Participant C9 from Southern Africa indicated:

> *My experience has shown that here [CU] is a bit more interactive. The first hour is mostly teaching, like present the slides and all that stuff and the other hour, they mostly try to explain deeper and give room for questions. Most of the lectures are actually structured in a way that probably the last thirty minutes are for questions and answers, so we ask questions and all that stuff. So, I think they are more interactive here than in my home country. (C9)*

Another set of undergraduates at CU whose first university experience was in Nigeria, regard the teaching and learning style in Nigeria as better than back home. These students had a good appraisal of their university and maintained that CU makes accessible all academic materials that a student needs to succeed, such as online module platform where students can access notes ahead of their classes. According to Participant C2 from West Africa, "*The structure here [CU] is such that if you are willing to make it academically, then you have all you need to succeed academically.*" Indeed, the CU student handbook is detailed on the resources and programmes available to students for not only their academic success but general wellbeing. Participant C4 from Southern Africa also said, "*the teaching and learning style is easier and better [in Nigeria]*". However, he sought improvements with regards to over-crowded classes which he said could be too noisy and therefore hampered interactions with the lecturers. This is worsened by the difference in accent, which made understanding lectures difficult. He would prefer small classes that promote more interactions with lecturers.

Some of the participants at UI who are enrolled for postgraduate studies and have had prior university experience in their home countries describe the teaching and learning styles in Nigeria to be the same or at least almost the same as those of their home countries. One of them, participant U2 from West Africa, ascribed the similarity to "the same African problem" which he explained as follows:

> *Regarding the teaching methodology, I can say they are almost the same. I find the same African problem in the way things are done; it is almost the same thing with the lecturers. Some of them take the students as being inferior, which is not good. From my own point of view, I see it as an African problem because in my previous university in my home*

country, it is the same thing. Some lecturers make teaching and learning very complicated, but we still have some that are very nice." (U2)

Scholars of internationalisation of higher education such as Alemu (2014) and Zeleza (2014) also reported on problems facing higher education in Africa and indicated that Africa has the least-developed educational system in the world. They referred to inadequate teaching and learning facilities, research limitations and pedagogical content as some of the challenges confronting education in Africa. Also, Participant U4 from West Africa stated, *"If I am to compare, I will say it is the same."* Although she did not elaborate on the aspect of similarity in terms of, for example, interactive class or rote learning, she did mention that while lecturers in her home country provide course materials through email and WhatsApp ahead of their classes, lecturers in Nigeria do so after classes. It is observed that the students who alluded to similar teaching and learning styles in Nigeria and their countries are all from West Africa. It is therefore possible that their claim applies to the West African situation rather than the entire African pedagogy.

5.5   CURRICULUM

The review of this theme aims to analyse how internationalised the curriculum at each participating university is. Leask (2009, p. 209) defines internationalisation of the curriculum as the "incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of a program of study". Does the curriculum provide students with learning opportunities at both local and international levels to produce graduates who will be globally competitive or are international students only exposed to the Nigerian context of their respective courses?

5.5.1   Findings from the questionnaire

Responses from the questionnaires depict how global or local the curriculum at each university is. At the two universities, 92.2% (n=59) reported that the curriculum was not local, while 7.8% (n=5) deemed the curriculum to be local. See Table 5.3.

Table 5-3: "Local" content of curriculum at the Universities

The curriculum at this university is local * University Crosstabulation

			University		Total
			Private university	Public university	
The curriculum at this university is local	No	Count	18	41	59
		Expected Count	20.3	38.7	59.0
		% within University	81.8%	97.6%	92.2%
		Standardized Residual	-.5	.4	
	Yes	Count	4	1	5
		Expected Count	1.7	3.3	5.0
		% within University	18.2%	2.4%	7.8%
		Standardized Residual	1.7	-1.3	
Total		Count	22	42	64
		Expected Count	22.0	42.0	64.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table depicting whether the curriculum at the two universities was being considered as local

The Fisher's Exact test performed showed a p-value of 0.044 ($<$ 0.05) which implies a significant difference in the responses of the international students at the two universities, as shown in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5 4: Difference between local content private and public Universities

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.005[a]	1	.025	.044	.044
Continuity Correction[b]	3.051	1	.081		
Likelihood Ratio	4.780	1	.029	.044	.044
Fisher's Exact Test				.044	.044
N of Valid Cases	64				

Fisher's Exact Test showing a statistical difference between public and private university with respect to local curriculum

From Table 5.3, fewer (n=4) than is expected respondents (n=1.7) at the private university found the curriculum to be local.

On the other hand, 87.5% (n=56) of the total respondents did not consider the curriculum at their universities to be global, while the remaining 12.5% (n=8) considered the curriculum global. Within each university, the percentage of those who found the curriculum not to be global surpass those who find it to be global. There was no statistically significant difference as regards global curriculum between the two universities (p-value = 0.430).

5.5.2   Findings from the interviews – How Internationalised is the curriculum?

Seventy per cent of the participants described the curriculum for their various courses as local and specific to the Nigerian context. While some found this to be normal, others were not pleased with it. One of the students who was enrolled for Civil Engineering voiced his frustration about the curriculum by stating that he would have to "relearn" everything he was currently learning at CU when he got back to his country in Southern Africa in order to be able to apply it to the context of his country. His words are:

> *For me, I am studying Civil Engineering and everything we do is Nigerian. It is like the standard; everything is Nigerian. I felt like I was going to an international school and will learn general things here. Most of the things I'm learning here, I will have to go and relearn a lot of things at home to relate to my home country because most of the things here are specifically for Nigeria.*

He had expected a more global course content as part of the advantage of an international study, but his expectation was not met in that regard. Again, this raises a question on the real value of acquiring an international education and the adoption of internationalisation practices reflected in the definition of Knight (2014 p. 11) as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education." Participant U3 from West Africa also expressed:

> *Seriously, it [the curriculum] is Nigeria specific. The references of most of our books say it all, and it is majorly Nigeria except in some cases where it says UK and that is because Nigeria was colonised by the UK and UI being established by the UK; there are no references from French countries. People speak Yoruba language a lot in this university, so what do you expect? The programme is majorly Nigeria specific. (U3)*

Nigeria was colonised by Britain and gained independence in 1960. The UI, the first university in Nigeria, was also established by the British as a college of the University of London until 1962 when it became an independent fully-fledged university. This explains why the British influence still plays out in some of the university's activities, including study materials, according to the claim of Participant U3. As a doctoral student, he had expected more encompassing study material, although one would have expected that a PhD student like him would engage in independent study and be self-exposed to diverse materials around the world. Perhaps he was referring to references in terms of the books in the library. Participant C1 from East Africa relayed that it could sometimes be difficult for international students to cope with

majorly studying the Nigerian context in his International Relations department. According to him, *"there are times we get angry, knowing fully well that we have not come to study the Nigerian system, we have come to study international system."* In the same manner, Chinese students studying in a Canadian institution complained of exclusion in the teaching and learning process stipulated by the curriculum (Guo & Guo, 2017). For another participant from West Africa, he understood that being in Nigeria warranted learning about Nigeria in his course, but he would have expected a sort of generalisation of the curriculum, at least to the African context and later narrowed down to Nigeria. He added that those who understand the three main Nigerian languages (Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa), do better in assignments than the rest of the class because of the Nigerian nature of the curriculum. Going by the vision of the two universities "to become a world-class institution", the views of the above participants regarding the curriculum do not seem to be a path towards the actualisation of such vision.

At both universities, some of the participants found the curriculum to be global and relational by both international and local students. This situation is what Agnew and Fox (2014) refer to as the "glocal context" - a contemporary phenomenon that promotes both the global and local dimensions of education. The postgraduate participants attested to learning the same or at least, almost the same course content to what they had previously learnt in their home countries. This is exemplified by the quote of Participant U8 from a francophone country in West Africa:

> *[The curriculum] carries everybody along because Aquaculture is a course that cuts across every country, I did it in [name of country] and now I am doing it in Nigeria but at a higher level. I think it is a standard course for every country, even if you go to the UK or any country to do aquaculture, you will still undergo the same course. It is standard across the world. (U8)*

Another participant studying at CU, and who seemed to be in touch with her friends back home in East Africa made it known that what she was learning in her Scientific field at CU was the same her colleagues were learning back home. An internationalised curriculum is not only beneficial to international students but also to local students. Local students are also exposed to the multicultural dimension of teaching and learning without leaving the shores of their country. This phenomenon is otherwise referred to as "internationalisation at home" by de Wit (2013). Furthermore, an internationalised curriculum promotes a rewarding institutional environment and aids positive interaction between home and international students (Leask, 2009).

5.6   ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Academic support in the context of this study refers to the guidance and assistance rendered to international students in order to cope with academic demands in their host institutions such as course content, workload, language difficulty, study skills and assessment methods. Studying in an unfamiliar academic environment is often accompanied by an overwhelming feeling, particularly in the transition phase. Hence, getting the right support either from faculty members or peers goes a long way in enhancing a smooth adjustment in a new study environment. To this end, the theme of academic support examined two aspects of support quantitatively and qualitatively, namely, faculty support and peer support.

5.6.1   Findings from the questionnaire

Out of the 64 valid responses from the two universities, 51 respondents (79.7%) found faculty members supportive while 13 respondents (20.3%) find faculty members unsupportive. There were no statistically significant differences in faculty support between the two universities (p-value = 0.752). With respect to peer support, there were 63 valid responses. 50 respondents (79.4%) out of the 63 found their peers (home students) supportive while the remaining 13 (20.6%) found them unsupportive. Again, there were no statistically significant differences in peer support between the two universities (p-value = 1.0).

5.6.2   Findings from the interviews

Faculty support and peer support

Faculty members are part of the major drivers of the internationalisation effort of an institution (Santhi, 2010). They play an essential role in determining the transition of international students through maintaining a stable student-faculty relationship. Eighty-five per cent (85%) of all the participants found faculty staff at the university supportive. These students enunciated that the academic help they received from their lecturers and supervisors alleviated their academic stress to a great extent. This is exemplified by the response of participant C9 from Southern Africa:

> *Yes, they [faculty members] are actually very supportive. They are very encouraging especially for us international students. They always try, even our lecturers find a way they can help us with extra tutorials and all of that. Even in class if I don't understand, the lecturer will repeat what he said, knowing that I am an international student. (C9)*

Just like participant C9, some other participants also mentioned that their lecturers were supportive by providing them with course materials and offering extra tutorials. Some students expressed that their lecturers and supervisors showed genuine interest in their academic and general wellbeing. This is the case for participant U1, a French speaker from West Africa who was studying in English for the first time in Nigeria. He had earlier lamented about the language difficulty he faced as regards studying in Nigeria, but he made it known that the support he got from his supervisor encouraged him not to quit. He stated:

> *My supervisor (laughs), for me, he's the best supervisor in the world because he cares about everything I do; he supports me. He gives me the courage to continue. He says, 'If you don't understand anything [name of student], tell me I can help you; I am here for you.' I don't have a problem with my supervisor, he is very helpful. (U1)*

Some participants added that their supervisors and other faculty members in their departments showed concern about their level of academic progress by following up on them from time to time. Although one of the international students revealed that lecturers only provide support if students meet with them to ask for it, while another student communicated that the measure of support they received could be better if all the lecturers took cognizance of the presence of international students through their teaching methods. Overall, the students asserted that the faculty staff provided them with academic support in one form or the other, which aided their smooth adjustment. This is consistent with the findings from the research of Rabia & Karkouti (2017) which revealed that Arab students studying in the US found the support and cooperation of faculty members very helpful in their academic adjustment. A slightly different view from the above is that of participant U10 from North Africa who alluded to the fact that some lecturers in his department are helpful, however, his supervisor has been unhelpful and impatient with him due to his busy schedule as a professor. He illustrated thus:

> *In terms of patience, I've been in situations where my supervisor was not patient with me. Although it differs from person to person, but I think that my supervisor is neither patient nor helpful. I know many lecturers in my department as well as in other departments who are very good and very helpful. Sometimes, God sends you to a helpful person but in my case, my supervisor is not helpful. He is one of these big professors, so I mostly work by myself. Yeah, that's the truth. (U10)*

Contrary to the views of the above students, two of the international students interviewed indicated outright that faculty staff are neither supportive nor helpful. One of them, participant

U3, a doctoral student, complained of being left alone, adding that international students are being admitted because of money. In the same vein, participant C10 explained that the lack of support from faculty staff led to depression and confusion upon arrival at the university. He went further to relay how he would often cry and almost went back home, if not for his strong belief that God wanted him to study at CU and had orchestrated his admission. These students were probed on whether they did approach some faculty staff for help They replied that some lecturers are impatient and would often snap at them when approached for help. Hence, they kept to themselves for fear of being shouted at.

Peer support is another way through which international students navigate their ways into a host country or a host institution. Due to the overwhelming feeling that accompanies studying in an unfamiliar context, being mentored by a peer goes a long way in helping international students settle quickly into their new study environment, as advocated by Taylor and Ali (2017). Chilvers (2016) refers to peer mentoring as PASS i.e. Peer Assisted Study Sessions, where second- and third-year students at a UK university are trained to assist new international students through a course-based learning community aimed at developing confidence, study skills and understanding of course material as well as friendships. As opposed to the report of Chilvers, there was no deliberate effort on the part of the participating universities to train senior students to mentor new ones; the support the international students in this study got from their peers were through self-efforts. The majority of the participants found their peers supportive while a few found them unsupportive. While some indicated that fellow international students were more supportive, others found both international and Nigerian students to be supportive alike. When asked if his peers gave him academic support, participant C1 from East Africa stated:

> *Yes, they are very supportive. My friends are very supportive, now that they have gotten used to me. They know me for who I am and not as a [nationality]; neither do they treat me based on my country of origin. So, they are very supportive, they help me a lot. They also get me involved in knowing more about the Nigerian culture. (C1)*

Some of the participants enunciated that although, support from home students did not occur at the start of their study due to cultural differences; they are being supported now that they have become used to one another. For instance, participant C2 from West Africa described her peers as not being supportive at the beginning but that they really are now because she is "pushy". One kind of support the international students receive is through group study, as

exemplified by Participant U6 from Southern Africa who said; *They [peers] are very helpful.* *We have sessions where we have discussions or group study.*" Another student mentioned that they share ideas on their courses, which made learning easier. Of note are the responses of the students who described the international students at CU as a family. They explained that they have a WhatsApp group where they communicate, share their problems and get them solved. In line with the report of Chilvers (2016), one of the participants, who was frustrated upon arrival, indicated that he owed his adjustment to the guidance and support he received from senior international students. Nevertheless, few of the participants did not enjoy peer support. One of them was participant C6 from Southern Africa, who relayed that she did not receive any form of support from Nigerian students because the latter do not want to relate with her; hence, she felt lonesome amongst them. She said the reason for the lack of support might be either because she looked different (half-cast) or she was very much older. When asked about her age, she revealed she was 23, whereas, some of her classmates were as young as 15 years old.

5.7 OVERALL ACADEMIC TRANSITION

With regards to this study, academic transition relates to the way international students navigate their ways through their new academic environment at the beginning of their study in Nigeria. In the literature, international students are often observed to grapple with a difficult transition in the first year of study in their new environment (Zhang, 2016). This is so because it is the period when they try to detach themselves from their home culture and immerse themselves in the culture of the host environment. For example, a mixed methods project done by Ashton Hay et al. (2016) on the transitioning experience of international students in three Australian university campuses found that international students faced challenges relating to language and culture, particularly in the first year when culture shock was more significant. The positive or negative academic transition of the international students in this study is influenced by all or some of the aspects of academic life previously analysed in this chapter. Again, findings from the questionnaires give a general picture of how the respondents perceived their academic transition while findings from the interviews provide more detailed experiences of the international students.

5.7.1 Findings from the questionnaire

The respondents were asked to describe their academic transition into their respective universities. The categories of description are Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor and Very Poor. Upon analysis, similar categories were regrouped into Excellent/Good, Fair and Poor/Very Poor in

order to eliminate categories with no responses. Hence, a total of 30.2% (n=19) respondents reported their transition to be excellent/good, 68.3% (n=43) reported a fair transition whereas only 1.6% (n=1) reported a poor/very poor transition. It was observed within each university that the percentage of respondents with a fair transition exceeded those with an excellent/good transition while the one person that reported a poor/very poor transition was studying at the public university. There were no significant differences in the academic transition of international students at the two universities (p-value = 0.110).

5.7.2   Findings from the interviews – Rough or smooth transition

The prevalent responses to the question of academic transition suggested a rough transition. All ten participants at CU and seven participants at UI expressed that they did not have a smooth academic transition; even though many of them reported that their academic experience had now improved. The English language was revealed as the key factor responsible for the rough transition of francophone students at UI while English accent was the key factor for the rough transition experienced by CU students, who were majorly from other English-speaking countries. The experiences of these students are consistent with the submission of Galloway and Jenkins (2005) and Zhang (2016) that language is considered one of the greatest issues that hinder a smooth academic adjustment for international students. Of interest was the statement made by a Participant U3 from a Francophone country in West Africa who was enrolled for a doctoral degree:

> *I came on the 16th of February 2016, I do not think I will be able to forget this date. I had a lot of stereotypes about Nigeria, socially and academically but let's focus on the academic aspect. I did not know anything in English when I came. I cannot tell you how many times I cried; I'm a man but I cried because a lot of times I did not understand anything. The situation was very rough. Without God and prayers from my family, maybe I would have gone back. I knew someone who was also sponsored by ECOWAS who came and went back because it was very rough. Can you imagine bringing someone from a French country and leaving them all by themselves in an English-speaking country with little or no guidance? I don't think there is anyone from a French country who had a smooth transition. It was very difficult but if you think deeply about your mission in Nigeria and how you got your scholarship, then you may have the courage to forge ahead. (U3)*

The quote from Participant U3 above calls for a reflection on the phenomenon of student mobility. Again, it raises a concern on the measures taken by sponsors of mobility programmes to ensure that the language gap is bridged between the sending country and the receiving country, especially when different languages are involved. It also raises a concern on the institutional platforms put in place to ensure the smooth adjustment of international students upon arrival at the university. Besides, it indicates how prior expectations influence the experiences of international students. The feeling of giving up due to the English language barrier was also reiterated by another doctoral student from a francophone country in West Africa. The difficulty arising from English language barrier is not peculiar to the international students in this study. Studies such as those conducted by Park (2016) and Taylor & Ali (2017) reiterated that the English language poses a challenge to international students whose first language is not English. Nevertheless, a study conducted by Taylor & Ali (2017) revealed that Asian students studying at a university in the United Kingdom had a good transition as a result of the availability of well-structured English support classes.

It appears that the students in this study did not anticipate the difficult transition they underwent; hence, they were not prepared for it. Schlossberg's theory of transition had rightly pointed out that unanticipated events could result in a difficult transitional experience for an individual (Schlossberg, 2011). Nevertheless, the theory argues that the onus lies on an institution to provide international students with an effective support system that will ensure the alleviation of a difficult transition. For the interview participants at CU, none of them had a smooth academic transition. A recurring reason for their rough transition alluded to the difference in English language accent. As in a study conducted by Park (2016) at three universities in Australia, international students from other English-speaking countries experienced language problems as a result of accented English spoken by Australians. For example, Participant C9 from Southern Africa indicated that he grappled with an accent at the start of his study in Nigeria:

> *When I first came, I struggled a lot especially with the accent. Like the first month or two, in class I couldn't understand anything. Most of the time I would have to teach myself because I didn't really get how they were talking and all that stuff. (C9)*

When probed further if the accent still posed a difficulty to him, he stated, "*I now understand how they teach, and I've caught up a lot. It is quite easy now; I am very familiar with the way things work here.*" Similarly, participant C7 from East Africa restated the same situation: *"The*

first challenge that I had in my first year was interacting with the lecturers, the accent and understanding what they teach in class.'' This was also corroborated by participant C6 from Southern Africa who stated, *"I thought it was really hard because of the accent, some lecturers have very thick Nigerian accent."* Aside from the rough academic transition attributed to accent, participant C2 pointed out that she had a difficult transition as a result of academic pressure. As a person, she prefers to do one thing at a time but coming to CU saw her grappling with too many courses and workload at a time.

Three international students at the UI expressed that their transition was smooth to a large extent. As mentioned earlier, two of these students did not have expectations prior to studying in Nigeria. According to them, they had come "with an open mind". They also stated that they were prepared to accept whatever the university had to offer them. Perhaps their open-mindedness paved the way for the smooth transition they experienced. One of the participants from Southern Africa ascribed her smooth transition to the first three months of integration, during which time there was no academic work in her department. The period was devoted to socialising with peers in her department, senior Nigerian students and international students, who helped her and some of her "new" colleagues get acquainted with "university life". By the time academic work started, she was already well-adjusted to the system.

Another participant from West Africa attributed his smooth transition to his undergraduate study at the same university. Having done his first degree at the UI, he was already used to the university system. Hence, when he began studying for his master's degree, he had no transition hurdle. When asked to describe his academic transition, he answered:

> *Actually, it has been a good experience. One thing I have learnt about schooling in UI environment is that you are taught to be dogged and well-ground. One of the core values of the university states that 'character and true learning' i.e. you don't only learn but you are taught to have character. Before you graduate from this school, you must have some level of character. That is one of the things I have really picked from here, which aided my smooth transition.*

In addition, the third participant who experienced a good academic transition attributed it to the support he received from the Office of International Programme (OIP), an office responsible for the affairs of the international students at the UI.

5.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter argued that the overall academic transition experiences of international students in Nigeria are a cumulation of the diverse aspects of academic life. While some of the experiences of the international students in this study are synonymous with the experiences of international students in other contexts, as established in literature; some findings analysed in this chapter highlight that international students in Nigeria have some peculiar academic experiences. One of such experiences is the attitude of lecturers towards international students' accents. It is doubtful if some faculty members are aware of internationalisation efforts being made by their universities, one of which is the recruitment of international students. Another highlight is the disputed efforts of the two universities in ensuring a smooth language transition for international students whose first language is not English. As much as the two participating universities promote internationalisation through their policy frameworks and aspire to become world class universities, the academic experiences of international students do not fully justify these efforts.

CHAPTER 6
SOCIOCULTURAL TRANSITION EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter argues that the sociocultural transition experiences of international students in Nigeria are influenced by diverse factors, which include culture, food, loneliness and perceived discrimination. In presenting this argument, the theoretical framework of Schlossberg (1981), as well as evidence from the review of literature, are examined to either corroborate or refute the findings from this study. These findings are further supported by direct quotes from the interviewees and relevant sections from institutional documents where necessary. Importantly, the researcher was open to the emergence of new ideas that contribute to knowledge on the internationalisation of higher education. In the context of this study, sociocultural experiences refer to the way the international students perceive the ethnic, linguistic and societal milieu prevalent in the host country and the host institution. The social and cultural aspects prevalent in a host country are important in determining the success of the international students' transition (Adebanji & Gumbo, 2014; Pearce & Lin, 2007; Yin, 2013). In line with this, a review of institutional documents at the two universities suggests efforts geared towards the socio-cultural adjustments of international students and home students alike.

While the previous chapter analysed quantitative and qualitative data relating to academic experiences, the analysis presented in this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part of the chapter deals with the analysis of socio-cultural experiences, while the second part presents the recommendations made by international students for a better transition experience (academic and socio-cultural). As with the mode of analysis in Chapter 5, findings from the questionnaires are first presented under each theme and immediately followed by findings from the interviews. Again, the narratives from the interviews provide a more comprehensive view of the international students' experiences while also giving clarity to findings from the questionnaire (Ivankova & Plano, 2016). To understand the socio-cultural experiences of the participants, eight questions were asked, from which five major themes emerged. Some of the major themes elicited sub-themes based on the coding and interpretation of data. As explained in Chapter 5, the 20 interview participants from the two universities are assigned codes in place of their

names for anonymity. While the 10 participants at CU are assigned codes C1 to C10, the 10 participants at the UI are assigned codes U1 to U10.

To this end, the following socio-cultural themes are discussed in this chapter:

- Culture
- Food
- Loneliness
- Feeling of discrimination
- Sociocultural Transition

6.2   CULTURE

Culture is central to any society, with each society defining its own values and norms. Similarly, Yam (2016) opines that culture is fundamental to the experience of studying abroad. Authors on international students' experiences also affirm the importance of culture as one of the motivations in the decision to study abroad. For example, studies conducted by Lee and Sehoole (2015) and Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2015) found culture to be one of the prevalent reasons why international students chose to study in South Africa and Mexico respectively. However, the transition experiences of international students depend largely on how well they can relate to the culture of the host country. Hence, the theme of culture was one that stemmed out of the review on how the participants perceived the way of life in Nigeria in comparison to their home countries.

6.2.1   Findings from the questionnaires

One of the questions in the questionnaire sought to find out if the respondents experienced culture shock in Nigeria. Three answer options were provided – Yes, No and Not Sure. Examining the findings at both universities, 36.1% reported they experienced a culture shock, 47.5% did not experience a culture shock, while 16.4% were not sure if they experienced a culture shock. At the private university, 61.9% experienced a culture shock, 28.6% did not experience a culture shock while 9.5% were not sure. At the public university, 22.5% experienced a culture shock, 57.5% did not experience a culture shock while 20% were not sure. See Table 6.1 below.

Table 6-1: International students' experiences of culture shock

| | | | University | | Total |
			Private university	Public university	
Do you experience culture shock in Nigeria	Yes	Count	13	9	22
		Expected Count	7.6	14.4	22.0
		% within University	61.9%	22.5%	36.1%
		Standardized Residual	2.0	-1.4	
	No	Count	6	23	29
		Expected Count	10.0	19.0	29.0
		% within University	28.6%	57.5%	47.5%
		Standardized Residual	-1.3	.9	
	Not sure	Count	2	8	10
		Expected Count	3.4	6.6	10.0
		% within University	9.5%	20.0%	16.4%
		Standardized Residual	-.8	.6	
Total		Count	21	40	61
		Expected Count	21.0	40.0	61.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing international students experiences of culture shock at the private and the public universities

The Fisher's Exact test performed showed a p-value of 0.010 (< 0.05) which implies a significant difference in the experiences of culture shock between the students from the two universities, as shown in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6-2: Difference in experiences of culture shock

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.275[a]	2	.010	.010
Likelihood Ratio	9.202	2	.010	.018
Fisher's Exact Test	8.737			.010
N of Valid Cases	61			

Fisher's Exact Test showing a difference in the experiences of culture shock between the private and the public university

It was observed that more respondents (n=13) than expected (n=7.6) at the private university experienced culture shock.

A follow-up question in the questionnaire asked if the respondents had any knowledge of the Nigerian culture before studying in Nigeria. This question was asked to determine if the international students' experience of culture shock was hinged on their prior knowledge of the Nigerian culture. From a total of 63 valid responses, only 25 (39.7%) of the respondents alluded to having prior knowledge of the Nigerian culture, whereas 38 (60.3%) reported no prior

knowledge. A closer look into the two universities revealed 14 (63.6%) respondents at the private university had prior knowledge of the Nigerian culture, while 8 (36.4%) did not. On the other hand, 11 (26.8%) respondents at the public university had prior knowledge of the Nigerian culture as opposed to 30 (24.7%) who did not. See Table 6.3 below.

Table 6-3: Prior knowledge of the Nigerian culture

| | | | University | | Total |
			Private university	Public university	
Did you have any knowledge of the Nigerian culture prior to your studying here?	Yes	Count	14	11	25
		Expected Count	8.7	16.3	25.0
		% within University	63.6%	26.8%	39.7%
		Standardized Residual	1.8	-1.3	
	No	Count	8	30	38
		Expected Count	13.3	24.7	38.0
		% within University	36.4%	73.2%	60.3%
		Standardized Residual	-1.4	1.1	
Total		Count	22	41	63
		Expected Count	22.0	41.0	63.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing knowledge of the Nigerian culture prior to studying in Nigeria

Fisher's Exact Test performed (see Table 6.4 below) showed a significant difference in the responses of international students at the private and the public university, p-value = 0.007 (< 0.05).

Table 6-4: Difference in knowledge of Nigerian culture prior to studying

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.104[a]	1	.004	.007	.005
Continuity Correction[b]	6.639	1	.010		
Likelihood Ratio	8.106	1	.004	.007	.005
Fisher's Exact Test				.007	.005
N of Valid Cases	63				

Fisher's Exact Test showing a significant difference in knowledge of the Nigerian culture prior to studying in Nigeria

It was observed that more (n=14) than is expected (n=8.7) students at the private university had prior knowledge of the Nigerian culture. Interestingly, more international students at the private university experienced culture shock despite their prior knowledge of the Nigerian culture than

the international students at the public university. Detailed experiences with culture emanated from the interviews as discussed below.

6.2.2 Findings from the interviews – culture shock and culture similarities

Culture shock was one of the sub-themes that emanated from the theme of culture. Culture shock as described by Brown and Holloway (2008) is anxiety that occurs from losing familiar signs and symbols of cultural interactions; and according to Lillyman & Bennett (2014), it is a period of mourning for one's cultural context. Fifteen out of the 20 participants expressed that they experienced culture shock in Nigeria. According to them, the way of life in Nigeria in terms of greetings, dressings, and general beliefs were completely different from what they were familiar with back home. This is consistent with the findings from a study conducted by Agbeniga (2016) at two selected Nigerian universities, which reported a high level of culture shock among the 35 international students interviewed. As depicted by Participant U8 from West Africa, "people here [Nigeria] rely too much on culture especially for greeting and so on". While the majority of these students had acculturated, some were still grappling with the unfamiliar culture, just as Chilvers (2016) and Heng (2016) attest that some international students' experience of culture shock is limited to the first year of their studies whereas others struggle with culture shock throughout their studies. One prevalent aspect of the Nigerian culture that "shocked'" the international students was the greeting. Indeed, the researcher agrees with Participant U8 that greeting is highly esteemed in Nigeria, especially in the South-West, otherwise known as Yoruba land, where the two universities are situated. Suffice it to say that the issue of greeting seems unique to the Nigerian culture as the researcher's careful examination of diverse literature on the experiences of international students around the world did not reveal any form of culture shock among international students arising from greeting. In Nigeria, greeting is regarded as a measure of respect and good manners among the people. Traditionally, a male is expected to prostrate while a female is expected to kneel while greeting an elder. This was considered strange by the international students who professed that a handshake or a simple "hi" or "hello" would suffice in their home countries irrespective of the age difference. For instance, for participant U10 who was a Muslim from North Africa, the Nigerian way of greeting was shocking. In his country and more so his religion, they only prostrate for God and not humans; although he later came to understand the greeting as part of the way of life in Nigeria. He explained:

> *I had culture shock when I came here [Nigeria]. The first was the greeting, the way people kneel or prostrate to greet shocked me because we don't do that in my country.*

In my religion, we believe we only prostrate for God, so I was shocked. It later became normal to me when I understood that it was not done in order to get something from someone, and that it was just the culture of the people, something they grew up with. I now see it as a very normal thing. (u10)

Of note is the experience of participant U6 from Southern Africa whose handshake was turned down by a Muslim male student. Having arrived newly in Nigeria from a country of mostly Christians, she was not aware that some core Muslims in Nigeria do not take handshake from the opposite gender. According to her, she felt disrespected, but like Participant U10, she also later discovered it was the norm. The use of "sir" and "ma" in communicating with an older person was also perceived as strange to some of the participants. Participant C3 from West Africa stated that it took him around a month or two to get accustomed to communicating in this manner. More so, CU places emphasis on respect as an integral part of the Nigerian culture, as a section in the CU student handbook (p. 81) reads, "An important aspect of our culture is respect for elders. All CU students are to give due respect and honour to their elders, faculty and staff of the University."

Beyond respect for elders, there are many aspects of the Nigerian culture that international students found shocking. Participant C1 narrated an instance that happened on his first day at CU. He had gone with his dad to the office of one of the administrators for registration purposes, and as he attempted to hand over some documents to the administrator, the latter immediately yelled at him, pointing out that it is rude to give out something with the left hand. Mclnnis (2001) argue that one of the major elements of a smooth transition into an unfamiliar learning environment is learning the culture of the host country and institution (McInnis, 2001); the likes of Participant C1 professed they learnt the Nigerian culture in a hard way.

Another aspect of culture shock that was elicited from the responses of the participants was the behavioural pattern of Nigerians. This is typified by the response of participant C4 from Southern Africa:

Talking about my culture back home, all in all people in [name of country] are hospitable, they are kind, they are cool and calm. I was expecting myself to maintain the culture of calmness, looking at things calmly, settling down and solving things in a calm manner but on getting to Nigeria, when there is an issue, you see everyone jumping around and everything seems to happen too fast. So, that was a culture shock for me. I was so shocked that I didn't know how to adapt to that but from 100 level till now, I have

adapted to it. Usually when I go home, they ask me why I am in a hurry; they tell me to
calm down and do things. (C4)

In the same vein, participant C7 who maintained that people in her home country and even East Africans, in general, are calm described Nigerians as "aggressive". Some of the participants have, however attested to appreciating the aggressive nature of Nigerians. They describe it as a "go-getter" spirit that enables them to achieve whatever they set their minds on achieving.

In terms of dressing, the culture shock experienced by some of the participants tends to be positive. Participants U3 and U7, both from different countries in West Africa, talked about the decent way girls/ladies dress in Nigeria, unlike their home countries where ladies dress indecently in very short and revealing clothes. True to their observations, the Nigerian culture tends to have zero tolerance for indecent dressing. This is portrayed by a section in the CU student handbook (p. 72-76) which explicitly stipulates 26 dress rules for female students and 20 for male students. For example, one of the dress codes for female students states that "all dress and skirt hems must be at least 5 -10 cm (2-4 inches) below the knees" (p. 72, 3b), while one of the dress codes for male students states that "shirt collars should not be left flying while collarless shirts are not allowed" (p. 75, h).

From the preceding, the experiences of culture shock as relayed by the participants in this study are synonymous with the findings in literature bordering on international students. For example, Pretorious and Small (2007), Rabia and Karkouti (2013), Zhou et al. (2008) and Ralarala (2016) all reported that culture shock is an ever-present predicament confronting international students.

A question may then arise as to whether the international students were not given orientations on the Nigerian culture before the start of their studies, as in the case of international students at UQ in Australia who received orientations on sociocultural issues in the country (Barron et al., 2009). Institutional policies at the two participating universities reveal that the universities do organise orientation sessions for international students, nonetheless, the sessions appear to focus on orientations on academic expectations and institutional culture rather than the Nigerian culture. More findings on orientation are reported later in this chapter.

Culture similarities was the second idea that stemmed out of the theme of culture. About 25 per cent of the total participants maintained that they did not experience culture shock in Nigeria, or at least, their experience of culture shock was very minimal. With the exception of one from East Africa, all the participants were from West Africa. One of the reasons for their

lack of culture shock was the similarity between the Nigerian culture and the culture in their home countries. Like the participants that experienced culture shock, these students particularly found the culture of greeting in Nigeria unfamiliar. Nonetheless, they were not taken aback by the overall cultural situation in Nigeria. The experiences of these students are a shift from the widely postulated belief about the ever-present notion of culture shock being faced by international students in their host institutions (Chilvers, 2016; Lillyman & Bennett, 2014; Pretorius & Small, 2007; Rabia & Karkouti, 2013). For Participant C1, he found some similarities between the culture of tribes in Nigeria and the ones in his East African country. According to him:

> *The tribes and the people in Nigeria are similar to those in [name of country], it's just the names that are different. The Igbos can be likened to a tribe in [name of country] that are believed to like money while the Yorubas can also be likened to another tribe in my country. I had to learn about the culture of respect, greeting elders, etc.; not that we disrespect our elders back home, but it is not just an important part of our culture. So, I had to learn that. (C1)*

The participants from West Africa also attested to having similar cultures to that of Nigeria, except for a few differences. Another reason for the lack of culture shock is attributed to the Nigerian movies seen by the students before their international study in Nigeria. To a large extent, the movies were a representation of Nigeria; through which they became conversant with the way of life in Nigeria. Again, this points to the impact of prior expectation and reality on the transition experiences of international students. In the same way, Mclnnis (2005) in his research on first-year undergraduate international students in Australia advocate that prior knowledge of the standards of a host country or institution is a critical influence on the experiences of students, particularly in the first semester. This is also typified by the experience of Participant U5 thus:

> *Not really shocking because most people in my country and people from African countries watch Nigerian movies a lot, so they have a clue of what is going on, especially with the Igbo tribe, the way they do their things and so on. So, on getting here, you see them behaving in similar ways, except in some cases. (U5)*

The Igbo tribe, as mentioned by the two participants quoted above, is a tribe in the Eastern part of Nigeria. They are popular for making movies which are widely watched in many African countries and referred to as 'Nigerian movies.' These movies are often seen by foreigners as a

reflection of Nigeria, even though this reflection cannot be generalised to the entire nation, which has three major tribes and hundreds of other minor tribes. Similarly, other participants from one of the West African countries that share a border with Nigeria did not experience culture shock because the mode of dressing and behavioural pattern in Nigeria is almost the same as what is obtainable in their home countries.

6.3 FOOD

As mundane as the issue of food might appear, research posits that students find food to be emotionally and physically important (Taylor & Ali, 2017); and it is considered an important aspect in the review of their overall experience. As observed by Agbeniga (2016) and Leong (2015), food poses a major cultural challenge to some international students as they struggle to come to terms with the entirely different foods of their host countries. Adjusting to the food of the host country is one of the many adjustments international students must deal with. This is evident in the quantitative and the qualitative findings discussed below.

6.3.1 Findings from the questionnaire

Out of the 62 valid questionnaire responses on the question of food, 48 (77.5%) respondents reported difficulty with Nigerian foods in the transition phase of their study while the remaining 14 (22.5%) reported no difficulty. It was observed that a higher number of respondents at each university experienced difficulty with Nigerian foods. There was no significant difference in the respondents' experiences with food between private and public university (p-value = 0.066). For those who experienced difficulty, details on the kind of difficulty are reported under the qualitative findings.

6.3.2 Findings from the interviews – Nigerian foods are too spicy

In the case of international students interviewed for this study, 90 per cent reported they had trouble with Nigerian foods – the most common being pepper. The students complained about Nigerian foods being too peppery, as opposed to foods in their home countries. This is in addition to the unfamiliar dishes with which they must cope. Worth noting are the responses of international students from a country in Southern Africa who unanimously referred to their likeness for a wider variety of Nigerian foods then in their home country, even though they found the foods totally different and too spicy as well. Participants C4 and C9 responses respectively were as follows:

> *The foods are totally different from [name of country] foods. I like the diversity in the*
> *food, but the only problem is that there could be little salt and much chilli. It took me*

time to get used to the hot and spicy foods here. It was a shock, I did not expect the foods to be this different, but I have now adapted to it and I like it. (C4)

I will start with the food because that is what I struggled with the most till now because in my country we don't put pepper in our foods but here most foods have pepper. So, it was actually difficult for me to choose what to eat. I like the variety. Compared to my country, I think Nigeria does a wider range especially in our school here in CU, there are lots of different foods you can try. (C9)

The participants at CU had their food problem made worse by their inability to cook in the dormitories. The university policy specifically states that "no student is allowed to cook in the halls of residence, students are to purchase their meals from the University cafeteria" (CU student handbook, p 68). In addition, all CU undergraduate students must live on campus, unlike their UI counterparts who can choose to live on- or off-campus and are allowed to cook their meals. Although the UI students also complain of too much pepper in the foods they buy, whenever they do not have time to cook or when they do not feel like cooking. Like the two participants above, participants U10 from North Africa lamented about the shock arising from his encounter with Nigerian foods. According to him:

"*We don't take pepper in my country like they do here; when I came, ah! It was a big problem for me. I could not adapt because of the pepper. They use lots of pepper, too much (laughs)…I've not experienced it before. It was a big shock for me*" (U10).

A similar study conducted by Leong (2015) equally found that Chinese students lamented on the difficulty they encountered in getting used to American foods, especially junk foods. Even in situations where these students were able to get Chinese foods to buy, the food was regarded as not being authentically Chinese and being "Americanized", having been loaded with sugar, salt and preservatives. The international students in this study went further to explain they devised a coping strategy by finding a Nigerian food or snack without pepper, which they ate for a long time. With time, they tried out the peppery foods until they got used to them.

On the contrary, two students, even though they found the foods peppery as well, had no problems with them. For example, participant U2 from a West African country stated; *"I personally do not have a problem with food, I can eat all kinds of food."* While the students from a country in Southern Africa were impressed with the variety of Nigerian foods to choose from, participant C2 and U8 from West Africa complained of Nigerian foods as lacking variety. The subject of variety can then be said to depend on the foods in the student's individual

countries in comparison to those in Nigeria. To show his uttermost dissatisfaction with Nigerian foods, an international student from a neighbouring country in West Africa explained he would travel home often to bring foods from his home country. A similar complaint was recorded in the case of some international students studying at one of the Nigerian universities where the participants, particularly those from East Africa, Europe and America, complained of how they felt homesick as a result of their unfamiliarity with Nigerian foods (Agbeniga, 2016).

6.4 FEELING OF LONELINESS

Due to the absence of established family support and social network in the first couple of months or weeks, as the case may be, international students may experience some form of loneliness (Yin, 2013). This is corroborated, for example, by research conducted with Chinese postgraduate students at selected universities in Singapore; loneliness was one of the two most common challenges reported by the international students (Lin, 2008). In spite of the presence of home students and fellow international students at the two universities, some international students reportedly experienced loneliness in the transition phase of their international study in Nigeria. While the quantitative findings provide an overview of loneliness experienced by international students at the two universities, the qualitative findings shed more light on the causes of loneliness.

6.4.1 Findings from the questionnaire

There were 62 valid responses from the question of loneliness. In total, 27.4% (n=17) respondents admitted to being lonely, 67.7% (n = 42) reported no feeling of loneliness while 4.8% (n=3) were not sure if they were lonely. At the two universities, it was observed that more respondents reported not feeling lonely. There was no significant difference in the feeling of loneliness between the respondents at the private and the public university (p-value = 0.194). A follow-up question was asked to determine if there is a link between loneliness and international students' relationship with home students. Out of a total of 62 valid responses, 14.5% (n=9) reported "yes" implying they had trouble relating with home students while 85.5% (n=53) reported "no" implying they had no trouble relating with home students (see table 6.5). See Table 6.5

Table 6-5: International students that had trouble relating with home students

| | | | University | | |
			Private university	Public university	Total
Do you have trouble relating with home students?	Yes	Count	8	1	9
		Expected Count	3.2	5.8	9.0
		% within University	36.4%	2.5%	14.5%
		Standardized Residual	2.7	-2.0	
	No	Count	14	39	53
		Expected Count	18.8	34.2	53.0
		% within University	63.6%	97.5%	85.5%
		Standardized Residual	-1.1	.8	
Total		Count	22	40	62
		Expected Count	22.0	40.0	62.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing the international student that had trouble relating with home students and those who did not

The Fisher's exact test performed showed a highly significant difference in the responses of international students across the private and the public university, p-value = 0.001 (see Table 6.6 below).

Table 6-6: Difference between private and public universities, relationships with home students

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.117[a]	1	.000	.001	.001
Continuity Correction[b]	10.530	1	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	13.170	1	.000	.001	.001
Fisher's Exact Test				.001	.001
N of Valid Cases	62				

Fisher's exact test showing a high significant difference between private and public universities

It was observed that more (8) than expected (3.2) students at the private university had trouble relating with home students and fewer (1) than expected (5.8) students at the public university had trouble relating with home students. Possible reasons for the difference between the two universities are discussed under the interview findings.

6.5 Findings from the interviews – International students at CU felt lonelier than those at UI

On the one hand, seven international students at CU experienced loneliness. Almost all of these students expressed they were the only international student from their country as well as

in their departments. Even though they acknowledged the helpful role of other international students in their adjustment process, they felt lonely because they mostly had encounters with local students. Loneliness is not peculiar to the international students in this study, Taylor and Ali (2017) emphasise the importance of social relationships as a result of their interviews with five international students in the UK; they found that the first few months of arrival were critical for these students as they grappled with loneliness and longed for social support systems. As described by some of the participants in this study, the academic workload at CU does not give much room for social interactions. Thus, international students were often in class with local students who did not engage in any meaningful form of friendship with them. Moreover, these students were also paired with local students at their halls of residence; again, there was no steady rapport between them that could eliminate their feeling of loneliness.

 For example, participant C6 from Southern Africa complained of loneliness because according to her, she was the only international student in her department and her physical attributes were different from those of her peers, which makes it easy to decipher that she is not a Nigerian. To complicate her loneliness, she was paired with a local student in her hall of residence, who was 15 years old while she was 23. She found the age difference to be a major concern for any common ground for conversation. She said; *"My roommate is 15 years old and it's hard for me to relate with her; like what do we talk about?"* She added that the closest people she related with are fellow international students, whenever she had the opportunity to do so. Her experience is consistent with the experiences of Chinese students at a Canadian university as reported by Guo and Guo (2017); these students complained of difficulties in connecting with domestic students. These difficulties were mainly due to linguistic, sociocultural and lifestyle differences, coupled with a lack of opportunities for interaction; the international students also complained of the unwillingness from domestic students to form meaningful relationships with them. Similarly, Participant C9 from Southern Africa described local students as having initial excitement on meeting with international students, after which everyone resorts to minding his/her business, making them (international students) feel lonely again. He explained it thus:

> *I sort of feel lonely because the local students are only excited the first few times you meet with them but after some time, they go about their business and you go about your business and then in the end you still have to be on your own and trying to adapt. So, it gets a bit lonely unless maybe you have international students as your roommates or maybe in the same hall that you can visit time and again but most of the time, it gets lonely. (C9)*

This is somehow surprising because the student handbook at CU highlight diverse activities including academic, co-curricular and religious activities that are specifically designed to unite students; but then, research has shown that many institutions formulate diverse policies with little or no implementation. For example, authors such as Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) and Zhang (2016) believe that undertaking an international study is not devoid of several challenges in spite of institutional policies, goals and missions. Nevertheless, the international students in this study devise different means of coping with loneliness, apart from communication with the people at home through chats, audio and video calls.

The international students from Southern Africa relied on watching movies and listening to music from their home countries while one of the international students from East Africa said she would look for a fellow international student from East Africa with whom she could speak Swahili (a language widely spoken in East Africa) "*whenever she was overwhelmed by too much English*". In the same vein, Evans et al. (2010) refer to the "strategies" adopted by an individual in coping with a situation. While some persons cope by modifying the situation, some control the meaning of the problem while others adopt methods of managing stress (Evans et al., 2010). As advocated by Goodman et al. (2006), the best way one can cope with stress is to adopt multiple strategies and be flexible.

 On the other hand**,** all the participants at UI reported no feeling of loneliness as opposed to only three participants at CU. As a reminder, all the participants at UI are postgraduate students. Perhaps, this accounts for the reason why they did not feel lonely, as one of them declared; "*If you are a serious postgraduate student, you can't be lonely because you are busy".* At both institutions, the company the international students kept (either with home students or fellow international students) is one prevalent reason why they were not lonely. The lack of loneliness as reported by these students therefore refute the popular submissions of authors such as Lin (2008) and Taylor and Ali (2017) who reported loneliness as one of the highest-ranked problems encountered by international students, based on their research with Chinese international students in Singapore and international students in the UK respectively. A popular reason for the lack of loneliness reported by international students is companionship. With reference to the international students at UI, many of them were studying in Nigeria in a group of other international students with whom they were on the same fellowship schemes. For instance, the international students from one of the West African countries were all studying at the UI on the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP) – an intra-Africa mobility scheme scholarship supported by the World Bank. The same applies to the

international students from another West African country who were on a scholarship provided by the ECOWAS mobility scheme. These students were mostly in the company of one another and did things in common. One of them, Participant U4 explained she did not feel lonely because they were 22 who had come to UI from her country on the WAAPP scholarship; and in addition to that, she lived with international students from other countries, coupled with constant communications with her family back home. In her words:

> *No, I don't [feel lonely] because we are 22 here, so I am with my people. Also, I live with some international students who can speak English and French like the Guineans and Ghanaians; so, I don't feel lonely. I also have my phone, which I use to chat with my family on WhatsApp or call them. (U4)*

Some of the other participants also attested to friendship and communications with family and friends at home as a way of combating loneliness or any feeling of homesickness. However, there were a few who could relate to being away from home based on their past experiences. This is in line with what Evans et al. (1998) refer to as the situation of previous experience being one of the variables that influence transition. In other words, the international students in question did not feel lonely because they had undergone a similar situation that took them away from home in the past. This is exemplified by the responses of Participants U2 and U7, respectively:

"No [I did not feel lonely], because even in [name of country] I spent the big part of my life somewhere else, not at home exactly. For me it's like the same thing, just that the distance is more with Nigeria" (U2).

> *Not really [feeling lonely], maybe that is because I have spent much time outside my home country since the age of twenty. Even when I stay home, it is not longer than one year. I don't feel lonely at all. As we speak, my friends and colleagues just left and I am likely to receive others soon, so I am not lonely. (U7)*

Suffice it to say that UI also plays a role in alleviating loneliness amongst international students by providing joint accommodation for them; unlike international students at CU who believe they are lonely because the university does not offer joint accommodation to international students. Still, a few international students at CU were still able to maximize the opportunity for companionship with other international students, as Participant C5 from Southern Africa indicated; "*I don't feel lonely because of the international students that are here.*" Again, the experiences of the international students in this category disprove the argument of Barron et al.

(2009) that loneliness ranks as the highest living problem encountered by international students, based on their research with international postgraduate students at a Scottish university.

6.6 DISCRIMINATION

Feelings of discrimination are often reported as one of the challenges faced by international students in their host environment (Brown & Jones, 2013; Yan & Berliner, 2013). Discrimination in the context of this study refers to international students being treated differently from local students, based on their different countries of origin. From the quantitative and qualitative findings, some of the international students experienced some form of discrimination while others reported no perceived discrimination.

6.6.1 Findings from the questionnaire

Out of 62 valid responses, findings from the questionnaire reveal 29% (n=18) of the respondents at the private and the public universities have experienced some form of discrimination while 71% (n=44) reported no form of discrimination. At the private university, there was an equal percentage between the two groups – 50% (n=11) of the respondents reported an experience of discrimination while the remaining 50% (n=11) experienced no form of discrimination. At the public university, however, 17.5% (n=7) reported experience of discrimination compared to 82.5% (n=33) who reported no experience of discrimination (see Table 6.7 below).

Table 6-7: Experience OF Discrimination in Nigeria

			University		Total
			Private university	Public university	
Have you ever experienced any form of discrimination in Nigeria?	Yes	Count	11	7	18
		Expected Count	6.4	11.6	18.0
		% within University	50.0%	17.5%	29.0%
		Standardized Residual	1.8	-1.4	
	No	Count	11	33	44
		Expected Count	15.6	28.4	44.0
		% within University	50.0%	82.5%	71.0%
		Standardized Residual	-1.2	.9	
Total		Count	22	40	62
		Expected Count	22.0	40.0	62.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing respondents experiences of discrimination in Nigeria

The Fisher's Exact test performed showed a significant difference in the discrimination experience of respondents between the private university and the public university, p-value = 0.010 (<0.05). See Table 6.8 below.

Table 6-8: Difference in discrimination experiences

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.276[a]	1	.007	.010	.009
Continuity Correction[b]	5.784	1	.016		
Likelihood Ratio	7.106	1	.008	.018	.009
Fisher's Exact Test				.010	.009
N of Valid Cases	62				

Fisher's Exact test showing a difference in the discrimination experiences of respondents at the private and the public universities

From Table 6.7 above, it was observed that more (n = 11) than expected (n=6.4) respondents at the private university experienced some forms of discrimination. The nature of discrimination perceived by the international students are discussed under findings from the interviews.

6.6.2 Findings from the interviews

As with the theme of loneliness, all the international students interviewed at the UI reported no form of perceived discrimination towards them. However, the number of international students that experienced discrimination at CU were slightly more than those who did not experience discrimination. Perhaps, these two groups of students had divergent perceptions of discrimination. Out of the ten international students that participated in the interview at CU, six reported perceived discrimination. For those who have spent at least four years at the university, the discrimination was more pronounced in their first one or two years of study when the local students were not very familiar with them; whereas, those who have spent at most two years at the university reported an ongoing form of discrimination. More so, discrimination was experienced mostly from local students and a few administrative staff members who would latch on their status as international students to exploit money from them. Several studies on international students' experiences have reported on international students' perception of discrimination from home students (Lee & Rice, 2007; Taylor & Ali, 2017). In their interviews with 24 international students from 15 countries studying at a research university in the US, Lee and Rice (2007) found that international students from India, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East reported a considerable level of discrimination as a result of majorly language and cultural differences. For example, Participant C10 from West Africa

perceived some form of discrimination from his local peers at the beginning of his study in Nigeria, a situation he claimed had eventually petered out. He described his experience as "social discrimination" and sensed his classmates did not want to relate with him because he was new and not from Nigeria. When asked if he experienced any form of discrimination, he answered:

I can say social discrimination, not racial. In my class, I was like left alone, as in when you get to a place and just sit alone; even nobody wants to sit with you because you are just a new guy, you are not from Nigeria. They can't relate with you, so it makes you feel bad but now it's no longer like that. (C10)

Indeed, he was right to refer to his perceived discrimination as "social" and not "racial", considering that he, just like other international students in this study, are of the African race. For other participants, accent posed a difficulty to their social adjustment, a situation they perceived as discrimination. This was the case for Participant C5 from Southern Africa, whose experience of discrimination from local students had to do with his accent. In his words:

"*The only discrimination I get is from students. For example, they tend to discriminate against my pronunciations/intonation. There are times it is laughable and there are times it gets out of hand and irritating*" (C5).

Unlike these two students above who felt they were discriminated against by other students, Participant C1 from East Africa told of how administrative staff, especially the porters at the halls of residence would single out international students and demand "tips" from them because they [the porters] believed international students were rich. The international students received good treatment from the porters if they heeded their request, otherwise, they were treated unfairly. Participant C1 succinctly pointed out thus:

> *Coming to the hostel, the porters have the impression that international students are rich, so they are always asking for tips. They will say 'just give us something small'. They are good with us if we give them, otherwise, they don't treat you nicely. We feel as if they are picking on us because we are international students. (C1)*

The researcher observes that many studies on international students' experiences often portray these group of students as having adaptation issues (Chira, 2017; Heyn, 2013; Rabia & karkouti, 2017) which implies that the onus lies on international students to ensure their own adjustments. Fewer studies (Lee & Rice, 2007; Taylor & Ali, 2017) examine how institutions,

host societies or even individuals may directly or indirectly discriminate against international students. In the case of Nigeria, and as validated by the quote of Participant C1, there is an inherent societal problem of monetary entitlement displayed by some public and private workers; even though these individuals are being paid to do a job, they still expect people to tip them before they can render their duties diligently. Contrary to the belief of the hall porters at CU that international students are rich, some of the international students were studying in Nigeria because of the scholarship opportunity offered by the David Oyedepo Foundation (the founding president of CU), and hence they would not have been able to afford an international education. The scholarship only covered tuition fees and so, they had to rely on whatever money was given to them by their parents for their general upkeep. The international students also corroborated the notion that international students at UI are perceived as rich and often get monetary demands from some of their local peers and some administrative staff, although in their own case, it was not perceived as discrimination. The researcher probed the participants to know if there were avenues for reporting such staff misconduct as stipulated by the institutional policies, they made it clear they were aware of such avenues. However, they were reluctant to report for fear of further victimization, especially if they lacked strong evidence to push their complaints through.

The second category in the discussion of this theme are the international students without perceived discrimination. A hundred per cent of the participants at UI and 40 per cent of CU participants reported no form of discrimination. This is exemplified by Participant U10 from North Africa who, when asked if he had experienced any form of discrimination, replied, "never". The international students described Nigerians as being open to diversity, accepting people as they are without discriminating against them. Lee and Rice (2007), in their study concerning neo-racism in the US, also reported that international students from Canada, New Zealand and Europe perceived no form of discrimination. These students believed Americans were welcoming and receptive of them, although some of them pointed out their experiences might be different if they weren't white or English speakers. Participant U7 from West Africa admitted to not having direct experience of discrimination, he, however, relayed his conversation with a fellow international student who told him of how some Nigerian students do get jealous because they think international students are being treated better by their supervisors. One of the preferential treatments referred to was having more access to supervisors than their Nigerian colleagues did.

6.7   SOCIOCULTURAL TRANSITION

The analysis of this theme is done in light of the sociocultural factors discussed above to get an understanding of the overall socio-cultural transition of the international students. Over two decades ago, Mclnnis and James (1995) argued about the importance of examining the initial experience of international students in their new study environment, especially with regards to social and cultural contexts. In the same vein, Schlossberg and Chickering (1995) advocate that the perception of students of their transition process determines the positivity or negativity of their overall experiences. Their argument is, to a large extent, consistent with the responses of the international students in this study; while some reported a relatively smooth transition, others alluded to a rough transition.

6.7.1   Findings from the questionnaire

There were 63 valid responses on the sociocultural transition from the questionnaires. Overall, 54% (n=34) of the respondents considered their sociocultural transition to be smooth while 46% (n=29) reported a rough transition. It was observed that more respondents at the private university experienced a rough transition (54.5%) than a smooth transition (45.5%), compared to the public university where more respondents reported a smooth transition (58.5%) than a rough transition (41.5%). However, the Fisher's exact test showed no significant difference in the sociocultural transition of respondents between the private and the public university (p-value = 0.057).

6.7.2   Findings from the interviews

The majority of the participants, especially those studying at CU indicated that they had a rough sociocultural transition upon the start of their study in Nigeria. Although each one of these students admitted to being well-adjusted into the Nigerian system at the time of the interview, the transition was not a smooth one in the early weeks or months of their study. The rough transition reported by the majority of the international students at CU may be linked to the fact that CU is a secluded institution, one in which the institutional policy makes it compulsory for all undergraduate students to live on campus. Besides, the participants at CU were all enrolled for undergraduate studies and may find it somewhat difficult adjusting to life outside the home for the first time. For example, Participant C7 from East Africa admitted to a difficult transition because she was experiencing life outside her home country for the first time. She said:

> *When I first came, it was difficult, challenging. It was my first time in Nigeria, the first-time experiencing life outside my country but with time I got to learn, got friends, formed*

a family; got friends that I can now call family in Nigeria that helped me transition well. (C7)

The difficult transition of this student and the role of support in alleviating the difficult transition affirms that the importance of support in the adjustment of first-year international students cannot be overemphasised (Guo & Guo, 2017; Yin, 2013). Similarly, the notion put forward by the theoretical framework of Schlossberg (2011) reiterates the role of support in influencing an individual's ability to cope with transition; that is, the level of support received from family, friends, institution, community and intimate relationships. Support could also come in the form of affirmation, aid and honest feedback. Schlossberg's theory of transition (1981) further opines that some features affect transition. These features include the personal and demographic attributes of an individual such as gender, country of origin, cultural heritage and socioeconomic status.

These features were evident in the experience of Participant U3 from a francophone country in West Africa, who when asked about his socio-cultural transition into Nigeria answered; *"talking about my transition into Nigeria, I was lost."* He explained that he was 'lost' because there were so many norms in his home country that were not acceptable in Nigeria. He referred to an instance when he newly arrived in Nigeria and had asked a lady to cook for him one day because he was tired. The lady yelled at him in anger, questioning why she should cook for him when she was neither married nor related to him. He was taken aback by the lady's reaction because, in his home country, a lady would regard his request to cook for him as normal. He also found the way of dressing in Nigeria to be very different from the way of dressing back home; although he later got to understand the Nigerian culture and how to abide by it.

In the same vein, participant C9 from Southern Africa emphasised the timing of his transition. According to him, his adjustment to the Nigerian socio-cultural context took a long time - more than a session (an academic session in Nigeria takes about one year). In his words:

In the beginning, it took more than a session for me to actually adapt to everything; like the way Nigerians speak, the way they relate, the food and other stuff. It took a very long time for me to adjust but for now I think I've really adjusted. (C9)

Country of origin and cultural heritage as demographic features played a considerable role in the transition process of the above participants. A noticeable trend is that the students in his category were mostly from countries in East Africa and Southern Africa. This explains why they found the social and cultural situation in Nigeria strange, unlike those from neighbouring

countries of West Africa. The role of cultural difference in the rough transition of these students is substantiated by the study conducted by Russell et al. (2010) among 900 international students in Australia. They found that 41 per cent of these students reported stress arising from cultural differences between Australia and their host countries. Similarly, the study of Hellsten (2002) found culture to be one of the acculturative difficulties encountered by international students at an Australian university. Urban (2012) and Wadhwa (2016) opine that one of the benefits of an international study is the opportunity to encounter new cultures, however, this opportunity was not without some difficulties in the transition phase of the international students in this study.

Conversely, some of the participants described their socio-cultural transition into Nigeria as a smooth one. With the exception of one participant from North Africa, these participants were from Nigeria's neighbouring countries of West Africa. They found the transition easy because according to them, Nigeria shares some similar socio-cultural values with their countries. While the experiences of these participants uphold the argument made by the theoretical framework of Schlossberg (Schlossberg, Lynch & Chickering, 1989), that it is not the transition itself that is of utmost importance, rather, it is the way a student adapts to the aspects of transition in a new environment; their experiences refute the stance of the theory that heterogeneity of learners in an institution brings to bear the different ways they handle transition. Here, we see the outplay in the homogeneity of culture between Nigeria and other West African countries. For example, participant U4 expressed:

> There was no difference because [name of country] is a neighbour to Nigeria because we have almost the same sociocultural values. The only problem I had is that some people opt to speaking a local Nigerian language whenever I try communicating with them. That affects my improvement in English. I have no problem with the dressing, Nigeria has its own way of dressing and my country has its own. (U4)

This student, who had come from a French-speaking country in West Africa confirmed that the demographic and socio-cultural values her country shares with Nigeria made her transition smooth. However, she decried the rate at which Nigerians communicate with her in vernacular, which hampered her English language skill. She had earlier stated she was studying in English for the first time in Nigeria and had learnt the English language in Nigeria. Likewise, an ethnographic study carried out by Li et al. (2019) reported on the struggles of 14 Chinese international students with native speakers in a town in the US. They found communication to

be one of the problems encountered by these students who would feign understanding during conversations with native speakers to avoid further language complications. Participant U2, a citizen of another francophone country in West Africa, had a similar experience. Although in his case, he was thankful that Hausa (one of the three main Nigerian languages) was also been spoken in his country and he was able to converse in it. Participant C8 also affirmed; *"we are all in West Africa, so we do things in common."* Though he pointed out the food as the only area of dissimilarity, something he had adjusted to by being selective with the food he eats. As mentioned earlier, one international student from North Africa, Participant U10, also found his transition into Nigeria easy, even though he was from another African region. He credited his smooth transition to his sociable personality and the friendly nature of Nigerians. He explained:

> *Regarding this [sociocultural transition], I think it depends on individuals; some people do not interact. As for me, I am very social, I like interacting. I even have a certificate in my room for the most social person in my hostel (laughs). So, the sociocultural transition was very easy for me. Like I told you before, Nigerians are very amiable, friendly and kind. They accept foreigners, they don't have any problem. In fact, they treat us in a better way, so it was easy for me to fit into the social and cultural environment. (U10)*

In his case, the features of "self" and "support" described in Schlossberg's theory (1981) of transition had an impact on his experience. While "self" had to do with his amiable personality, he received "support" from the Nigerian community. To an extent, the assumption that international students are responsible for their own adjustment could be implied from the quote of Participant U10, in line with the assumptions made by some authors on international students' experiences such as Chira (2017) and Heyn (2013).

In a nutshell, the international students from West Africa had a smoother sociocultural transition experiences than those from other regions.

6.8   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' TRANSITION EXPERIENCES

The analysis of recommendations for improving the transition experiences of international students at both universities represents the views of the international students and not those of the researcher. As Davey et al. (2013) argue, happy university alumni are involved in marketing the institution for active recruitment upon returning to their home countries. During the interviews, the participants were asked if they had recommendations for their university on how international students could have a better transition into Nigeria and the host university.

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Interestingly, all the participants had one recommendation or the other; none seemed to be entirely satisfied with their transition experiences. This affirms that international students face a number of challenges in their host countries and host institutions (Bamford, 2008; Leong, 2015; Lillyman & Bennet, 2014; Zhang, 2016). Cremononi and Antonowics (2009) identify two obstacles confronting international students, namely, bureaucratic obstacles within a country such as ambiguous visa policies, and bureaucratic obstacles within an institution such as learning in a second language. Thus, Cremonini and Antonowicks (2009) call for a client-approach in the way higher education institutions deal with international students; by so doing, they would receive feedback on improving international students' experiences.

On the one hand, an analysis of the student handbook at CU revealed no reference to international students' wellbeing whatsoever apart from a sub-section on the procedure for international students' admission. On the other hand, an analysis of a UI comprehensive document that contained all necessary information about the university (2016 – 2018) revealed considerable units of information on international students; however, they appear as mere information and not action statements targeted at the students' wellbeing. At both universities, there were some common and overlapping recommendations by the international students, whereas, some recommendations were peculiar to individual universities, as suggested by the responses. In reporting the findings, the quantitative findings corroborate the qualitative findings where necessary. The findings on recommendations are discussed below under different sub-headings

6.9   ORIENTATION

6.9.1   Findings from the questionnaire

Quantitatively, most of the international students at the two universities recommended orientation upon arrival at the university. Out of a total of 64 valid responses, 70.3% (n= 45) recommended orientation compared to 29.7% (n=19) who did not. A closer look within each university revealed likewise that most of the respondents in each university recommended orientation. The Fisher's Exact test showed no significant difference in the recommendation of orientation at the private and the public university (p-value=0.565). The respondents were probed further on whether they received orientation upon arrival at their respective universities. In total, 61.3% alluded to receiving orientation while the remaining 38.7% claimed they received no orientation upon arrival. See table 6.9 below:

Table 6-9: Respondents who received orientation

			University		Total
			Private university	Public university	
Did you receive orientation on arrival at this university, be it on academics or how to navigate your way through the society	Yes	Count	5	33	38
		Expected Count	13.5	24.5	38.0
		% within University	22.7%	82.5%	61.3%
		Standardized Residual	-2.3	1.7	
	No	Count	17	7	24
		Expected Count	8.5	15.5	24.0
		% within University	77.3%	17.5%	38.7%
		Standardized Residual	2.9	-2.2	
Total		Count	22	40	62
		Expected Count	22.0	40.0	62.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing the respondents who received orientation on arrival at this university and those who did not

Fisher's Exact test performed showed a highly significant difference in the receipt of orientation between the two universities, p-value =<0.001, as shown in Table 6.10 below.

Table 6-10: Differences in the receipt of orientation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.374[a]	1	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Continuity Correction[b]	18.929	1	<0.001		
Likelihood Ratio	22.081	1	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Fisher's Exact Test				<0.001	<0.001
N of Valid Cases	62				

Fisher's Exact test showing a significant difference in the receipt of orientation between the private and the public university

At the private university, fewer (n=5) than expected respondents (n=13.5) did receive orientation upon arrival, whereas, fewer (n=7) than expected respondents (n=15.5) at the public university did not receive orientation. In a nutshell, most students at the private university did not receive orientation upon arrival. This affirms the students' claim about late admission and resumption as will be seen later in this chapter.

6.9.2 Findings from the interviews – Orientation upon arrival is important for international student's smooth transition

At both institutions, the participants talked about the need for orientation upon arrival at the university. Martinez and Colaner (2017) argue that orientation prepares students early enough on what to expect and that this, in turn, has the capability of leading to positive academic outcomes, guarding against negative experiences of discrimination and alleviating culture

shock. In contrast, the participants who recommended orientation alleged they had no idea of what to expect at the university or how to go about getting what they needed, which compounded the difficulties of their transition process. Some of the participants mentioned that they were "lost" and "did not know where to go or how to do things." They had difficulty locating different offices, places, classrooms, canteens, etc. due to lack of orientation upon arrival. When probed further, the international students at CU alluded that the university did organise an orientation for all students, local and international, who newly arrived at the university. True to this, a review of institutional documents confirms orientation programmes are being organised at the two universities for all students in general, and not international students in particular. For example, a section in the CU student handbook (p. 45) reads, "Students' Orientation Programme: This shall be organized at the beginning of every session. It is a programme wherein students are taken through the culture, practices, philosophy and vision of CU. It is compulsory for all the students of the institution." Nonetheless, international students at CU missed the orientation process as a result of late admission which resulted in late resumption (the issue of late resumption is discussed in detail under one of the subsequent sub-heading). The international students at UI, on the other hand, indicated they had no formal orientation organised for them in spite of the institutional document of 2016 – 2018 (pg. 428) that reads *"Orientation programmes are usually arranged for fresh students during the first few weeks of resumption. Talks and lectures are given to introduce students to life on the campus and warn them about some dangerous steps which are inimical to their success as students."*

The international students' recommendation for orientation is typified by the response of Participant C3 from West Africa:

> *Once the university knows that an international student is coming in, an orientation should be organised for that student. I never had such orientation. When I came, I wasn't treated as an international student because nobody invited me for a tour around the school, I was just like a home student. So, first of all, the school should give a new international student an orientation about the school and everything. (C3)*

The lack of orientation makes the transition experience of international students a stressful one, instead of a good one as they would expect. An example of how orientation provides transitional assistance to international students is seen in the study of Kovtun (2011) carried out in the US. The study found that the international students who took part in the first-year

orientation classes, (a) gained understanding of social diversity in the US, (b) enhanced their psychological development, (c) improved their writing skills, oral presentations and research, and (d) developed self-confidence and positive attitude. Students are prone to encountering fresh challenges in their transition phase that they may not know how to handle. Some authors, therefore, advocate that orientation should not be a once-off exercise; it should be an on-going exercise for a considerable duration or at least until international students have appreciably settled into the host country and institution (Barron et al.,2009; Guo & Guo, 2017).

6.10 ACCOMMODATION

6.10.1 Findings from the questionnaire

At the two universities, 56.3% (n=36) of the respondents recommended assistance on accommodation while the remaining 43.8% did not see the need for assistance on accommodation. At the private university, while seven of the respondents would not recommend accommodation assistance, 15 respondents recommended that the university offer accommodation assistance to international students. However, the number of respondents who recommended assistance on accommodation at the public university equalled those who did not – 50% each. Findings regarding the recommendation of accommodation to international students did not reveal a significant difference between the two universities (p-value=0.193).

6.10.2 **Findings from the interviews – prioritisation of international students' accommodation**

The participants would like the accommodation of international students to be prioritised by the participating universities. A previous study by the researcher (Agbeniga, 2016) reported accommodation as one of the major problems encountered by international students in Nigeria. At both universities, international students allegedly pay much higher fees than local students. Hence, one of their expectations was to enjoy better accommodation facilities than home students. However, this is not the case at both universities. For instance, information on CU website, and confirmed by the participants, revealed that international students at CU pay tuition fee of an average of USD6000 per session depending on the course and level of study while home students pay around 325,000 naira which is a little less than USD1000. These students, therefore, deemed it unfair to be paired in the same rooms with students who pay less than one-sixth of the fee charged to them. The recommendation for better accommodation for international students is depicted by the quote of Participant C3 from West Africa:

They should also look into the accommodation of international students. I don't think somebody who paid 6,000 dollars per academic session should be treated the same way with somebody who paid 325,000 naira. We are put in the same room with national students, having the same facilities with them. So, there is no distinction between international students and national students; but our fees are different. The only notable difference between me and a national student is that I am from [name of country] (C3)

Although, some of the CU students expressed that the issue of accommodation was being looked into by the school authority, they believed the university could do better in solving the problem of accommodation. At CU, all students live on campus in the halls of residence provided by the school and covered by the tuition fee. Paltridge, Mayson & Schapper (2010), in their qualitative case study of a single hall of residence at Monash University in Australia, argue that international students who reside in university accommodation felt secure and experienced a minimal threat to their social security. They, therefore, advocated that residing in university accommodation is a likely way of ensuring the security of international students. Also, international students previously interviewed by Agbeniga (2016) at CU admitted they felt secured residing in the university halls of residence amidst ongoing terrorism perpetrated by the insurgent group called Boko Haram in Nigeria. At UI, on the other hand, students are allocated university halls of residence based on availability. It is succinctly stated in the UI policy document of 2018 (p. 425) that "*The demand for hall accommodation far exceeds the number of available bed spaces. All rooms are, therefore, allocated to qualified students on the basis of first-come-first-served.*" The policy document also added that "*Accommodation in the halls of residence is a privilege and not a right.*" The university, however, gives accommodation preference to first-year undergraduate students as a way of providing them with security in their new university experience

Nevertheless, international students at UI also recommended that international students should be accommodated in a different hostel. As discriminatory as they thought it may seem, they argued that considering the high status of the university and the higher fees paid by international students compared to locals, international students are entitled to better facilities than they currently had. It was difficult to get the exact amount of fees paid by international students at UI since all the participants were on scholarship and their fees were paid directly to the university by their sponsors. Nonetheless, the students were sure they were charged much higher fees.

Narrating his experience, Participant U7 from West Africa told of how his expectation of accommodation was dashed. The university had promised him accommodation on campus before leaving his home country but upon arriving at the university, an off-campus accommodation was arranged for him due to the unavailability of space on campus. The inconsistent power supply in Nigeria also posed a huge challenge to him. He had expected constant electricity in Nigeria just like the case in his home country; and had left for Nigeria with his laptop which contained all his e-books. Unfortunately, he ended up printing all his e-books to read them because according to him, they could go up to three or four days without electricity and not be able to charge his computer. He then recommended that international students should be offered special accommodation with essential facilities such as a generator, even if it meant including it in the bill. There is a private accommodation with essential facilities such as a steady generator on campus, where some international students reside; however, it is too expensive and not affordable by students whose scholarships do not provide "fat" monthly allowances. UI, in one of the institutional policy documents reviewed for this study, acknowledged limited funding received from the government as a threat to the provision of essential facilities. The document further stated that "The University could not achieve its desire for a 24/7 power supply which is expected to be "normal" for a university environment following the high cost of municipalities including the cost of electricity…" As pointed out by Iruonagbe et al. (2015) and Pulse (2016), inadequate funding continues to impede on quality service delivery in Nigerian public universities.

6.11 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

6.11.1 Findings from the questionnaire

Responses from the questionnaire showed that international students expected some form of institutional support from their universities. This support is more of an academic nature, and they include individual help from faculty and feedback from lecturers. Findings from the quantitative data revealed 50% (n=32) of the overall respondents recommended faculty support while the remaining 50% (n=32) did not. The Fisher's Exact test performed suggested no difference in the recommendation of faculty support between the two universities. Whereas, 60.9% (n=39) of the overall respondents recommended feedback from lecturers while the remaining 39.1% (n=25) did not. See Table 6.11 below:

Table 6-11: Recommendation of feedback from the lecturers.

			University Private university	University Public university	Total
Feedback from lecturers	No	Count	13	12	25
		Expected Count	8.6	16.4	25.0
		% within University	59.1%	28.6%	39.1%
		Standardized Residual	1.5	-1.1	
	Yes	Count	9	30	39
		Expected Count	13.4	25.6	39.0
		% within University	40.9%	71.4%	60.9%
		Standardized Residual	-1.2	.9	
Total		Count	22	42	64
		Expected Count	22.0	42.0	64.0
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency showing university cross tabulation on the recommendation of feedback from lecturers

Fisher's exact test performed showed a significant difference in the recommendation of feedback from lecturers between the two universities. The Exact Sig (2-sided) p-value is 0.030, as shown in Table 6.12 below:

Table 6-12: Differences Between public and private hospitals on recommendations about feedback from lecturers

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.649[a]	1	.017	.030	.018
Continuity Correction[b]	4.440	1	.035		
Likelihood Ratio	5.614	1	.018	.030	.018
Fisher's Exact Test				.030	.018
N of Valid Cases	64				

Fisher's Exact test showing a significant difference between private and public university

From Table 6.11 above, it is observed that more respondents (13) than expected (8.6) at the private university recommended feedback from lecturers while fewer (12) than expected respondents (16.4) at the public university did not recommend feedback from lecturers. The reason for the difference could perhaps be linked to the distinction in type of degrees enrolled for at the two universities. International students at the private university are enrolled for undergraduate classes and receive more lectures than the postgraduate international students at the public university who engaged mostly in independent research.

6.11.2 Findings from the interviews – "There should be a way of assisting us"

The interview participants recommended more administrative support from the universities. According to the students, such support would improve their transition and integration. The

students called for genuine interest in international students by the universities. They want to be supported and cared for because "*everyone needs a shoulder to lean on*". Even though Lillyman & Bennett (2014) opine that it might not be possible to relieve international students completely of their stress, a considerable measure of support can significantly reduce international students' stress levels (Sengupta, 2015). In addition, the transition theory of Schlossberg (1981) postulates four models of adapting to transition, one being support. The theory posits out that the level of support received from the host society and host institution could go a long way in helping international students settle faster and experience an easy transition. Recognising the importance of support to international students, the Malaysian Ministry of Education formulated some codes of practice in tackling internationalisation-related problems. Amongst others, international students support services formed one of the six major scopes of the codes of practice (Yee, 2014).

One area of support the participants in this study longed for was assistance with registration. Registration was a major issue because there was no form of support from the institution for international students to get their registration done. In spite of a section in the UI policy document that says students are able to receive assistance and advice from the Student Affairs Division on different kinds of individual matters, the participants at UI decried the frustrations and stress brought about by the registration process. Worse still, some of the participants at UI who were in their 2nd and 3rd years were yet to complete their registration processes at the time of this research. They indicated they still had no student identity cards and library cards that would give them access to student benefits and make them "feel like proper students." Also, some of them mentioned they were not able to attend conferences and seminars where they were often required to present their student cards as proof of studentship. This is exemplified by the quote of Participant U7, a third-year doctoral student from West Africa:

> *There should be a way of assisting us, especially international students who can get easily frustrated. So many of us are frustrated over registration. It takes weeks to register after being admitted. Even to get an ID card is like a fight of the century, it doesn't come easy. I know someone who did a master's degree programme without an ID card. An ID card for a student is a basic thing, there are some conferences we have to attend, and we are required to show our ID cards, there is no way you can prove you are a student without it. (U7)*

In this age of globalisation and technological advancement, universities around the world, including those in some African countries such as South Africa, have embraced online registration for students. It is then unexpected to find that the best public and private universities in Nigeria are still engaged in an archaic and exhausting form of registration that requires students moving from one office to another to get the process done. Another area of support, as identified by the participants, was with visa processing. International students from member countries of ECOWAS to which Nigeria belongs, do not need visas to study in Nigeria. However, those from other regions who need visas describe the experience as a daunting one. Cremononi and Antonowicz (2009) describe this as a bureaucratic obstacle posed to international students by a country and its institutions. For example, Participant C1 from East Africa asked that the university support them in resolving visa issues, which calls for renewal and payment every year. He stated thus:

We do not ask for special treatments. We are only asking the university to assist in the area of visa because we pay school fee of about USD6000 per session and still have to pay $800 for visa every year. So, I really hope the university can help sort out visa issues. (C1)

According to this student, the $800 is paid to the university to assist with visa processings every year, in addition to tuition fees. Yet, getting visas has always been a daunting task. Basically, the international students want the university to be interested in their transitioning and overall wellbeing, and not just in admitting them for income generation purposes.

Follow-up and mentoring

6.11.3 Findings from the questionnaire

Almost twice the number 65.6% (n=42) of the overall respondents recommended follow-up, while 34.4% (22) did not. A crosstabulation of the two universities revealed more respondents at the private (63%) and the public (66.7%) universities recommended follow up. Fisher's Exact test showed no significant difference in the recommendation of follow up between the two universities (p-value=1.000). Moreover, the quantitative findings did not suggest a strong recommendation for peer mentoring. Out of a total of 64 valid responses, 38 (59.4%) recommended peer mentoring, while the remaining 26 (40.6%) would not. More respondents (64.3%) at the public university recommended peer mentoring compared to 35.7% who did not. At the private university, while 50% of the respondents recommended peer mentoring, while the remaining 50% did not. Again, there was no significant difference in the recommendation of peer mentoring between the two universities (p-value=0.296).

6.11.4 **Findings from the interviews – Constant follow-up eradicates the feeling of neglect from international students**

Due to the overwhelming feeling that accompanies studying in an unfamiliar terrain, constant follow-up and mentoring could assist international students to adjust quickly to their academic and new sociocultural environment. The interview participants in this study complained of being neglected without any form of follow-up, mentoring or guidance. Similar to the research done by Schullman & Choudaha (2014), one third of international students studying at a selected university in the UK had the notion that the university was only interested in the exorbitant fees paid by international students while more than half of the students felt unwelcome and neglected. The participants in this study, therefore, recommended that the university initiate the move of checking on them from time to time to know how they were faring academically and otherwise. This is exemplified by the quote of Participant C10 from West Africa:

> *There is also the issue of follow up, they are not really following up with us. You are like outside the country, no parents, no guardian; so if they can set up some guardians or something like that from at least 100 level who will try to find out if we have any issue socially, academically or financially; because you need people closer to you so that you won't feel lonely. So that you can freely express yourself and feel among. So, we need that kind of follow*-up. (C10)

In line with the above quote, Martinez & Colaner (2017) establish that international students face socio-cultural problems, including loneliness and an overwhelming situation owing to lack of follow-up. As a result, Canadian universities adopted various approaches targeted at improving international students' experiences. For example, the University of British Columbia launched a concerted effort within and across all departments of the university to offer programmes that ensure the international students are well integrated into the university system and also to ensure they do not feel abandoned. International students in Nigeria from francophone countries made it known that they were faced with three main challenges in the transition phase –a language barrier, a problem of academic integration and societal integration. They recommended the need for the university authorities to constantly check how well they were coping in their departments and to know the problems they were facing; adding that it would make them "feel comfortable".

Furthermore, the international students advocated for mentors, who could be either faculty staff or senior students who are doing well academically. They believed the mentors would guide

them on time management, financial management and academic success. They relayed they were often forced to look for mentors themselves and would appreciate if the university could allocate them mentors. Bamford (2008), Chilvers (2016) and Taylor and Ali (2017) advocated for peer mentoring as a means of helping international students adjust to their host institutions. They believed that these peers, who could be senior home or international students could help new international students in the area of language difficulty, study skill, course content, sociocultural adjustment and assessment approaches.

The subsequent recommendations are only discussed qualitatively because they emerged during the interviews with international students at the two universities.

6.11.5 English language support classes

As established in the previous chapter, there were international students in Nigeria from French-speaking countries, such as Mali, Togo, Cameroon, Algeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Benin Republic. These students attested to studying in English for the first time in Nigeria. While there were no English support classes for such students at CU, there were for students at UI, but according to the UI students, the classes were not long enough for the acquisition of the required English language skill. One of the participants from an English-speaking country once wondered how students whose first language is French, cope with studying at CU. Similarly, Ali and Taylor (2017) argue that the role of language support classes in making adjustment smooth for international students, especially English as a Second Language (ESL) students, goes a long way in impacting positively on their adjustment. The participants in this study, therefore, recommended that the university organise standard English classes for ESL international students upon arrival. Participant U7 advocated for a stronger programme and more structured English curriculum for francophone international students at the UI. According to him, "there are no planned curriculum or lecture structure for English classes." He admitted that there were English support classes offered to English as a Second Language (ESL) international students at UI, however, the lectures and curriculum were not structured in a way that would enhance learning and leave a lasting impact on the students. In addition to organising English language classes for non-English speakers at CU, Participant C7 from West Africa recommended a platform through which non-English speakers could apply to study at the university. He reiterated:

"*They should also provide an avenue for international students whose first language is not English to still be able to apply to CU. There should be special English classes for such students, so that they will be able to cope with the language*" (C7).

It is not clear what the CU policy for international students states but one wonders why there are no English support classes for non-English speakers to cope in an English university. More so is the fact the university claims to be making efforts geared towards internationalisation and "wants to be a world-class university", as mentioned by one of the participants. In fact, the utmost vision of CU, popularly referred to as 'Vision 10:2022' is to become one of the top ten universities in the world by 2022. It could, therefore, be questionable that there is no language support platform offered by the university for international students whose first language is not English. The recommendation of the participants with regard to English support classes is affirmed by the successful input of language support classes in the experiences of Chinese students studying in the United Kingdom (Bamford, 2008), Arab students in the United States (Rabia & Karkouti, 2017) and Asian students in Australia (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016).

As for Participant U9 from West Africa, his university was doing great, but he believed the university could do better with regards to international students' transition. He recommended that they should be made to learn English alongside Nigerians to enable interactions and improve their English communication skill.

6.11.6 More involvement of the international office

Each of the two participating universities has an office designated for internationalisation activities. The international office at the UI is referred to as the Office of International Programmes (OIP) while the one at CU is referred to as the International Office and Linkages (IOL). Amongst other things, the offices are responsible for the recruitment of international students and ensuring their adjustment and general wellbeing in their host institution and the host country. This is outlined in the UI handbook (p. 456) thus "[one of the duties of the OIP] is to attract international scholars and students to UI, assist in their adjustment on campus and provide immigration support services". Unfortunately, the international students adjudged the international office at their respective universities as not making enough effort towards a good transition experience for them. Again, there is a mismatch between policy and implementation. The students complained of being "abandoned" by the international office, which they expected to act as their representative and guardian in Nigeria. One of the students, Participant C3 from West Africa talked extensively about his disappointment in the international office at the UI.

He relayed that the OIP did not have a good relationship with international students. He believed it was impossible for the international students to have a direct talk with the Vice-Chancellor, hence the duty of OIP as their representative. A short excerpt from his long narrative is as follows:

OIP does not have the details of all the international students in UI. OIP is not doing what they should do, as far as I am concerned. They are supposed to be a mother and a father to us in this university. They only call us for meetings when they have their own interest. If we are not happy, we will always miss home and want to go home. OIP is supposed to have periodic meetings with international students so that they can know how we are faring and how they can assist us. (C3)

He went further to say he was the representative for ECOWAS students and as such was privileged to a lot of information. He indicated that many international students were not happy that the OIP was less concerned about their wellbeing. Other participants corroborated his claim that the OIP did not show concern for them, adding that the office was supposed to have meetings with international students at regular intervals, which they failed to do. More so, they expected the OIP to be a part of their transition phase rather than wait till the end of their programme to ask about their overall experience. An international student from West Africa equally stated the OIP was not abreast with the details of all international students at UI, contrary to the policy document (p. 457) that states that the office has the responsibility to "keep inventory and database of all foreign students and staff visiting UI". He added that he and many of his colleagues had no knowledge of the presence of the international office until later on in their study programmes.

Another interesting revelation further made by Participant U3 is as follows:

"*I was shocked that the Office of International Programmes do not have people who can speak French, German, Portuguese, Spanish and so on, but speaking only English is not reasonable. OIP cannot deal with my university because we speak French; so, there are some levels they cannot reach*" (U3)

The above participant would have expected the international office to be versatile in offering other languages for a more diversified involvement with other universities around the world, as part of their internationalisation effort but this was not the case. His submission underlines the assumption that African universities are not fully prepared to handle the increasing demands of internationalisation (Doevenspeck, 2015; Kritz, 2013). Furthermore, international students

at CU recommended a detailed online information database for international students and also expected the IOL to communicate with the students before leaving their home countries, in order to come to Nigeria knowing what to expect. Evidence from the literature suggest that some universities in the US bridge the gap between expectation and reality by providing prospective international students with access to information (Wu, Garza and Guzman 2015). For example, Binghamton University developed a unique online service known as e-buddy, which connects prospective international students with those already on campus to allow the former have access to vital information about the university and the US at large. Participant C2 from West Africa reiterated the shock and frustration arising from a mismatch between expectation and reality. For example, it was not until she got to CU that she realised students were not allowed access to cell phones, an information she claimed was missing on the university's website; even though it is in the student handbook, students are only given the handbook after registering at the university. This in turn made her transition a difficult one, as she could not communicate with her people back home. Like her UI counterparts, she added that once studying at the university, the onus lies on the international office to see to the smooth adjustment of international students.

6.11.7 Early admission of international students

The discussion of this recommendation is applicable to the international students at CU. The students alluded their difficult transition was largely due to late admission and late resumption. Many of them reportedly resumed at least two months into the semester, long after home students had settled into the university system. As a result, they missed the general orientation organised for all new students, they missed a lot of classes, attendance, assignments and tests. This in turn affected their overall results and grades. Late admission of international students at CU was described as a "trend" by one of the participants. The following three quotes buttress the issue of late admission at CU, as relayed by the participants:

"*The first thing they should do is to admit international students before national students because we always have this issue of international students reporting late, and that has affected all our results.*" (Participant C4 from East Africa)

"*I will say earlier admission, number one, so that everyone can make friends more easily with anyone basically; not just come late and feel outside, like out casted.*" (Participant C6 from Southern Africa)

"Number one, they have to find a solution to the late admission of international students because almost 98 per cent of international students at CU are admitted late." (Participant C10 from West Africa)

The above quotes are first sentences from the students' responses. An analysis of their detailed responses revealed that they did not only miss orientation and grapple with poor grades; they also had difficulty making friends and interacting with local students. They believed making friends would be easier if they all resumed at the same time when they were all new. Similarly, de Wit (2011) believe in the need for appropriate sociocultural integration, otherwise referred to by Schlossberg (2011) as the process of smooth transition, if international students are to contribute meaningfully to a host institution. The participants recommended that the university process the admission of international students first, to enable international students have ample time for visa processing and other preparations that need to be made ahead of their study in Nigeria, while also enabling them to integrate and connect with home students early enough.

6.11.8 Other Recommendations

There are some important but unpopular recommendations put forward by the international students at both universities.

One, the international students advocated for an inclusion in the universities' agenda. In other words, they would like the universities to recognise and celebrate their individual countries' culture and important national days such as independence. This way, they believed the cultural diversity of the university would be enriched while also creating awareness on the presence of international students and their cultural heritage for the sake of home students and staff who were hitherto unaware.

Two, the participants, particularly those at CU, recommended that the university organise periodic excursion for international students. This is to get them acquainted with Nigeria. According to these students, they were confined to their university environment because they lived compulsory on campus. Hence, they study in Nigeria and leave at the end of their programme without really getting to know Nigeria.

Three, the international students at UI recommended a concrete supervisory arrangement prior to their arrival at the university. The university should make effort to match students with supervisors who are familiar with the students' areas of research. More so, supervisors with very busy schedules should not be assigned to international students. The students expressed that since their scholarships were time bound, it was important to be assigned supervisors who

are easily accessible, in order to avoid time wastage that results in frustration for the students. They proposed that the university engage the services of younger faculty members in place of the many old professors at UI who were rarely accessible to students.

Four, the participants suggested faculty-staff be carried along in the internationalisation efforts being made by the university. According to them, if lecturers were sensitized on the multicultural nature of students, they would be able to treat international students accordingly, taking cognizance of non-Nigerians who might have difficulty with language and accent in the classroom. In addition, the students suggested that specialized academics from the diaspora be invited to lecture them at intervals.

Other important, yet unpopular recommendations include food variety, decongestion of the curriculum, technological advancement such as access to internet, feedback from lecturers, availability of more and better infrastructure and learning facilities, more practical learning, provision of suggestion box and putting an end to lecturers' intimidation.

6.12 CONCLUSION

Drawing on evidence from literature, institutional policy documents and participants' quotes, this chapter discussed in detail the sociocultural experiences of international students as well as recommendations for improving the academic and sociocultural transition experiences of international students. The chapter argued that several sociocultural factors contribute to the overall sociocultural experiences of international students in Nigeria. The findings as well as the recommendations from the international students suggest the need for the participating universities to brace up their efforts towards the social and cultural adjustments of international students.

The next chapter discusses the findings from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data reported in chapters four, five and six. The chapter also discusses the recommendations of the researcher for policy and practice, suggests directions for future research and draws conclusion on the entire research

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CHAPTER 7
IMPROVING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TRANSITION EXPERIENCES
7.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses in detail the synthesis of findings reported in chapters four, five and six. Three broad areas were identified from the findings based on the research questions – academic experiences, socio-cultural experiences and recommendations from the international students. These broad areas are further discussed bearing in mind the demographics of the international students, the themes that emerged from the analysis as well as the theoretical framework and previous literature on the subject of internationalisation of higher education. Differences in the demographic characteristics of international students at the two universities are outlined. Furthermore, this chapter features the implications of the research for policy and practice; and suggests directions for future research. Lastly, the chapter offers a conclusion to the entire study.

As a reminder, the aim of this study was to analyse the academic and sociocultural transition experiences of international students in two selected universities in Nigeria. In other words, the study sought to find out how the international students adjusted from the familiar situations of their home countries to the unique situations of the host country and the host institutions when they newly arrived. Thus, this study shifts attention from the popular focus of international students' overall experiences reported in most previous studies (Garza & Guzman, 2015; Guo & Guo, 2017; Wu, Leong, 2015; Zhang, 2016) to concentrate on the transition experiences of international students by addressing the academic and sociocultural aspects of transition. In doing so, the study adopted the mixed methods research approach in answering the research questions. This method was helpful in providing more comprehensive information on the transition experiences of international students than either of the quantitative or qualitative method alone.

In addition, this study provides insight into the recommendations made by international students at both universities. One private university (CU) and one public university (The UI) were chosen as the research sites in order to also compare findings across the two universities. One of the assumptions upon which this study was premised is that the international students at the private university would have a better transition experience than their counterparts at the public university. To this end, this study addressed the following research questions:

- How do international students experience academic and sociocultural transition in Nigeria and the university at which they are studying?

  The primary question is guided by the following secondary questions:

- What are the academic experiences of international students in Nigeria and the university at which they are studying?
- What are the socio-cultural experiences of international students in Nigeria and the university at which they are studying?
- How do the transition experiences of international students at the private university differ from the transition of those at the public university?
- What recommendations do international students suggest to the university for improved international students' experiences?

Table 7 1: Differences in the demographic characteristics of international students at the private and the public university

Private university	*Public university*
International students were mostly from English-speaking countries	International students were mostly from French-speaking countries
All the international students were undergraduates, enrolled for bachelor's degree	All the international students were postgraduates, enrolled for master's degree or PhD
Some international students were self-funded while others were studying on scholarship	All the international students were studying on scholarship
All international students resided on campus	Some international students resided on campus while others resided off-campus
International students have spent more years in Nigeria – an average of four years	International students have spent less years in Nigeria – an average of one year
International students have attended a higher number of semesters at the university – an average of five semesters	International students have attended a lesser number of semesters at the university – an average of two semesters

7.2 ACADEMIC TRANSITION EXPERIENCES

The discussion of academic transition experiences borders around how the international students navigated their ways through their respective universities academically at the beginning of their study in Nigeria. From the analysis of academic experiences in Chapter 5, it

was revealed that these students had diverse academic encounters in the transition phase of their study. These include a correlation between expectations and actual realities, language difficulty, academic support, teaching and learning and curriculum. The demographic profiles of the students also impacted on their academic transition. The impact of these factors on the overall academic transition of the international students in this study are examined in this section.

7.2.1 Expectation versus Reality

It is normal for the participants to have pre-conceived notions about their host institution. It is a way through which international students appraise their institutions, which ultimately impacts on their experiences (Tinto, 1975). From both the quantitative and the qualitative findings, it was revealed that the majority of the international students had expectations prior to studying in Nigeria. The most highly ranked expectation of the international students in this study was the desire to be proficient in the English language, in addition to obtaining a degree. This expectation was prevalent in the responses of the international students from francophone countries who were studying at the UI. Ordinarily, some of these students would not be studying in an anglophone country due to the difficulty associated with studying in an entirely different language as an adult. Nevertheless, the conditions of their scholarship providers such as ECOWAS, necessitated their decision to study in Nigeria. On the other hand, the international students at CU expected to build their spirituality, alongside studying for a degree. Other expectations included a good learning infrastructure, accessibility to research materials, good grades and a higher standard of education than what was obtainable back home. Of course, there were a few who had no prior expectations of either the host country or the host institution.

It appeared, however, that having expectations was not as important as having the expectations met. At the two universities, many of the international students expressed their disappointments in the realities of studying in Nigeria. For example, these students expected a better international environment, better infrastructure and more advanced technology than what they had actually found. Some of them made it known that their unmet expectations negatively impacted their academic performance. Their unmet expectations were not far-removed from the reports in the literature about the degraded state of learning facilities and poor technological infrastructure in Nigerian universities (Madichie & Madichie, 2013; Robert-Okah, 2016). More so, the researcher witnessed some of the disappointments relayed by these students first-hand during the data collection phase of this study. As much as universities, including Nigerian

universities, globally make internationalisation efforts to attract students from around the world; the treatment meted out to these students often negate such efforts (Cremonini & Antonowicz, 2009). In the same vein, a mismatch between international students' expectations and school life was discovered by Griffith University as one of the factors responsible for high attrition rate after the university was rated as the second-worst university in Australia in 2005 (Schulmann & Choudada, 2014). The discovery led to Griffith University embarking on transformational activities geared towards better experiences for international students. This implies that a strong association exists between international students' expectations and the actual reality, and this influences their transition. In addition, Schlossberg's (2011) theory of transition is useful in explaining the tough transition experienced by international students in this study as a result of a mismatch between expectation and reality. An expectation of something that was not scheduled to happen, but which unexpectedly happened or an expectation of something scheduled to happen, but which did not materialise could lead to a negative perception and experience for an individual.

7.2.2 Language as a factor in academic transition

As in the studies of Ashton et al. (2016) and Park (2016) conducted with international students in Australian universities, the language was the key factor that brought about a challenging academic transition for the international students in Nigeria. At the two universities, the participants alluded their tough transition was as a result of language differences between Nigeria and their home countries. Particularly, the international postgraduate students from francophone countries at the public university had a tough time relating with their supervisors, studying and conducting research in English.

The responses suggested that most of these postgraduate students would not be studying in an English country like Nigeria if it were not for scholarship opportunities. Interestingly, all the international students at the public university were studying on scholarships. The terms and conditions of their scholarships were the major determinants of their study destination. For example, one of the conditions of the ECOWAS scholarship required French speakers to study in an English country and vice versa. For those on the Pan African University (PAU) scholarship, their chosen discipline determined the African region in which they studied. Most of these students were, therefore, studying in an English country for the first time. Perhaps, the transition of these students would have been better if there was a well-structured arrangement for them to attend English classes upon arrival. More so, some of them were currently attending English classes concurrently with their departmental classes. This is dissimilar to the

experiences of French students studying in selected South African universities in a study conducted by Adebanji and Gumbo (2014). To boost the linguistic competence and acculturation level of the French students at the South African universities, the students had to first undergo an English foundation phase initiative for a particular period before commencing their major courses. This way, they had minimal language challenges in the transition phase of their academic pursuit.

While it would seem like the tough transition of international students from anglophone countries would not be related to language, the students reported accent as one of their major academic challenges. The issue of accent was peculiar to the participants at the private university. Even though they were from other English-speaking countries, they found the English accent of Nigerians to be different from theirs. These students had difficulty comprehending lectures and communicating verbally, which had a negative effect on their grades and overall academic performances. The issue of accent is consistent with previous studies. For example, Davey et al. (2013), Park (2016) and Ashton et al. (2016) reported difficulty with language and accent among international students in Australia. In their studies, international students faced frustrations arising from Australian accented English which also hampered participation in class discussions and tutorials.

At this juncture, it is imperative to examine the role of the Nigerian universities in ensuring a positive experience with language in the transition phase of the international students. Unlike universities in the UK and the US which would require international students to pass an English proficiency test before being offered admission (Bamford, 2008), international students were not required to pass an English proficiency test as a prerequisite to studying in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the UI, aware that many international students at the University were from francophone countries, organised special English classes for such students. The students attested to attending English classes when they newly arrived at the university and before the start of their degrees. The challenge, however, remained because the duration of the classes was reportedly too short to acquire the required English language skill and the classes reportedly lacked a structured curriculum. In essence, they attended classes and were taught as individual facilitators deemed fit; even though many of these students were happy with the level of progress attained in their English language skill at the time of this research. On the other hand, the French speakers at the private university had no special English classes organised for them. This prompted one of the participants to question how the French speakers

at CU coped with studying in the English language. The students resorted to self-learning in the course of their degrees.

It is not clear if the private university was unaware of the presence of students from Francophone countries at the university. Again, this brings to bear a discrepancy between the internationalisation policies and implementation, especially at CU, which upholds a vision to become one of the best ten universities in the world by 2022. To compound the international students' frustrations, some faculty members did not help to alleviate the students' language problems. Some lecturers were reported to be impatient with or inconsiderate of international students in terms of their accent, which further affected the self-esteem of these students. Of note is the argument made by Gopal (2011) on the importance of preparing faculty staff to teach effectively in a cross-cultural setting. Similarly, Paige & Goode (2009) and Preston & Wang (2017) reiterate that faculty staff are not aware of competent pedagogical strategies on how to accommodate diverse learners in a culturally sensitive manner. This implies that some lecturers lack the competence to communicate and work successfully with learners from other cultures, or how does one justify the rationale for a lecturer at the private university scoring an international student zero during an oral test, simply because the lecturer could not understand, or was not patient enough to understand the student's accent?

Lastly, some students were not entirely pleased with the fact that some lecturers did not adhere strictly to English as the language of instruction in the classroom. They expected lecturers to take cognisance of international students and avoid the use of vernacular during teaching. This set of students complained of missing out on some important concepts explained in "Yoruba", a local language widely spoken in South West Nigeria where the two universities are located. Nonetheless, some of the students saw the use of vernacular as normal because to them; it promotes the African heritage. That said, the use of vernacular in the classroom was not peculiar to the Nigerian context. In his interviews with international students at a Turkish university, Bavli (2017) equally found that lecturers were prone to speaking Turkish in class instead of adhering to English. Notwithstanding, the international students in Turkey alluded to an improvement in their English language competence at the end of their programme, similar to some of the participants in this study.

7.2.3 Teaching and learning styles

From the literature, it can be deduced that a shift from a familiar teaching and learning style could bring about a challenging academic transition for international students (Bavli, 2017;

Martinez & Colaner, 2017; Yeoh & Terry, 2013). From the findings, diverse views regarding teaching and learning were reported by the participants at the two universities. This suggests that the participants had different perspectives regarding teaching and learning styles at their respective host universities. In comparison with teaching and learning in their home countries, some of the international students found it the situation to be better in Nigeria, some found it to be better in their home countries, whereas others thought the teaching and learning style in Nigeria was about the same as in their home countries.

For those who found the teaching and learning to be better in their home countries than in Nigeria, they can be said to have experienced what Gu (2005) refers to as "learning shock" arising from the supposedly strange academic methods of a host country.

From the findings, this set of students were shocked about the dominance of lecturers – a situation where a lecturer's view cannot be challenged by a student, else the student will be regarded as insolent. The students expected that teaching and learning in the 21st century should not portray the lecturer as an authoritarian. Also, these international students complained of lectures being too theoretical and lacking practical engagements, especially for engineering and technology-related disciplines. This is similar to the findings made by Bavli (2017) in the research conducted with international visiting students at a public university in Turkey. The international visiting students who participated in the research complained about the lecturers adopting the rote teaching methods instead of practical and interactive methods that could promote critical thinking. This approach is regarded as teacher-centred by Yeoh and Terry (2013).

Perhaps the lack of practical engagements in engineering and technology-related disciplines, as pointed out by some of the participants in this study, could be linked to the poor funding that continuously confronts higher education in Nigeria. In spite of the growing demand for university education, government budgets for higher education are underfunded and unable to meet the standard of quality teaching and learning; and the available facilities are in deteriorating conditions (Iruonagbe et al., 2015). Although private universities are not funded by the government, as they are expected to generate their own funds; some Engineering students at the private university expected better learning facilities owing to the exorbitant fees paid by students.

Conversely, some international students in Nigeria perceived that the teaching and learning styles were better than those of their home countries. To these students, lectures are interactive,

and lecturers do allocate time for questions and answers as well as discussions that would foster deep thinking. According to Ralarala et al. (2017), this approach was similar to the Western-style, which was more student-centred. The findings also revealed that the students were impressed with the availability of learning materials made easily accessible to students. Particularly, the international students at the private university believed that the university has made available all kind of academic platforms and materials needed for any student to succeed academically.

Lastly, more findings revealed the same teaching and learning styles in Nigeria and the home countries of some of the participants. Some students believed that African universities adopt a similar method of teaching and learning, such as lecturers making learning complicated for students and also making students feel inferior. A situation one of the participants described as an "African proble"', which he had previously observed in his home country. It seems logical that the African problem as described by the participant in this study is salient in the literature such as Alemu (2014), Madichie and Madichie (2013), Robert-Okah (2014) and Tagoe (2012).

7.2.4 Internationalisation of the curriculum

An appraisal of the curriculum by the international students at the two universities was imperative in determining if the students were being exposed to the international dimensions of their respective disciplines or strictly the local dimensions. Leask (2009) advocates for an internationalisation of the curriculum by suggesting that an international and an intercultural dimension be incorporated into the content of a curriculum. Some of the international students in Nigeria expressed their frustrations regarding learning mostly about the Nigerian aspect of their disciplines, which might not apply to the real-world situations of their home countries. These students questioned the essence of undertaking an international study when, in fact, there was little or no form of internationalisation in their study.

In the same way, Ippolito (2007) agrees with the submission of Leask (2009) by opining that an ideal curriculum should meet the learning demands of all students in an equal manner, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity or sociocultural background. The postgraduate participants at the public university complained of largely Nigerian reference materials in the library. To them, such a widely acclaimed university as theirs is expected to reflect internationalisation in the teaching and learning materials as opposed to what was obtainable at the university. In this age of globalisation, there is a need for the university curriculum to be more inclusive in ways that will promote global competence in both international and local students. In achieving this,

Agnew and Fox (2014) call for a reflection on the "glocal" context of the curriculum – a phenomenon aimed at promoting both the global and local dimension of a curriculum. They argue that a glocal curriculum will facilitate new ways of thinking in both international and home students and prepare them to be globally relevant.

However, some of the international students considered the curriculum to be global. According to these students, their peers in other countries were learning the same course contents as they were. A few postgraduate students also attested to an internationalised curriculum by affirming that what they were learning at their current university was a continuation of what they had previously learnt during a previous degree in their home countries.

7.2.5   Academic support

Studying outside one's home country, especially for the first time, could be accompanied by an overwhelming feeling of confusion and frustration. However, getting the right support is capable of alleviating any such feelings. In this study, the quantitative findings validated the qualitative findings to suggest strongly that the international students received substantial academic support from faculty members and their peers.

With regards to faculty support, most of the international students were happy with the level of support they received from faculty members at their respective universities. They admitted that they considered the transition phase of their academic pursuit in Nigeria as smooth owing to faculty support. This validates the argument of Santhi (2010) that faculty members, as major drivers of the internationalisation efforts, play an important role in the transition of international students. For the undergraduate international students at the private university, many of the lecturers were approachable and encouraging. Aware of the likely challenges confronting international students, some of these lecturers went an extra mile to ensure international students received further academic help through tutorials and by offering additional learning materials.

For the postgraduate students at the public university, their supervisors were supportive by following up on them and showing genuine interest in their academic and general well-being. These students, who are mostly from francophone countries, admitted they felt like quitting at the beginningthe but the encouragement and support from their supervisors assisted them to forge ahead. Contrarily, a few postgraduate students at the public universities had a feeling of frustration concerning the level of support received from their supervisors. Unlike the Arab international students studying in the US who found the support of faculty members helpful in

their academic adjustments (Rabia & Karkouti, 2017); the students who received little or no support in this study opined the university was only interested in the money generated from international students. Correspondingly, authors on the internationalisation of higher education such as Guo and Guo (2017) and Teichler (2010) noted a shift in the internationalisation operation of many institutions in developed nations like the US, the UK and Australia where international students and international activities served as a means of income generation. It is true that the benefits of income generation cannot be separated from the subject of internationalisation (Teichler 2010; Urban & Palmer, 2014); however, international students should not be given an impression that their monetary contribution is prioritised over their wellbeing.

To a large extent, it was found that international students at the private and the public university also received academic support from their peers – both international students and home students. However, support from home students was not immediately present upon arrival at the university due to the socio-cultural differences and the fact that they were all new. As time went on, the relationships improved. The home students aided the international students' transition through shared learning which helped them settle into the university system faster. The findings also revealed that the academic support and guidance from senior and fellow international students could not be overemphasised. Particularly at the private university, all the international students were committed to helping one another adjusting and collectively solving any problem that may arise. Similarly, previous studies advocate that peer mentoring reduces acculturative stress for international students, it helps in the area of academic adjustment and boosts their sense of belonging (Chilver, 2016; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; Taylor & Ali, 2017).

7.3   SOCIOCULTURAL TRANSITION EXPERIENCES

This section discusses the key findings based on the sociocultural transition experiences reported in Chapter 6. The analysis showed that international students in Nigeria had diverse sociocultural experiences during the transition phase of their study in Nigeria. In alignment with previous research (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011; Lin, 2010; Urban & Palmer, 2014; Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2014; Yam, 2016), transitioning from a familiar study environment to an unfamiliar one is dependent on a host of factors inherent in the host country or institution. Thus, the discussion of socio-cultural transition experiences is done in relation to the themes of culture, food, feeling of loneliness and discrimination.

7.3.1 Culture

In this study, the experiences of international students with regards to Nigerian culture differed between the two universities. A tenable reason for the prevalent culture shock among the international students at the private university could be because they were undergraduate students who were experiencing life outside their home countries for the first time. The international students at the public university, on the other hand, were postgraduate students who appeared older and more experienced. Therefore, it is not to say the respondents at the public university did not experience culture shock at all (as the interview responses revealed some of them did), but they were able to handle it better based on some factors such as previous experiences. This is what Schlossberg (2011) refers to as the "strategies" of coping with a transition. Interestingly, more international students at the private university than those at the public university alleged they had some knowledge of the Nigerian culture before studying in Nigeria; yet, they reported more culture shock than their public university counterparts. Even the international students who were of Nigerian descent at CU expressed a high level of culture shock. Perhaps this explains why their parents sent them back home to study in Nigeria, so they would not feel culturally out of place should they decide to relocate to Nigeria in the future.

Greeting was referred to as the one aspect of the Nigeria culture that the international students found the strangest. What was intriguing for nearly all the international students was not the greeting in itself but the mode of greeting and the accolades attached to the greeting. A greeting that was not properly done in line with culture was regarded as an act of disrespect. Additionally, the Yorubas believed in greeting as many times as you came in contact with a person in a day, irrespective of whether you have previously exchanged greetings. Generally, the international students regarded Nigerians as a people who place a high premium on culture. Similarly, Agbeniga (2016) found in an interview with 35 international students in Nigeria that Nigerians, especially those from the South-Western part of the country, have high respect for culture. Nigerians regard culture as a part of their identity.

Another aspect of the Nigerian culture that shocked 75 percent of the international students, especially those from Eastern and Southern Africa was the behavioural pattern of Nigerians. These students found Nigerians to be quite aggressive and always in a rush; as opposed to the calm nature of people from those regions. Also, the experience of culture shock could be traceable to particular demographics such as the region. Notably, most of the international students from other West African countries reported no culture shock. This is due to the similarities they claimed existed between the Nigerian culture and those of their home countries

in activities such as dressing. Nevertheless, some of these students still found the greeting aspect of the culture strange. In the same vein, Lee and Sehoole (2015) found that international students in South Africa who originated from countries in the SADC integrated better into the culture of South Africa than international students from countries outside the SADC.

7.3.2 Food

With regards to food, the prevalent response from the international students in this study strongly suggests that Nigerian foods are too spicy. At the private and the public universities, it was gathered that food influenced the transition of the majority of international students in a negative way. The cultural differences in food affect the emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing of international students. At first, food might be considered as a less important aspect of transition experiences; however, the findings from this study in line with findings from the study of Taylor and Ali (2017) affirm that the absence of familiar home foods can pose a barrier to the smooth transition of international students. In their study with five international students studying in the UK, Taylor and Ali (2017) found that the lack of access to familiar foods created a feeling of homesickness for international students. In other words, there is a positive relationship between the taste of familiar foods and the nostalgic thought of home. Invariably, the majority of the international students in this study struggled with Nigerian foods, especially in the transition phase.

Findings from the interviews revealed that the participants at the private university had a more difficult experience with food because they all resided on campus and had no choice but to buy foods from the cafeteria, as cooking was not allowed in the halls of residence. This also raises a concern on the effort of the university in acknowledging the presence of international students and ensuring their adjustments. It should be considered whether the cafeteria at CU could prepare separate and non-spicy foods for the sake of international students. Even though those at the public university could cook their own foods, food or food ingredients similar to those in their countries of origin was not easily accessible. To relay the extent to which the unavailability of familiar foods affected the overall wellbeing of international students, one of the participants revealed he would travel to his country (a neighbouring country in West Africa) at regular intervals to bring home foods to Nigeria for his consumption. Others cope with the local foods by eating a particular food they found less spicy for a long time until they adjusted to eating spicy foods. Similarly, previous studies such as Agbeniga (2016) and Leong (2015) reported that international students in Nigeria and Chinese students in the US respectively

experienced homesickness and culture shock as a result of the culturally different foods in the host countries.

7.3.3 Feeling of loneliness

Research on international students' experiences emphasises the importance of social interaction in the overall wellbeing of international students in the first few months of their study (Baron et al., 2009; Guo & Guo, 2017; Yin, 2013). Three major reasons can be deduced as to why the participants at the private university experienced a greater feeling of loneliness. One, many of them were experiencing life outside their home countries for the first time, as undergraduates. Two, international students at the university were fewer in number. Three, the schedule of academic activities at CU was too busy to allow for meaningful social interactions. Besides these deductions, age was seen as a factor in the loneliness experienced by the international students. Being a private university, CU admits students who are as young as 14 years of age, as long as they meet the admission requirements and can afford the fees. This is unlike public universities in Nigeria where the minimum university admission age is 16. One of the participants linked her loneliness to the age difference between her and her roommate – a difference of 8 years. This hampered their friendship and communications because they felt their maturity levels differed. Moreover, many of the home students were reportedly not interested in friendships with international students, especially at the beginning. This may be due to differences in accent, culture, physical looks and divergent views. Perhaps, this is why Taylor and Ali (2017) consider social acceptance to be one of the most common needs of international students. Suffice it to say that universities have a role to play in ensuring the social adjustment of international students. One example is by pairing them with home students based on some matching characteristics such as age, discipline or even religious belief. Sherry, Thomas & Chui (2010) describe international students as a vulnerable student population who often grapple with several problems, including loneliness. More so, the international students at CU mostly had contact with local students in their classes and halls of residence; yet they experienced loneliness due to the absence of meaningful interactions with the latter. To a large extent, international students overcame loneliness by forming a team at the private university. They supported one another as much as they could, even though the action was considered inadequate by some.

At the public university, the majority did not experience loneliness. Two major reasons can be inferred from their responses. One, they were postgraduate students, and many of them had previously lived or studied outside their home countries. Two, the majority were studying in

the company of other international students from the same country and on the same scholarship scheme. Overall, companionship ranked the highest reason why international students at the public university did not feel lonely. From the findings, international students at the public university mostly shared accommodation. This way, they see one another very often. Unlike the participants at the private university, international students at the public university found it easy making friends with local students and engaging in meaningful interactions with them. It might not be far-fetched to ascribe their coping to their maturity. Despite the companionship and friendship, the feeling of loneliness was not completely eliminated from the experiences of the international students at the public university. Like their counterparts at the private university, they engaged in communicating with families and friends back home from time to time.

From the foregoing, the differences in the experiences of loneliness at the two universities highlight the four aspects of coping with a transition as put forward by the transition theory of Schlossberg (2011). Firstly, the international students at the public university have been in a previous similar "situation" of studying at a university and/or studying outside their home country unlike those at the private university. Two, the" self" attributes such as age and phase of life of these two groups of students differed significantly. Three, three international students at the private university did not receive substantial "support", especially from home students to overcome loneliness. Four, international students at the public university devised more "strategies" in coping with loneliness, perhaps based on their experience in previous similar situations, coupled with self.

7.3.4 Discrimination

With regards to discrimination, the findings show a clear divide in the experiences of students between the two universities. In light of this, responses from the interviews were useful in describing what the international students reported to be discrimination. Of all the participants at the private university, none reported any form of discrimination. Though the reason(s) is not explicitly clear, it can be inferred from the responses that international students found Nigerians to be generally receptive of foreigners. They also regard Nigerians as friendly and welcoming, happy to relate to international students. It could also be because they are older and were able to handle issues more maturely.

At the private university, however, 60% of the interview participants reported some form of discrimination. Taylor and Ali (2017) argue that discrimination is an influence arising from the

absence of shared national identity and lack of understanding between diverse cultures and peoples. On a similar note, international students at the private university reported that they were discriminated against by Nigerians because they were from different socio-cultural backgrounds. One aspect of discrimination as reported by the international students at the private university had to do with accent. Apparently, people from Eastern and Southern Africa have a distinct accent from Nigerians. Some international students from these regions reported that home students would laugh and make jest of their accent. The resultant effect was that international students would rather not speak or speak as little as possible to avoid any form of unwarranted treatment from their local counterparts. Some participants related discrimination to extortion by some non-academic members of staff such as security personnel and porters who had the notion that international students were rich. Failure to consent to the extortion often led to international students being treated unfairly by these personnel. One might wonder if there are no avenues for reporting such misconducts; the participants inferred that reporting such cases might not yield the desired change or action.

Also, some reported discrimination from the actions and attitudes of local students. They reported some local students would not just sit or relate with them, simply because they were from another country. It is worth noting that the discrimination by the international students at the private university dwindled over time. As at the time of this study, those who had spent close to four years at the university no longer experienced discrimination while those who had spent less than two years still reported some form of discrimination but not as serious as it was at the beginning of their study. From the findings, it does not seem as though discrimination was targeted against a particular country or people, it seemed more like international students, in general, were easily identified by their accent or looks; hence, there was an equal likelihood of experiencing discrimination. A review of previous studies suggests that discrimination is not peculiar to the international students in this study alone. For example, the findings of Lee and Rice (2007) in their study with international students at a large public university in the US is consistent with that of this study. Their findings reveal that international students reported considerable discrimination; although the level of discrimination varied depending on the nationality and race of the international students.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FOR IMPROVED TRANSITION

Research on international education portrays international students as clients and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as service providers (Martin & Peim, 2004). Thus, ensuring that

current clients are satisfied is essential in promoting the opportunities of HEIs to attract prospective clients. As regards the findings, the international students in this study appeared not to be totally satisfied with the services received at their respective universities. They, therefore, made recommendations for improvements in the academic and sociocultural transition experiences of international students. It is interesting to note that most of the recommendations cut across both universities; even though a few are peculiar to each university. The key recommendations are discussed subsequently.

Orientation: Orientation upon arrival at the university ranked as one of the highest recommendations suggested by international students at the two universities. Indeed, the role of orientation in enhancing a positive transition experience for international students cannot be overemphasised. Research done by Kovtun (2011) reiterates the importance of providing orientation to international students before the commencement of their studies. Likewise, the majority of the questionnaire respondents recommended orientation. Statistical analysis showed no difference in this recommendation between the two universities. This implies orientation was equally important to international students at both universities. Interview responses detailed the frustrations of the participants upon arrival at the universities owing to a lack of proper orientation. Many of them questioned why the university would admit international students with little or no guidance upon arrival in an entirely new environment. Findings revealed a slight variation with regards to the orientation between the two universities. On the one hand, international students at the private university alleged the university organised an orientation programme for all new students; however, most international students missed the programme because they resumed their studies late for the academic session. On the other hand, the majority of the international students at the public university alleged they received orientation upon arrival; albeit, it was mostly an informal form of orientation from colleagues and friends and not a structured orientation programme organised by the university. It can be inferred from the responses of the participants that orientation upon arrival at the university would have led to a better transition experience. To emphasise the importance of orientation, Barron et al. (2009) and Guo and Guo (2017) argue that orientation should be an ongoing exercise for international students as opposed to a once-off event organised by most institutions.

English language support classes: Another highly ranked recommendation by the international students at the two universities is the need for English language support classes for those whose first language is not English. The importance of English language support

classes in ensuring the smooth transition of international students, especially English as a Second Language (ESL) students, is non-negotiable (Rabia & Karkouti, 2017; Ralarala et al., 2016) Clearly, there was a mismatch in the expectations of the participants as regards English support classes. The international students at the public university advocated for more structured and longer sessions of English classes as opposed to the unstructured and short classes they attended upon arrival. However, as English support classes were non-existent at the private university; the international students recommended that the university set up English classes to enable non-English speakers to have a smooth language transition. As in the study of Taylor and Ali (2017), international students whose first language was not English and who attained English fluency experienced greater opportunities for better adjustments, while those who were less fluent reportedly struggled.

Institutional support: Students at both institutions recommended stronger institutional support to facilitate a smooth transition and adjustment in the new environment. While the questionnaire responses revealed more academic support from faculty and peers, the interview responses revealed administrative assistance. According to the participants, international students had the impression that the universities showed no genuine interest in them. There were specific institutional support needs that were indicated at each university. At the private university, participants recommended assistance in the procurement of visas. From the findings, these students pay visa fees to the university annually; yet, obtaining visas remained a struggle. At the public university, completing registration processes appeared to be one of the greatest challenges faced by international students. Some of the participants had spent close to three years at the university without a student card due to the complex registration procedures. Therefore, they strongly recommended that the university assists with registration by putting easy procedures in place while also giving preference to international students.

Accommodation preferences: International students at both universities recommended prioritisation of accommodation for international students. All students at the private university resided on campus and had no option of choosing to stay off-campus. These students believed they deserved better accommodation facilities based on the high differences in fees they paid compared to what the local students pay. Conversely, students at the public university had the option of residing on-campus or off-campus. Like their counterparts at the private university, participants at the public university reiterated paying higher fees than local students. Hence, they also advocated that the universities should make provision for more comfortable accommodation facilities for them, especially being postgraduate students who needed to

engage in research. Having come from countries where power supply was steady, some of them decried the erratic power supply in Nigeria. They, therefore, suggested special accommodation equipped with facilities like generators to enable them to have a hitch-free study. They also recommended a special accommodation arrangement for international students before arrival in Nigeria, as this would enhance a smooth transition. The international students at the private university had no issue with power supply as the university generated its own electricity and ran on a steady power supply.

International offices involvement: International students further recommended more involvement of the international offices at the two universities. These offices were regarded by the participants as representatives and guardians of international students in Nigeria, but they were disappointed that the offices showed inadequate interest in their affairs. For example, participants at the public university proposed that the international office call periodic meetings with international students as a way of checking their well-being The International students at the private university recommended that the international office provide sufficient information to them before leaving their home countries to prevent shocks upon arrival in Nigeria. Of note is the observation of one of the participants at the public university. He alluded that the university, through the international office, admitted international students from non-English countries; yet, the international office had no staff who speak other languages apart from English. He then recommended that, as part of internationalisation effort, the international office should employ personnel who can communicate in other languages. In a nutshell, the international students in this study alluded that their transition experiences would be smoother if the international offices showed more involvements.

Early admission: At the private university, it was evident that all the participants started their study in Nigeria late, after the local students had commenced with their studies. This is because they were offered late admission by the university – a situation described as a trend. They, therefore, recommended that the admission of international students should be given preference. In this way, international students would have ample time to process visas and make travel plans. More so, they would start their academic activities at the same time as the local students and have the opportunity to partake of orientation activities, semester tests, assignments and also make friends early enough.

Other recommendations: International students suggested follow-up and mentoring by faculty members and peers. However, this recommendation appeared not to be prevalent, some

international students believed it would be helpful if each of them had a designated mentor who followed up on them in the transition phase. These mentors could be faculty members who would support them academically or peers who were more experienced to provide guidance academically and otherwise. Other unpopular but important recommendations include internationalisation of faculty and employing younger faculty members to replace ageing faculty staff.

7.5   IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

To improve the transition experiences of international students in Nigeria and beyond, some implications for policy and practice stem from this study. These implications do not suggest that all international students in Nigeria experience a difficult transition or that a difficult transition experience is unique to international students at the two participating Nigerian universities. Rather, the researcher highlights possible ways to mitigate problems confronting international students in a host country and at their host institutions. This study aligns with previous studies (Lillyman & Bennet, 2014; Yin, 2013; Zhang, 2016) to reveal that international students experience diverse difficulties, particularly in the transition phase of their joining their host institutions. Findings from this study further reveal that not all international students were confronted with the same magnitude of challenges. Thus, the implications for policy and practice suggested by the researcher are based on the academic and socio-cultural issues identified from this study.

First, higher education institutions should bridge the gap between prior expectation and actual reality by providing orientation to international students before and after arrival at the host university. It was found in this study that a mismatch between expectation and reality contributed significantly to the negative experiences of some of the international students. This was further compounded by a lack of proper orientation upon arrival. International students are guests and should, therefore not be left to figure things out on their own or navigate their ways unguided. The onus lies on a host university to provide guidance through diverse orientation activities that will enhance the smooth transition of international students from their home countries to the host country. Such orientations should include information on the culture of the host country including foods; academic activities, university rules and regulations, language and general demographics. In line with previous studies such as those conducted by Preston & Wang (2017) and Kovtun (2011), the researcher suggests that orientation should begin before the international students leave their home countries, it should be given upon arrival at the

university and should continue until these students have fully adjusted into the new environment.

Second, the importance of providing institutional support to international students cannot be overstressed. The researcher recommends three kinds of support for international students. One, academic support should be provided by faculty members who would invite international students for a discussion of their academic experience, just as Taylor & Ali (2017) equally suggested. International students who struggle academically might not find the courage to approach faculty members for academic assistance. Therefore, institutions should put proactive measures in place for international students to receive academic help. Two, administrative support such as registration, visa and accommodation assistance should be rendered to international students. Transitioning to an entirely new environment is often accompanied by enough overwhelming experiences, thus, institutions should alleviate international students' stress by offering valuable assistance on issues within their capabilities. Three, sociocultural support should be offered to international students upon arrival at a host institution. For example, international students could be paired with home students who would acquaint them with the culture of the host country and also for social relationships. Research (Chilvers, 2016; Martinez & Colaner, 2017) has shown that having home students as friends aids the smooth adjustment of international students. Furthermore, pairing international students with home students will create an appreciation of diversity in home students; which will ultimately help them become tolerant of others from different social and cultural backgrounds.

Third, institutions should intensify internationalisation efforts in the real sense of internationalisation. The mere presence of international students in an institution is not an indicator for internationalisation (de Wit, 2011). As much as internationalisation and the recruitment of international students is important to higher education institutions, the positive experience and overall satisfaction of international students should be equally important. One way of ensuring the positive experience of international students is to create awareness amongst university staff and home students on the presence of international students. As argued by Preston and Wang (2017) and Yee (2014), faculty members need to be cognizant of a multicultural classroom in teaching and learning. This way, they can accommodate the needs of international students which will enhance their adjustment and academic performance. Although no serious form of discrimination was reported in this study, creating awareness among home students on the presence of international students will encourage acceptance of one another in spite of differences. It is worth noting that some home students at the two

participating universities were unaware of the presence of international students and would express surprise upon meeting them. In addition, it is questionable whether institutions are keen about the experience of international students or they are just after recruiting them for prestige and income generation purposes. For instance, how can English universities recruit international students from French countries without making proper provision for linguistic transition? Institutions should implement policies that will promote linguistic integration for international students whose first language is not English. It was gathered from the findings of this study that linguistic frustration does not only apply to international students, faculty members also bear some of the frustrations caused by a gap in communications. Moreover, it is important to raise awareness on linguistic diversity and linguistic tolerance amongst staff and students to avoid any form of discriminatory attitudes towards international students' English accents.

Lastly, the countries of origin of the international students in Nigeria strongly suggests intra-Africa student mobility. This was further evident from the conditions of the various scholarships of the postgraduate international students at the public university. Therefore, the researcher suggests that the promoters of intra-Africa student mobility agree on a unified curriculum for all partner institutions so that there is homogeneity of training irrespective of where students are studying. Hence, these students can fit into the workforce in any partner country since this is one of the aims of the mobility schemes such as ECOWAS.

7.6 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study adopted the Schlossberg's theory of transition (1981) as an appropriate lens to further understand the phenomenon of transition, especially with regards to the international students in Nigeria. In other words, the theory provided some useful guiding assumptions to the present study and gave the researcher direction in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Clearly, the adopted theory holds a considerable number of implications as far as the findings of this mixed-methods study are concerned. However, the researcher only dwells on three of these implications.

One implication of the Schlossberg's theory on the findings of this study is the notion of accommodating and supporting the heterogeneity of higher education students, in this case, international students, through the transition phase (Schlossberg, Lynch & Chickering, 1989). Mukhejee (2014) argues that having a good mix of international students in an institution contributes to the rich cultural context of that institution. Clearly, the international students in

this study had heterogeneous characteristics – for example, the countries of origin were distinct (23 countries), there were differences in schooling language background (French and English) and diversities of courses enrolled for. Although the findings suggest that the international students in Nigeria decried the inadequacies in the way their respective institutions took cognizance of their diverse academic and sociocultural backgrounds; nevertheless, the theory provided some pathways on the ideals of helping learners of different characteristics transition with little or minimal hitches.

The second implication is that the theory spells out three types of transition, namely, anticipated, unanticipated and non-events. The three types of transition support the analysis in Chapter 5 about expectations and reality. The findings reveal how some of the international students in Nigeria experienced either a smooth or a difficult transition as a result of their expectations being met or not. As argued by Schulman and Choudaha (2014), a relationship exists between international students' expectations and the actual reality of studying abroad, which ultimately defines their transition experiences. While some of the participants alluded to their expectations being met, others were disappointed that their expectations were not met, whereas a few had no expectations prior to studying in Nigeria. In spite of the varying views of the participants, the theory was helpful in providing some underlining assumptions that were relevant to the findings.

The third implication is that the findings agree with the submission of Schlossberg's theory that the coping mechanism adopted in the transition phase is of utmost importance, more than the transition itself (Schlossberg, 2011). Four aspects of transition – Situation, Self, upport and Strategies; otherwise referred to as Schlossberg's 4Ss (2011) were identified by the theory as coping mechanisms (Schlossberg, 2011). Similarly, the participants described their individual mechanisms of managing their transition, especially with regards to those who reported a difficult transition. From the findings, we saw the four aspects of transition playing out in the coping mechanisms shared by the participants. Of interest are the reports of the postgraduate international students at the public university who were able to relate with their transition experiences because they had been in similar "Situations" in the past. There were some international students who alluded to coping with the transition as a result of "Support" from other international students, local students and families (Sengupta, 2015; Taylor & Ali, 2017). Some saw their personality (Self) aiding their transition process, while others devised their unique "Strategies" of coping (Evans et al., 2010). In short, the four aspects of transition were vivid from the findings analysed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Needful to say, the context of transition should be an important consideration in evaluating the transition experience of international students. This is not to say that the theory does not make reference to context (Goodman et al., 2006); however, there is a need for more a deeper perspective on context as it relates to transition in higher education. In this case of the study of Nigeria, suffice it to say that the findings advance knowledge on international students' experiences in the specific context of Nigeria. There would be a high likelihood that the international students from Francophone countries, for instance, would have a better transition experience (at least, with regards to language) if they were studying in another Francophone country. Moreover, Schlossberg's theory posits that transition is best defined by the person experiencing it (Schlossberg & Chickering, 1995), the researcher argues that a higher education institution will be able to decipher if international students are experiencing a positive or negative transition through an appraisal of annual enrolment rates. Some of the resultant consequences of the transition experiences of international students will include their enrolment, retention and attrition rates.

In a nutshell, the findings from this study confirm, to a large extent, the argument of the Schlossberg's theory of transition which serves as a framework through which the transition experiences of the international students in Nigeria were analysed and better understood.

7.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are not many studies on internationalisation in Nigeria, and more so, international students' experiences. This creates the possibilities for vast research on internationalisation in Nigeria. Hence, the researcher would like to suggest three future studies that could emanate from the present study. One, this study was limited to two universities in South-West Nigeria; it would, therefore, be worthwhile for future research to investigate the experiences of international students in other regions such as the Eastern and Northern parts of Nigeria which have different cultural contexts from that of this study. This would reveal if the transition experiences of the international students in the present study are a function of the sociocultural context in which they were studying. Two, a university with a larger number of international students should be considered in further research, especially for survey purposes. Three, it would be interesting to investigate whether institutional stakeholders are aware of the challenges international students face in the transition phase of their international study.

7.8 Conclusion

This mixed methods study examined the academic and sociocultural transition experiences of international students at the best ranked private and public universities in Nigeria. It is evident from the findings that international students face diverse challenges while trying to adjust to a new environment, in line with previous research. Adopting Schlossberg's theory of transition was useful in the critical examination of how international students navigate through the familiar situations of their home countries to the unfamiliar situations of the host country and universities. Some of the findings revealed some differences between the academic and socio-cultural experiences of international students at the private and the public university, while some findings showed no differences. It is clear from the findings that international students from West African countries had less of a culture shock in Nigeria than those from other regions. The findings also suggest intra-Africa student mobility, as the majority of participants and respondents were from other African countries.

On the one hand, the support of faculty members in the positive transition of the international students is worth noting. On the other hand, findings indicate that the participating universities are largely accountable for the negative transition experiences reported by international students. Again, this raises a question on the engagement of internationalisation practices in Nigerian higher education institutions in comparison to abounding policy statements. Recommendations for improvements in transition experiences were made by the international students in this study, coupled with implications for policy and practice put forward by the researcher. However, the applicability of these recommendations may vary across different higher educational contexts.

As a final note, a positive transition experience and overall satisfaction of international students should be central to the motive of any higher education institution that advocates internationalisation.

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APPENDICES

9.1   LETTER – UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

The Director
Office of International Programmes
University of Ibadan
UI Road, Ibadan Oyo 200284
Nigeria
Cc: The Vice Chancellor
April 25, 2018
Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF ACADEMIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL TRANSITION IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

The above subject refers. Olaide Agbeniga, a PhD student of The Department of Education Management and Policy Studies of the University of Pretoria in South Africa, is planning to conduct the above study. The study is part of the requirement towards the fulfillment of her PhD programme.

Competition exists amongst global academic institutions to attract international students. International students are attracted to institutions in certain countries based on academic, political, economic, social and cultural reasons. These factors serve an advantage for institutions and their countries of domicile. Similarly, Nigeria needs to consider these factors in order to succeed in attracting international students. One way to achieve this is to ensure that international students are well integrated into the Nigerian system as well as into their respective institutions. In Nigeria, the experiences of international students is under researched. Rather, reports on outbound student mobility to developed countries abound. The aim of this study is to contribute to the scarce literature and lacking information on internationalization in Nigeria. The University of Ibadan has been chosen as one of the three case universities where this research will be conducted in Nigeria. The other two universities are, The University of Lagos and Covenant University. According to my preliminary studies, these universities are among the major hosts of international students in Nigeria. This study seeks to answer the following question: How do international students experience academic and sociocultural transition in Nigeria and the institution they are studying at? Findings from this study will provide the much needed but lacking information for Nigeria and the participating universities on their international student body.

Data will be collected through questionnaires and interviews of students who will be willing participate in this study. Data from this study will be used solely for research purposes - thesi journal articles and conference presentations.

I hereby humbly request your permission and support to conduct this study at your universi and also be given access to relevant documents such as policies, reports/ statistics that w: inform the study.

In case of questions that need clarifications, please contact me at laidestar@yahoo.com Professor Chika Sehoole at chika.sehoole@up.ac.za.
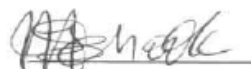
I look forward to your support on this research.

Yours sincerely,

Olaide Agbeniga   Prof. Chika Sehoole

(PhD Student)   (Supervisor)

9.2   LETTER – COVENANT UNIVERSITY

The Director
International Office and Linkages
Covenant University
KM. 10 Idiroko Road
Canaan Land Ota 11001,
Ogun State
Nigeria
Cc: The Vice Chancellor
April 25, 2018
Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF ACADEMIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL TRANSITION IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF COVENANT UNIVERSITY

The above subject refers. Olaide Agbeniga, a PhD student of The Department of Education Management and Policy Studies of the University of Pretoria in South Africa, is planning to conduct the above study. The study is part of the requirement towards the fulfillment of her PhD programme.

Competition exists amongst global academic institutions to attract international students. International students are attracted to institutions in certain countries based on academic, political, economic, social and cultural reasons. These factors serve an advantage for institutions and their countries of domicile. Similarly, Nigeria needs to consider these factors in order to succeed in attracting international students. One way to achieve this is to ensure that international students are well integrated into the Nigerian system as well as into their respective institutions. In Nigeria, the experiences of international students are under researched. Rather, reports on outbound student mobility to developed countries abound. The aim of this study is to contribute to the scarce literature and lacking information on internationalization in Nigeria. Covenant University has been chosen as one of the three case universities where this research will be conducted in Nigeria. The other two universities are, The University of Ibadan and The University of Lagos. According to my preliminary studies, these universities are among the major hosts of international students in Nigeria. This study seeks to answer the following question: How do international students experience academic and sociocultural transition in Nigeria and the institution they are studying at? Findings from

this study will provide the much needed but lacking information for Nigeria and the participating universities on their international student body.

Data will be collected through questionnaires and interviews of students who will be willing to participate in this study. Data from this study will be used solely for research purposes - thesis, journal articles and conference presentations.

I hereby humbly request your permission and support to conduct this study at your university and also be given access to relevant documents such as policies, reports/ statistics that will inform the study.

In case of questions that need clarifications, please contact me at laidestar@yahoo.com or Professor Chika Sehoole at chika.sehoole@up.ac.za.

I look forward to your support on this research.

Yours sincerely,

Olaide Agbeniga   Prof. Chika Sehoole

(PhD Student)   (Supervisor)

9.3   INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

Dear International Student,

In the questionnaire on international students' experiences, you indicated your willingness to participate further in this project by being interviewed. You are hereby invited to participate in an interview for this project. The purpose of the interview is to explore further some of the questions that were asked in the questionnaire, particularly your experiences as an international student in Nigeria as well as in your institution of study. The rationale for this study is to understand the patterns of international students' transition into the Nigerian system and institutions. Data collected in this study will further our understanding of international students' experiences and contribute to the limited knowledge on internationalisation in Nigeria.

Your identification will be strictly anonymous. No attempt will be made to link your identity to your responses. All answers will be kept strictly confidential, and your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participating in this project at any time and should you wish to do so, know that this will not affect your status or relationship with your university. The interview will be conducted at a place convenient for you. Please ensure that the choice of place is quiet enough to allow for recording of our interview. This interview will take between 30-50 minutes to complete.

If you agree to participate, please fill and detach the consent form below, and return it to me.
Kindly contact me at laidestar@yahoo.com or Professor Chika Sehoole at chika.sehoole@up.ac.za for any clarifications
Thank you,

_____   _____

Olaide Agbaje   Prof Chika Sehoole
Doctoral Student   (Supervisor)

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

CONSENT FORM

I am willing to participate in this study by being interviewed. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, should I wish to do so.

…………………………...   ………………………   ………...
    Participant's name   Participant's signature   Date

9.4   INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions

Academic experiences

1. Please describe your academic expectations prior to studying in Nigeria.
2. What has been you experience of those expectations compared to the realities of studying in Nigeria.
3. How will you describe your academic transition into Nigeria and your institution of study compared to now?
4. Do you think there are enough opportunities to relate with Nigerian students? Please explain your view.
5. Please describe the teaching and learning style at this university compared to your home country (e.g. rote learning, interactive…)
6. Does the curriculum here respond to your needs as an international student, please elaborate your answer?
7. How has the use of language here impacted on your academic performance?
8. Does language affect your participation in the classroom?
9. Do you find the language of instruction in the classroom suitable? Please explain if lecturers engage the use of vernacular in the classroom.
10. Student/faculty support, do you find faculty helpful?
11. Peer support?
12. Do you find studying in Nigeria stressful? Please elaborate.
13. Is there any academic support offered to international students? Please elaborate.

Sociocultural experiences

1. How will you describe your social and cultural transition into Nigeria and your institution of study compared to now?
2. Please describe how Nigerians relate with you when they find out you are an international student.
3. What is your perception of each of the following?
   a. The Nigerian society
   b. Your university
   c. The Nigerian culture

4. Please relay your socio-cultural experience in Nigeria in comparison with your home country (if possible) in terms of:
   a.   Culture shock (greeting, dressing, etc)
   b.   Food
   c.   Loneliness/homesickness
   d.   Relationships
   e.   commerce (buying/selling)

10. Do you feel marginalised at this university? Any experience that you will like to share?

11. What new social cultural things have you learnt in Nigeria?

Recommendations

1. What recommendations would you give for a better international student transition into:
   a. The Nigerian society?
   b. The institution of study – registration, accommodation, orientation, English classes

Is there anything else you will like to share with me?

9.5 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' QUESTIONANAIRES

International Students Questionnaire

Welcome to the 'International Students in Nigeria' Questionnaire. This research is conducted by Olaide Agbaje, a PhD student in the Department of Education Management, Law and Policy at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. The data collected for this study will further my understanding of international student experiences and contribute to the scarce knowledge on internationalisation in Nigeria.

You have been invited to participate because you were identified as an international student. Your identification will be strictly anonymous. No attempt will be made to link your identity to your responses. All answers will be kept strictly **confidential**, and your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time and this will not affect your relationship with this university. This questionnaire is divided into two parts and each part will take about 15 minutes to complete.

In the context of this questionnaire, your academic experience as an international student has to do with your opinions, feelings and personal views regarding various aspects of teaching and learning in the classroom or the university at large while socio-cultural experience refers to your opinions, feelings and personal views on how well you fit into the society (university and Nigeria) in which you are studying.

If you have any questions, please contact me at laidestar@yahoo.com.

If you agree to participate, please complete and detach the consent form below.

Thank you!

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………….

9.6   CONSENT FORM

I am willing to participate in this study by being interviewed. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, should I wish to do so.

…………………   ………………………   ………...

Participant's name   Participant's signature   Date

Please answer every question as honestly as possible, thanks.

BACKGROUND

1. Gender

      ○ female   ○ male

2. Ethnicity/Race

3. Primary Language/First Language

4. What other language(s) do you speak?

4. Country of Citizenship

5. How long have you stayed in Nigeria?

5. Where do you live in Nigeria?

| On campus ❍ | Off-campus ❍ | Other _____ |

6. How many semesters have you attended at this university (including this current semester)

7. Are you on scholarship or you are self-funded? Please tick one.

| Scholarship ❍ | Self-funded ❍ | Other _____ |

7. What is your major course at this university?

8. In what type of degree program are you enrolled at this university?

❍ No degree program (short-term exchange student)

❍ BA/BSc/BEd or equivalent

❍ MA/MS or equivalent

❍ Ph.D

❍ Other - Please explain (if applicable)_____

Academic experiences

Please rate the level of your English language proficiency.

| Excellent ☐ | Good ☐ | Fair ☐ | Poor ☐ | Very poor ☐ |

Were you required to pass an English proficiency test or undergo any English language class to enable you study in Nigeria?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Does your accent affect your participation in the classroom?

Yes ☐   No ☐

How will you describe your academic transition experience into Nigeria?

| Excellent ☐ | Good ☐ | Fair ☐ | Poor ☐ | Very poor ☐ |

Please rate the impact of strike action on your academics

| Low impact ☐ | No impact ☐ | High impact ☐ | Not applicable ☐ |

Do you feel isolated in the classroom?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Do you feel marginalised at this university?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Are there avenues for reporting international students' challenges to institutional authorities?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not sure ☐

If yes, please list them:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Does the Nigerian culture have a negative impact on your academic pursuit (E.g., does the culture come with shock that translates into academic stress)?

Yes ☐   No ☐

How would you describe your interaction with each below:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor

Peers					
Academic staff members					
Non-academic staff members					
People outside the school					

Please rate your level of classroom participation.

Excellent	☐	Good	☐	Fair	☐	Poor	☐	Very poor	☐

Do you find faculty members academically supportive?

Yes	☐	No	☐

Do you find home students helpful?

Yes	☐	No	☐

Please describe the curriculum at this university. Please tick all that apply.

Familiar	☐	Strange	☐	Relevant	☐	Local	☐	Global	☐

Based on your academic experience, would you recommend studying at this university to others?

Yes	☐	No	☐	Not sure	☐

In what way(s) do you think this university can make the academic transition of international students better:

Socio-cultural experiences

How will you describe your transition into the Nigerian system?

Very smooth ☐	Smooth ☐	Rough ☐	Very rough ☐

Did your expectation of Nigeria prior to studying here match the actual reality?

Yes ☐	No ☐

Please rate your level of interest in learning the Nigerian culture in each category below:

	Highly interested	Interested	Slightly interested	Not interested	Indifferent
Food					
Language(s)					
Dressing					
Greeting					
Way of life					

Please describe your everyday activities in each category below:

	Very easy	Easy	Slightly easy	Difficult	Very difficult	Not Applicable
Shopping						
Taking buses						
Asking for help						
Other day-to-day activities						

Did you have any knowledge of the Nigerian culture prior to your studying here?

Yes ☐	No ☐

If you answered yes above, please specify below what you knew about the culture.

Do you have any challenges with the Nigerian accent?

Yes	☐	No	☐

Do you feel isolated because your accent is different?

Yes	☐	No	☐

How will you describe your overall sociocultural experience in Nigeria?

Excellent	☐	Good	☐	Fair	☐	Poor	☐	Very poor	☐

Do you experience culture shock in Nigeria?

Yes	☐	No	☐	Not sure	☐

Do you feel lonely?

Yes	☐	No	☐	Not sure	☐

Do you feel homesick?

Yes	☐	No	☐	Not sure	☐

Do you have trouble relating with home students?

Yes	☐	No	☐

Do you have family members or friends in Nigeria prior to your studying here?

Yes	☐	No	☐

Do you think there are enough opportunities to relate with home students?

Yes	☐	No	☐

Have you ever experienced any form of discrimination or racism in Nigeria?

Yes	☐	No	☐

What support systems would you recommend the university give to international students to enable them a smooth transition? Please tick all that apply.

Individual help from faculty	☐	Peer mentoring	☐
	☐		

Assistance on accommodation	☐	Guidelines on assignments/projects	☐
Help with online technology	☐	Help with online technology	☐
Feedback from lecturers	☐	Orientation before arrival	☐
Other _____		Other_____	

Did you receive orientation on arrival at this university, be it on academics or how to navigate your way through the society?

Yes	☐	No	☐

Are you willing to stay back in Nigeria upon graduation?

Yes	☐	No	☐	Not sure	☐

Based on your experience socio-cultural, would you recommend studying in Nigeria to others?

Yes	☐	No	☐	Not sure	☐

In what way(s) do you think this university can make the socio-cultural transition of international students better:

Is there anything else you will like to share with me?