Higher education student mobility in Africa: a passage to Nigeria

by

OLAIDE AGBENIGA

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DECLARATION

I, Olaide Agbeniga, declare that this dissertation, titled '*Higher education student mobility in Africa: a passage to 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 are identified and duly acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Olaide Agbeniga (14275733)

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DEDICATION

To God the Father, my help from ages past; God the Son, the lover of my soul; and God the Holy Spirit, my source of inspiration.

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ABSTRACT

International student mobility is a growing expression of internationalisation. Research has shown that close to 3.7 million international students travelled across the borders of their own country to study in 2009, representing a 77% increase since 2000 (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2011). Historically, the mobility was one-dimensional from South to North, but of late there is evidence of North-South and South‑South mobility. Despite being viewed as victims of a brain drain, there is emerging evidence that there are some African countries that play increasingly vital roles in receiving the world's top higher education students. It is within the context of this emerging evidence that this study examined the phenomenon of student mobility to Nigeria. This study addressed two main research questions, namely: *Why do international students choose to leave their country of origin to study in Nigeria? How did international students in Nigeria choose the institution they are currently attending?*

This study adopted a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The highest ranked public university and the highest ranked private university in Nigeria, according to the Webometrics ranking of 2015, were purposively chosen as the sites for the research. A total of thirty-five international students were involved in face-to-face interviews at both universities. Institutional documents as well as national documents - mainly from the National Universities Commission (NUC) – were consulted in collecting data. This study used the push-and-pull theory of migration to fully understand the phenomenon being studied.

The empirical findings reveal that international students are attracted to Nigeria and the two selected universities for reasons ranging from scholarship opportunities and quality of education offered by Nigerian institutions to parental influence in the choice of Nigeria and the institution at which they study. The study also gave an indication of the impact and influence of terrorism that could be seen as push factors in decisions to study in Nigeria. The study further highlighted the challenges students face both at national and institutional levels as well as making known the improvements that they would like to take place. It was also observed that regional hubs are an emerging trend of student mobility in Africa. It is believed that the recommendations made - if adopted - will go a long way towards enhancing internationalisation strategies for Nigeria and much more for the continent of Africa as a whole.

The study makes a contribution to the body of knowledge regarding the phenomenon of academic student mobility.

Keywords: Internationalisation; student mobility; Africa; Nigeria; push-and pull factors; regional hub; brain drain; international students; university and higher education.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CU   Covenant University

ECOWAS   Economic Community of West African States

GCE   General Certificate of Education

JAMB   Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board

MDA   Machine Data Acquisition

NABTEB   National Business and Technical Examinations Board

NECO   National Examination Council

NUC   National Universities Commission

OIP   Office of International Programmes

PDA   Process Data Acquisition

STR   Subject to Regularization

UI   University of Ibadan

WAEC   West Africa Examination Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 2: STUDENT MOBILITY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF
**   INTERNATIONALISATION**

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

**CHAPTER 4: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN NIGERIA - RATIONALE, EXPERIENCES
                AND PROSPECTS**

CHAPTER 6: COLLATING THE FINDINGS: WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR AFRICA, IN GENERAL, AND NIGERIA, IN PARTICULAR?

CHAPTER 1

FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction

Higher education has become more international in the last twenty years (Njuguna & Itegi, 2013); there were approximately 4.3 million students enrolled at foreign institutions in 2011 (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2013). Today's competitive world calls for continuous improvement of standards and international criteria of a country's educational system. Incorporating international perspectives into teaching and research has become one of the core goals of higher education institutions that want to maintain global relevance. This explains the reason why the past decade has witnessed a dramatic growth in student mobility throughout the world (Adeoye, Anyikwa & Avant, 2012). For a developing region like Africa, higher education is an essential instrument for socio-economic development; a key feature of the global higher education sector is the increase in internationally mobile students.

However, as reported by Sehoole (2011), Wei (2012) and Alemu (2014), over the years there has been a disproportionate one-way flow in student mobility. Students from developing countries in Africa often migrate to richer developed countries to study. The United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Australia and New Zealand are reported to have had the highest number of incoming international students (Kondacki, 2011; Shields, 2013). For example, there were over 600,000 international students studying in the US in 2007, with a large number coming from Africa (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2007). It may be said that this results in a brain drain for the continent of Africa as the majority of these students never return to their home countries. It also has an immediate damaging effect and future economic consequences for the continent (Kritz, 2013). Teferra (2000) maintains that approximately 50% of Ethiopians who went abroad to study between 1991 and 2000 never returned to their country of origin after completing their studies. Ghana lost about 120 doctors and over 650 physicians in 1990; two-thirds of the 36,134 faculty positions in Nigeria were vacant with 10,000 Nigerian academics and 21,000 physicians working in the US alone in 2000 (Alemu, 2014). Africa has lost one third of its human capital since 1990. Of the current 300,000 highly qualified Africans in the diaspora, 30,000 have PhDs (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2015).

However, there is evidence that suggests that this situation is changing; a new pattern in student mobility in Africa is emerging (Madichie & Madichie, 2013; Shield, 2013; Wei, 2012,). Despite the notion that most African institutions have been characterised by inadequate financial resources; problems of quality

and relevance; and poor research infrastructures and systems, several internationally mobile students now find the emergence of new destinations in Africa viable options for international study (Rumbley, Altbach & Reisberg, 2012). While student mobility in Africa has become a more significant trend of late, research on the topic is limited (Du Plessis and Fourie, 2011). The prevalent dearth in the literature is because the inward mobility of higher education students to Nigeria has not been adequately reported; 95% of the existing literature is concerned with the outward mobility of students from Nigeria to other countries (Alemu, 2014). This study aimed to explore the inward mobility of international students to Nigeria in order to understand the reasons why students currently enrolled at the two selected Nigerian universities chose to study in Nigeria and, in particular, at their current institutions. The impetus for this study was a larger study on academic student mobility in Africa which involved nine African countries, namely: Ghana, Egypt, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, Morocco, Cameroon and Tanzania. This research focused on Nigeria and built on what has been done in South Africa by Professor Chika Sehoole, a faculty member at the University of Pretoria and Professor Jenny Lee of the University of Arizona (Lee & Sehoole, 2015).

In this chapter, the nature of the study and the pattern followed are discussed by first presenting the statement of purpose followed by the problem statement and the rationale for the study. The research questions for this study are given and the theoretical framework is outlined. The methodology that was used, in terms of research epistemology, research design, sampling, data collection plan and the mode of data analysis, is briefly described. Quality criteria, limitations of the study, ethical considerations and the significance of the research are discussed. The chapter concludes by outlining the contents of each chapter in this dissertation.

1.2   Purpose statement

The main purpose of this qualitative study was to examine higher education student mobility in Africa, with a specific focus on Nigeria. This study used a case study design to understand the reasons why international students in Nigeria chose Nigeria and the institutions they were currently attending.

Using semi-structured face-to-face interviews and document analysis, the study further analysed the encounters of international students in Nigeria and their respective institutions in order to make recommendations for boosting internationalisation in Africa, in general, and in Nigeria, in particular.

1.3   Statement of problem

Despite the fact that Africa is seen as a continent suffering from a brain drain (Sehoole, 2011), some African countries, such as Nigeria, South Africa and Ghana, play important roles in welcoming higher education students from other countries - especially within the continent. However, very little empirical

research has been done on this important trend (Sehoole & Lee, 2015). Current works reveal that the one-way movement of international student mobility, especially from developing countries to developed countries, has been overtaken by mobility within regions. According to the OECD (2012), the regional mobility rate is higher than the global mobility rate; students now prefer to study within their regions rather than travel to countries outside their regions. Data from the OECD (2012) suggests that of the 4.1 million higher education students enrolled outside their countries of origin in 2010 worldwide, 77% were studying in the OECD countries.

Similarly, Malumba, Abdulkarim, Kagiso & Rohen (2008), in Njuguna and Itegi (2013), observe that a new trend is emerging in Africa. Students from West Africa often migrate to Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroun and Ghana; students from East Africa often move to Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania; and students from Southern Africa often make South Africa their targeted destination. However, limited research exists on this new trend. Few investigations have been carried out on student mobility within a region, even though studies that cover studying across multiple international borders have been widely reported (Alemu, 2014). There is especially a dearth of literature concerning inbound student mobility in Nigeria as most of the available literature relates to outbound mobility.

This study explored student mobility in Africa, using Nigeria as a case study in order to understand the reasons why international students studying in Nigeria chose that country and the institution they were attending.

1.4   Rationale

Previous studies have shown that students' motivation for international study differed. Researchers on the subject of student mobility advocate that some countries and institutions are more receptive to international students than others (Tagoe, 2012; Zaleza, 2012). The reasons for this phenomenon are peculiar to individual countries and institutions, despite the existence of popularly held reasons (Sehoole, 2011; Kritz, 2013). Jaja (2013) is of the opinion that there are international students in Nigeria but that their motivation for choosing Nigeria is under-researched; this made this study worth undertaking. The rationale for this study was, therefore, to understand the factors that motivate international students' choices to study in Nigeria.

A further rationale underpinning this study was the limited research that has been carried out on student mobility in Africa, particularly in Nigeria. In contrast with the view that student mobility is unidirectional, i.e., from developing to developed countries (Njuguna & Itegi, 2013), this research was instrumental in exploring the new direction that is evolving in academic student mobility and the causal factors for this emerging trend. For example, since the fall of the apartheid regime, the number of international students in South Africa has grown dramatically from approximately 12,500 in 1994 to

3

about 53,000 in 2005 and 72 000 in 2013; 74.3% were from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Lee & Sehoole, 2015). In addition, in 2010 there were 16,000 international students (mainly from East Africa) in Ugandan universities (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2015). Despite these cited examples, there is a dearth in the literature of research and a paucity of data concerning inward student mobility in Africa, especially in Nigeria. There are, however, many reports on international study involving multiple borders (Robert-Okah, 2015).

As an international student, the researcher had her reasons for choosing to study abroad: the major factor that 'pushed' her out of her country was the perception of falling standard in education while the major factor that 'pulled' her to South Africa was the high quality of education and better conditions of living. She believed that other students who were studying outside their home country also had their reasons for studying abroad which she was keen to discover.

This main goal of this study was to explore the phenomenon of inbound student mobility in Nigeria. It was expected that this would make a significant contribution to the existing literature on student mobility.

1.5   Research questions

Based on the research problem, purpose and rationale mentioned above, the main research question that this study sought to answer was:

- *Why do international students choose to leave their country of origin to study in Nigeria and at their current institution?*

The main research question was guided by the following sub-questions:

- *Why did international students choose to study in Nigeria?*
- *How did international students in Nigeria choose the institutions they were currently attending?*
- *To what extent has on-going terrorism affected inbound student mobility in Nigeria?*
- *To what extent would international students recommend studying in Nigeria to prospective students?*
- *How satisfied are international students with their institutions and how does this affect their willingness to recommend the institutions?*

1.6   Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the push-and-pull migration theory. This theory was first proposed in 1966 by the migration theorist, Everett S. Lee (1917-2007). Lee (1966) divides factors that determine the decision-making process of migration from one country to another into two categories, namely: Push and Pull factors. He argues that people move from one place to another either temporarily or permanently for political, economic, environmental, educational and social reasons. He maintains that the push factors that make people leave their home countries include war, poverty, few opportunities and poor standards of living while the pull factors that attract people to other destinations include a peaceful environment, better standards of living and better education and job prospects.

Sehoole (2011) and Kritz (2013) use the pull-and-push migration theory to explain the phenomenon of international student mobility in South Africa and Africa, respectively. These factors account for the inflow and outflow of students in a country or region. Eric (2014) believes that the way students view and perceive their home country and a foreign country contribute to push-pull factors that influence their decisions whether to study at home or abroad. Pull factors can be referred to as those factors that operate within the host country that make the country and its institutions attractive to international students and make them want to study there (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Cremonini & Antonowicz, 2009); these factors are regarded as magnets of opportunities that attract international students. Some pull factors that influence students' choices to study abroad include the high quality of education; the availability of certain specialised courses; the international ranking of foreign universities: better living conditions; and job opportunities that come with studying abroad (Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2011). Push factors are those that operate within the source or sending country and motivate students' decisions to seek out international study (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002); they make the home country and its institutions less attractive to its citizens and force them to seek opportunities abroad. Push factors include poor quality of education; low ranking of home institutions among international institutions; few job prospects after graduation; and poor conditions of living.

A lack of access to high quality higher education in many African countries has been a major reason for the large outflow of students to more developed countries during the second half of the twentieth century (Adeoye, Anyikwa & Avant, 2012). Nevertheless, the twenty-first century has witnessed a decline in this trend as a large number of students now find a new destination for international study in many African nations and their institutions which form part of the global south. This theory was used in examining the factors that 'pushed' international students studying in Nigeria from their countries of origin as well as the factors that 'pulled' them to Nigeria and the institution where they were studying.

1.7   Research design

This study was based on a qualitative approach grounded in an interpretivism paradigm. It was a case study design using semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The carefully chosen sites of this research were two universities in Nigeria, one public, the University of Ibadan (UI), and one private, Covenant University (CU). Thirty-five international students who represented the target population were purposefully sampled to participate in this study. The qualitative approach was adopted in order to fully capture the views of international students (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). An analysis of relevant documents was carried out to substantiate the data collected from the interviews. Data was analysed using thematic analysis.

1.8   Limitations

A major limitation to this study is that the findings cannot be perfectly generalized. The aim of qualitative research was not to generalize findings across a population; rather, it sought to provide an understanding from the perspectives of the participants (Maree, 2010). This means that the findings are peculiar only to Nigeria and the participating universities and students. Therefore, care was taken to ensure that a detailed conceptualisation of the study was provided.

Another limitation to this study was that empirical research on the inward mobility of students in Nigeria was very limited. The researcher, therefore, had to rely on other sources of information, namely, interviews and document analysis in order to fully explore the topic.

1.9   Significance of the research

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on student mobility. It explores new ways of understanding student mobility and it narrates international student experiences from the Nigerian perspective. The findings of the study provide useful insights for Nigeria, its institutions, student administrators and international student officers; they give some indication of how to promote the enrolment and integration of international students into the Nigerian system. This was partly achieved through an analysis of data that was gathered during the field work. Furthermore, the Office of International Programmes at the University of Ibadan has acknowledged that this research has been instrumental in providing a better service to the existing international student body and, subsequently, has attracted many more to the institution. The university recognised the need to begin an orientation programme for all new international students to make them feel welcome and comfortable.

In addition, this study may be informative for stakeholders in higher education, such as lecturers, researchers, administrators, government and policy-makers. They should find it useful in determining cogent issues that can direct education policy and practice that will make their country attractive to

international students and also positively facilitate students' overall experiences. Immigration officers in Nigeria, particularly, will find this study helpful in reviewing visa policy as it affects international students.

Moreover, this study has, in no small measure, enlightened the researcher on the discourse concerning inbound student mobility in Nigeria. It has been expository on issues raised about Nigeria and its institutions. Nigeria could benefit from further research that builds on the foundations that this study has provided.

Even though the findings are not perfectly generalizable to the whole of Africa, the study has been contextualized by providing detailed institutional and student sample information from each institution. This will serve as a reference and a point of departure for those who aim to embark on a similar study without having to 'reinvent the wheel.'

1.10   Outline of the study

The plan for the study in terms of chapters is as follows:

Chapter 1: Foundations of the Study - This chapter provides an overview of the study. It focuses on the rationale for the study and the statement of purpose that informed the research questions. It also discusses the theoretical framework, the limitations and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Student Mobility as an Instrument of Internationalisation – In this chapter the concept of student mobility, as discussed by different authors, is explored in terms of four related topics: student mobility in the global African and regional contexts, acknowledging its merits and demerits; student mobility in relation to internationalisation; higher education and student mobility in Nigeria, including the effects of terrorism and its peculiarity to Nigeria; and recommendations from literature on promoting internationalisation in Africa.

 Chapter 3: Methodology - A detailed account of the research approach, design, data collection process and analysis as well as the choice of the sample selected for this study is given. The chapter discusses how this qualitative study used the case study approach to collect data through semi-structured interviews as well as the examination of national and institutional documents. It further discusses the mode of data analysis, highlighting all the ethical measures that were taken to ensure credible and trustworthy findings.

Chapter 4: International Students in Nigeria: Rationale, Experiences and Prospects - In this chapter the reasons why the selected international students chose Nigeria for further study, their experiences and the prospects for Nigeria to attract more international students are given.

Chapter 5: International Students at Nigerian Universities: Choices, Challenges and Recommendations - This chapter discusses the motivation of international students for their choice of their respective institutions; the challenges they face; and the recommendations they would make to improve their institutions, in general, and their services to international students, in particular - which reflects their level of satisfaction and their willingness to recommend their institutions to other prospective students.

Chapter 6: Collating the Findings: Which Way Forward for Africa, in General, and Nigeria, in Particular? - This final chapter presents a summary of the study. Based on the findings of the research, it reaches conclusions, acknowledges theoretical implications and makes recommendations for Africa, Nigeria and the relevant institutions as well as for future research.

CHAPTER 2

STUDENT MOBILITY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF INTERNATIONALISATION

2.1   Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant available literature on internationalisation and student mobility and makes four related arguments. Firstly, that internationalisation and international student mobility in higher education are global phenomena that are increasing at a rapid pace around the world. While international student mobility has been in existence since ancient times, it appears to be a popular instrument through which internationalisation has found expression in recent times. According to Du Plessis and Fourie (2011), 68 million students were registered at higher education institutions in 1991 and by 2005 the number had grown to 144 million. This implies that there was an annual growth rate of 12.7%; the result of this dramatic growth is the rapid increase in the number of students studying outside their home country. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013) maintains that global higher education mobility has grown by 57% with over 2.9 million students studying outside their home country in 2008, rising to 4.3 million in 2011, compared to just 600,000 in 1975. The OECD (2015) reported that 5 million students were studying outside their home countries in 2015 and the Institute on International Education (IIE) projects that this number will increase to 8 million by 2025 (IIE, 2009).

Secondly, this chapter argues that student mobility in Africa is not new, although the continent has witnessed more outbound mobility than inbound. The outward bound mobility of students and mobility from Africa to the northern hemisphere has received attention in literature (African Union, 2014; Mello, 2013; Zeleza, 2014). Researchers of student mobility, including Alemu (2014), Mpinganjira (2008) and Robert-Okah (2014), make the observation that Africa and its institutions are faced with challenges that push students and scholars to more developed countries, thereby causing the continent to suffer a brain drain. However, a new trend is seen to be emerging rapidly in Africa with countries, like South Africa and Egypt, attracting more inbound international students and becoming regional hubs (African Union, 2014; Lee & Sehoole, 2015).

Thirdly, even though Nigeria has the largest higher education system in Africa and, therefore, has the potential to attract more international students, the country is not realising its full potential for attracting international students due to - among other things - the threat of terrorism (Adamu, 2009).

Fourthly, this chapter argues that in addition to factors associated with international student mobility, such as brain gain and economic boost, the advantages of internationally mobile students outweigh the disadvantages. This makes investment in attracting international students a worthwhile venture for any nation that is keen to become an important global player in higher education development. It is in terms

of this premise that the chapter makes recommendations concerning strategies that African nations and institutions could adopt to realise the full advantages that accrue from internationalisation.

The focus of this research was limited to higher education which refers to educational services that result in obtaining a university degree or part thereof. There is a growing literature on the international mobility of skilled workers but the literature pays little or no attention to international student mobility. Moreover, international student mobility has received little attention in the African migration literature (Du Plesis & Fourie, 2011; Kritz, 2013).

2.2   The concept of student mobility

In commenting on the concept of mobility Eitzen and Zinn (2012) are of the opinion that people of diverse origins, languages, customs and religions throughout the world frequently come into contact with each other. They add that a major instrument of internationalisation that promotes the flow of international knowledge in a knowledge economy is the mobility of students. According to UNESCO Institutes for Statistics (UIS, 2006), foreign or mobile students are those who study in countries where they are not permanent residents. They are also referred to as students who chose to study abroad for tertiary education. The OECD (2012) broadly refers to student mobility as the most visible part of internationalisation. Student mobility is not a new phenomenon; from ancient times, students have been moving from one country and region to another for tertiary education. Lee and Kim (2010) consider this phenomenon a unilateral one in which people leave their country for another in pursuit of education or work. Student mobility can either be inbound or outbound; it is outbound when students move out of their home country (sending country) to pursue post-secondary education in another country and it is inbound when students come into a country (receiving country) that they deem able to meet their academic needs (Cremonini & Antonowicz, 2009). The focus of this study was, essentially, on inbound student mobility into Nigeria.

As observed by Knight (2010), students have been mobile from ancient times but globalisation has brought about an increased pace in student mobility. The rise of international student mobility is also informed by an increased demand for specialized and post-secondary education that prompts students to go abroad in search of educational opportunities that are better than those in their home countries (Shields, 2013).

After independence in the 1960s, many African countries had little choice other than to send university students abroad to acquire skills which were lacking in the region to fill most government and university posts. Although some countries with higher populations had one or two universities, they had very few PhD graduates and they did not offer advanced specialised training. Sending students to study abroad was perceived to be a way of improving the country's human capital and it was thought that these

students, on their return, would train the younger generation. It was believed that this would help countries acquire the expertise that would increase their students' skill levels; their human resource base; and their global competiveness. Sehoole (2011) and Kritz (2013) use the pull and push migration theories to explain international student mobility. These factors account for the inflow and outflow of students and the rationale for the process in a country or region. In Africa some of the push factors that influence students to study abroad are: their perceptions of the low quality of education; inadequate funding in the home country; overcrowding; and the low value attached to degrees and certificates acquired from home institution (Sehoole, 2011; Wei, 2013; Kritz, 2013).

2.3 Student mobility in the global context

One of the most rapidly growing tradable service sectors globally is international trade in higher education. Pugach (2012) argues that the percentage of international students in a country is regarded as one of the most important indicators that the higher education system of that country is internationally attractive. A current study shows that the mobility of people with a tertiary education is higher than that of people with a low level of education (Wei, 2013). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2009) reports that in 2007 the US received the highest percentage of international students (21%), followed by the UK (13%), France (9%), Australia (7%) and Germany (3%). China, India and South Korea were reported to be the top three senders of international students in 2007 with 421,148; 153,312 and 105,327 students abroad, respectively. This suggests that international students are, mostly, from Asia; in 2015, 712,000 Chinese higher education students studied outside their home country - the highest number recorded by any country so far (University World News, 2016). With the advent of a knowledge economy, talent and skill have become the driving key forces of any nation that is serious about economic development and improved national strength. Despite the fact that higher education institutions constantly encounter challenges in servicing higher education demands, high student mobility presents countries with enticing and promising opportunities to boost their economies and over the last two decades enrolments at higher education institutions have grown dramatically, worldwide.

A common pattern in student mobility in the past century was a one-way movement of students from developing to developed countries. However, a two-way movement has emerged globally; student mobility has transformed from a one-way outflow to an international student circulation (OECD, 2008). Countries that used to be major senders are now also destinations for international students. This pattern is exemplified by countries, such as Malaysia, India, China and South Africa, particularly, which have experienced higher growth rates of inbound student mobility (Wei, 2012). By 2014 China had become the sixth most popular destination, enrolling 377,054 international students of whom the majority were from Asia but with a growing number from OECD countries (Institute of International Education, 2016) while the number of international students studying in South Africa increased by 234% between 2000

and 2008 (Du Plessis & Fourie, 2011). Studies show that international students from North America and Europe often choose to study in Mexico because of its culture while students from Latin America study there in order to obtain a degree (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2015). Students from developing countries prefer Turkey to western countries for reasons that include financial issues and academic quality. Similarly, students from Asia tend to make Korea their destination for economic and utilitarian reasons (Cantwell, Luca & Lee, 2009; Kondakci, 2011; Jon, Lee & Byun, 2014). However, it is not yet certain why students choose to study in Africa and Nigeria, in particular; this is what this study set out to ascertain.

The higher demand for education, especially at postgraduate level in developing countries, is putting pressure on the higher education systems and the result of this is that a large number of students seek higher education outside their home countries (Du Plessis and Fourie, 2011). In a study by Knight (2010) on student mobility, it was found that the ten most highly ranked reasons why students travel abroad - listed in order of importance - are: (1) to attend workshops and conferences; (2) for career paths; (3) to gain life experience; (4) for collaborative research; (5) to take specialised courses; (6) to seek employment; (7) to access foreign supervisors; (8) to collect data/conduct field work; (9) to learn a language; and (10) to access specialised equipment.

2.4   Student mobility and internationalisation of higher education

Internationalisation and student mobility are two phenomena that are inter-related and intertwined. Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2015) suggest that academic mobility is one of the major instruments of internationalization that promotes the flow of international knowledge in the knowledge economy. The number of international student enrolments in all countries is growing rapidly as the total number of enrolments grows. Thus, the international mobility of students is an important aspect of internationalisation that is regarded as an important complement to the transfer of knowledge through the movement of goods and services across borders (Wei, 2013).

Internationalisation is a phenomenon that is defined differently by different scholars. According to Daly in Mello (2013), internationalisation is the essence of international trade, relations, treaties and alliances. Daly's definition is based on the economic importance of internationalisation and views education as a product that can be sold without any need for independent countries to uplift each other for development and to promote global peace - as opposed to the idea of partnerships in higher education. Knight (2008) defines internationalisation as the art of inculcating international, intercultural or global phenomena into the purpose, function and delivery of post-secondary education. Knight's definition suggests the benefits of internationalising higher education, as portrayed in this study. Internationalisation, viewed from a human resource perspective, is a quest for excellence and is a result of the scarcity of qualified

skills in specialised fields. Internationalisation is defined by Njuguna and Itegi (2013) as the inclusion of an international or intercultural dimension into the teaching and all aspects of higher education.

This study defines the internationalisation of higher education as a process whereby higher education institutions adopt all forms of international educational activities and participate in international collaborations that open them to international students. Internationalisation from both a national and a global perspective is shifting from the periphery to the core of higher education.

There are many driving forces for internationalization - besides student mobility; some of them include the migration of skilled workers in a global economy; revenue generation; the desire to attract the best talent; and the promotion of mutual understanding through partnerships and collaborations (Adeoye, Anyikwa & Avant, 2012). Internationalisation has been given attention in global debates on higher education innovation in Africa and its effect is evident in many African universities. Recognisable measures taken towards internationalisation in higher education institutions in Africa include student and staff exchange programmes; study abroad initiatives; and inculcating an international dimension in the curriculum. Hudzy (2010) predicts that there will be a surge in demand for internationalisation by 2025; he maintains that global international student mobility which is at over 4 million at present can more than double annually by 2025.

The recruitment of international students is essential for the survival of foreign institutions and the growth of a country's economy. As a way of attracting more international students, China earmarked 2.5% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for higher education and this initiative is already yielding positive results (University World News, 2016). It was reported by the Times Higher Education in December 2015 that of the ten universities recently ranked, five were from China - making Chinese universities top their latest ranking for emerging economies. Asia, in general, is intensifying its efforts in terms of internationalisation; for example, the number of international students studying across Malaysia increased from 45,000 in 2007 to 110, 000 in 2015 (University World News, 2016). African higher education systems are also faced with the responsibility of becoming highly internationalised.

2.5   Student mobility in Africa

Africa is the second most populous continent in the world with more than 54 independent countries and an estimated population of 1.033 billion in 2013, which is projected to increase to 1.2 billion by 2025 and 2 billion by 2050 (Alemu, 2014). Njuguna and Itegi (2013), Umar, Noon and Abdullahi (2014), Alemu (2014) and Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2015) argue that the internationalisation of higher education in Africa dates back to the colonial era when it was limited to the physical mobility of students and scholars crossing borders to pursue higher education opportunities. With the introduction of European higher education systems in Africa during the colonial era, the mobility of African students

to Europe for higher education training started to become popular. In the British and French colonies, particularly, sending a few African students to study in their respective home institutions was adopted as a strategy to produce an elite that could assist with colonial administration. This was also considered to be cost effective as it absorbed the costs of expanding institutions of higher education in Africa (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013 in Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2015).

Tertiary education enrolment in Africa has increased at an average annual rate of 9% compared to an average annual rate of 5% elsewhere in the world (World Bank, 2009). A study by Kritz (2013) shows that 5.8% of enrolled tertiary students in Africa study outside their home countries and that no other region in the world has a higher percentage than this; countries in the region spend an average of 18% of their budgets on education which is higher than what most Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) countries spend (World Bank, 2009). Two factors that have been widely cited to have contributed to the growing demand of higher education in Africa are rapid population growth and increased completion rates of secondary education. As more and more people complete secondary education, the need for tertiary education increases and most middle-class families in urban areas recognise that a high level of education is what will position their children to acquire high-paying jobs. As cited in Umar *et al.* (2014), African students studying abroad have increased from 2,580 in 1970 to 183,000 in the 1980s, representing 20% of the total international students in the world. This number increased to 380,376 African students in 2010, representing approximately a tenth of all international students in the world (University World News, 2013). The number of African students studying in different higher education institutions in the UK alone was estimated at 66,000; this figure suggests that one out of every 15 international students in the UK is from Africa (Kritz, 2013).

Sehoole (2011) argues that with the exception of South Africa and Egypt, African countries record a greater outward bound mobility of students than an inward bound mobility. Most of the African students that study abroad never return home and this has resulted in a brain drain for the continent. According to a study conducted by the ICEF Monitor (2013), African countries had an average of 380,376 international students abroad in 2010 with Morocco sending 42,800 (11.3%), Nigeria: 38,851 (10.2%), Algeria: 22,465 (5.9%), Zimbabwe: 19,658 (5.2%), Cameroon: 19, 506 (5.3%) and Tunisia: 19,506 (5.1%).

An important question that has emerged from the study of student mobility in Africa is: *Why is there a high rate of African student mobility to Europe and America?* Kritz (2013) and Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2015) attempt to answer this question in their articles on student mobility; they argue that despite the high rate of enrolment over the past four decades, with an annual average growth rate of 8.4% compared to 4.3% in the rest of the world, African higher institutions of learning are still faced with the challenge of accommodating the increasing demand of higher education. They go further by

saying that in Africa, fewer higher institutions accommodating increasing number of students; declining quality of education; the lack of post-graduate programmes - as most colonial universities focused more on undergraduate programmes; the unavailability of scholarship opportunities; and poor conditions of living - unlike in Europe and America, are some push factors. They identify the major pull factors to Europe and America to be a high prospect for better paying jobs on graduation coupled with better conditions of living.

2.6   Regional hub as an emerging trend in student mobility

There is a new and emerging landscape of student mobility and international education in contrast to the traditional picture of origin and destination countries (ICEF Monitor, 2016) which is claiming its larger share of international students and increasing the proportion of intra-regional student mobility (OECD 2014); it is often referred as regional hubs (Lee & Sehoole, 2015; Knight, 2004, 2008). Knight (2008) notes that this is especially true at the regional level where countries are trying to achieve stronger economic and political alliances with neighbours through increasing their international education activities on a regional basis which implies that a greater number of students who go abroad study within their home regions instead of more distant destinations. Knight (2008) describes the growing importance of regions as an unexpected result of globalization and adds that higher education has witnessed the development of new regional-based mobility programmes, such as the University Mobility Program of Asia Pacific (UMAP) which focuses on student mobility schemes among member institutions in Asia as well as the ERASMUS programme and the Bologna process which are sponsored by the European Union to make Europe more attractive as a study destination in terms of region-wide reform.

As the US and the UK - ranked to be the world's leading destinations of international student mobility - continue to experience a decline in international student mobility through to 2025, other countries capitalise on this to attract international students through the development of regional hubs (ICEF monitor, 2016). For instance, Asian students studying abroad and enrolled in Asian institutions in 1999 rose from 36 percent in 1999 to 42 percent 2007 while Arab students studying abroad within the Middle East increase from 12 percent in 1999 to 26 percent in 2012 (ICEF Monitor, 2013).

Africa is often associated with a brain drain that results from the continent losing its academic talent to North America and Western Europe (Lee & Sehoole, 2015); however, there appears to have been a shift in the choices made by African students studying abroad. According to the ICEF Monitor (2013), regional hubs in Africa are becoming popular for African students; they are increasingly choosing to study on their own continent rather than going to North America or Western Europe. This trend is highlighted by South Africa that is regarded as "Africa's America" (University World news, 2016) by

becoming the number one choice of study destination in Africa, especially for students from Southern Africa Development countries (SADC). In their study on student mobility, Lee and Sehoole (2015) report that nearly half of the 89,000 SADC students who studied outside their home country in 2009 attended South African universities which constituted 74.3% of their international student population. The pull factors that attracted these students to Africa include the strong reputation of higher education in the country; affordable fees compared to European and American institutions; proximity to home; and available government subsidies for students from the region (University World news, 2014). Similarly, countries in West Africa, such as Nigeria and Ghana, record a good number of international students from neighbouring countries, like Liberia, Cameroun and Mali, as a result of the quality of education being perceived to be better than what is obtainable in their home countries. In order to strengthen regional ties, countries in West Africa formed the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) to ensure the free flow of citizens for educational and other purposes within member states through flexible policies and other forms of alliances. Besides, a high number of African students cannot afford the high fees and cost of living abroad when studying at foreign higher institutions and so most of them choose to study in neighbouring countries rather than America or Europe (UNESCO 2009; Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2015). This change engenders the possibility of turning the tide of the brain drain in Africa. According to the ICEF Monitor (2013), "Africa is on the move – both in terms of its students' mobility and in its reputation as a study abroad destination in its own right."

2.7   The benefits of internationally mobile students

A question that may be asked is: *How can student mobility contribute to the overall development of Africa?* Attracting internationally mobile students to Africa has numerous benefits for not only educational development but other sectors of the host countries; any nation that is serious about development in its education sector will probably witness development in other sectors, such as economic, social and environmental sectors. According to the British Council's (2014:52) report on international mobility,

> There is a positive correlation between education and prosperity – having better-educated citizens, so goes the thinking, leads to better-functioning organisations, which in turn leads to greater national prosperity.

Student mobility is not only beneficial for the country of origin of students but also to the host country, the individual student and the host institution. For example, Germany is aware that international students are a valuable resource and it has decided to join the global wave in recruiting a highly skilled foreign labour force. Since the country has a shortage of more than 30,000 IT specialists, the government has developed a policy to attract international students and to retain them in the country after graduation (Knerr, Tlatlik & Xi, 2010). Evidence from the literature indicates that higher education institutions in

the US benefit largely from the presence as well as the cultural, academic and financial contributions made by international students (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002). Generally speaking, student mobility - as an important aspect of internationalisation – results in high international academic standards brought about by the enrichment of curricula by including international study programmes and activities which add value to the educational systems of host countries (Tagoe, 2012). Internationalisation is beneficial for both international and domestic students; in recognition of the potential contribution international students can make to development, the South Africa government is developing policies that make it easy for international students who want to remain in South Africa after graduation to do so. According to its Minister of Affairs, Malusi Gigaba,

> *No country can produce all of the skills it needs… Skilled immigrants make an important contribution in destination economies. International students are especially advantageous, as their qualifications have been obtained here in South Africa and are thus able to transition seamlessly into their chosen fields* (Times Live, October 01, 2015).

In terms of the benefits of internationally mobile students, the following issues are deemed important: awareness of global issues; generation of 21st century skills; economic boost; human resource development; income generation; research and innovation; and strategic alliances.

2.7.1   Awareness of global issues

One of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals for Africa is that by 2030 all learners should have the required knowledge and skills needed to promote global citizenship and an appreciation of cultural diversity that would contribute to sustainable development; this can be achieved by promoting student mobility in Africa. Internationally mobile students are capable of developing and achieving a greater awareness of global issues as well as having a better understanding of how educational systems operate across various nations, cultures and languages (OECD, 2012). One of the benefits of the presence of international students for host countries and institutions is that there are good opportunities for learning from, and social interaction with, foreign students for domestic students who may not have travelled in Africa or abroad to enrich their experience (McMurtrie, 2011). This is referred to as internationalisation at home (Beelen & Leask, 2011; De Wit, 2011; Knight, 2006; Teekens, 2013). According to Beelen and Leask (2015), internationalisation at home is any set of activities and instruments adopted 'at home' with the objective of inculcating both international and intercultural abilities in the guiding policies and procedures of an institution. Such instruments include, but are not limited to, internationalising the curriculum, recruiting lecturers with an international pedigree on either short or long term contracts, online collaboration and digital learning. Although the concept has been largely criticised by African scholars as placing too much emphasis on activity rather than result (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2010; University World News, 2013), the fact remains that it is highly beneficial to not only international students but also to local students who might not have had study

17

experience abroad (Jones, 2013). International education expands students' knowledge to function in a diverse world and understand the international aspects of their discipline. Exposure to cultural values and other languages and practices can deepen students' knowledge of different culture and challenge their stereotyped beliefs, assumptions and bias of other people's ways of life as well as increase their cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity (Geelhoed, Abe & Talbot, 2003). In the US, for example, American students who have not travelled abroad and have not had international experience see international students as a source of opportunity for cross-cultural communication and the acquisition of international and intercultural skills (Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2015).

2.7.2 Generation of 21st century skills

As a driver for change and innovation, internationalisation generates the skills needed in the 21st century. Student mobility has an impact on the relevant educational skills of students who will become the citizens, entrepreneurs, inventors and scientists of tomorrow. A study on the relevance of international student mobility for work and employment conducted by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO, 2005) suggests that studying and training abroad gives students generic skills needed at work and international competencies rather than occupation-specific skills in their field. Similarly, Rivza and Teichler (2007) are of the opinion that when students study abroad, they benefit from a higher quality of education or a specialisation which is not available in their home countries. Student mobility is a viable means of enriching the lives of talented and ambitious young people in Africa and for building a greater understanding and trust between countries (British Council, 2014). Du Plessis and Fourie (2011) believe that many international students remain in the host country after graduation and contribute to meeting the demands of a shortage in the skilled workforce. For this reason countries, like Germany and France, facilitate the process in terms of their immigration policies (Cremonini & Antonowicz, 2009). The acquisition of skills needed in the 21st century is pivotal in realizing, and in bringing Africa to desired levels of development. Therefore, most of the skills lacking in the workforces of African countries can be gained by encouraging student mobility.

2.7.3 Economic boost

International students make considerable financial contributions to the economy of their host countries. Institutions that incorporate an international dimension in their teaching and learning as well as their administrative operations contribute to nation-wide economic growth and development. China and India send a large number of students to study abroad because they consider them to be an asset for economic progress after graduation (Khadria, 2012). A project carried out by the British Council in collaboration with the German Academic Exchange Service (2014) reports that Egypt has a long-standing interest in providing study-abroad opportunities for its citizens by offering them scholarships. Despite the fact that

Egypt has undergone economic, political and social unrest in recent years, its Mission Department is committed to continue sending as many scholars as possible abroad for its economic development (African Union, 2014). It is believed that sending students abroad for tertiary education is worth the investment because of a lack of training opportunities at home; the inability of the local education system to meet demand; and its association with the perception of low quality education. Moreover, it is believed that the strong need for national economic development in Africa justifies the expense incurred in sending students abroad to acquire knowledge that would boost the local economy upon completion of their studies abroad. International students contributed almost $27 billion dollars to the US economy in 2014 - a 12% increase compared to 2013's $24 billion (Ortiz, Chang & Fang, 2015). Similarly, in 2011 240,000 international students in Canada contributed $6.5 billion to the local economy (Horden, 2012). If African countries are open and welcoming to international students, they will boost their economy; they will also experience positive economic returns from investing in sending students abroad when these students return home.

2.7.4   Human resource development

Internationalization creates the opportunity to recruit the brightest students, scholars and highly qualified people from other countries in order to increase scientific, technological and economic competitiveness (Teferra & Knight, 2008). Professor Jelel Ezinne of the Tunisian Association for the Advancement of Science, Technology and Innovation maintains that the best way to tackle the challenges faced by any country is through a well-trained human capacity. She adds that even though education for education sake is necessary, it is highly important to train graduates to solve societal problems and contribute to socio-economic development (Trust Africa, 2015). This is the major challenge for African countries. However, the more a country gets involved in the global economy, the more human capital resources it produces to handle its challenges and by recruiting the best talent from different parts of the world, the goals of the African continent to eradicate poverty and ensure equitable and quality education for all, will be easily met.

2.7.5   Income generation

The commercial approach of trade in education involves the provision of educational services to international students on a full-fee paying basis. The income generated from internationalization is not only of great benefit to higher education institutions but also to the host countries. International students, mostly, pay the full cost of instruction and, in many countries, surcharges not paid by domestic students. For instance, international students in South Africa, in addition to paying an international levy, pay double the amount of tuition fees paid by domestic students. Revenue generated by international students in terms of living expenses is, especially, substantial. According to OECD (2013), international

student expenditure on tuition, accommodation and living expenses contributed more than CAD8 billion to the Canadian economy in 2010. There is a long-term influence on the economy when students remain in a country after graduation. The available data of the OECD countries for between 2008 and 2009 indicates that the stay rate is generally up to 25%, with a few countries experiencing more and, thereby, boosting their labour market (OECD, 2013). A study conducted in six South African universities by Aloyo (2008) reveals that international students generate up to R78,167 per annum for a local institution. Promoting student mobility is a viable means for African countries to generate a substantial income that will drastically reduce poverty, hunger and the low quality of life that is ravaging the continent.

2.7.6 *Research and innovation*

Research plays a significant role in the new knowledge economy; however, this is one area where Africa is critically challenged in scope and quality. There is some hope for African countries and institutions to overcome this challenge by becoming open and welcoming to international students. The movement of students and academics across nations provides opportunities for 'real world' and 'real time' learning experiences in areas that cannot simply be taught (OECD, 2012). Through collaboration and partnerships among academics and institutions, research has become internationalised; it is a fact that some research projects cannot be effectively carried out at a national level without international partnerships and collaboration. According to Zeleza (2012), international study produces innovative thinkers in a globally competitive world; it affords scholars the experience and avenues to meet people that will promote collective creativity; and it is believed that students and scholars trained in the latest research methods and pedagogies will produce a higher quality of teaching and research that will lead to reform in the tertiary education system of any nation. Student mobility also leads to collaborative partnerships, such as student and faculty exchanges as well as research and degree collaboration (British Council, 2014). Research is essential in identifying both the developmental challenges and solutions to national problems. Projects can be ventured into in order to find out the root causes of most of the problems that Africa experiences. When the causes of these problems are known, measures targeted at tackling them will be effective.

2.7.7 *Strategic Alliances*

Internationalization is considered to be a way to develop closer geo-political ties, educational partnerships and economic relationships that will bring about a stronger economic and political integration with other countries (Knight, 2004). International students can also strengthen global academic cooperation as well as social, cultural, political and international diplomatic relationships (Albert, 2007). What most African countries need to achieve development is to form strong alliances with countries that have the 'what' and know the 'how'. A good way to do this is to improve their

internationalisation strategies by encouraging student mobility. Through student mobility, educational partnerships can be formed with developed countries and highly-ranked institutions. Knight (2004) maintains that the internationalisation of tertiary education is a way of developing strategic alliances which will bring about stronger bilateral or regional cooperation. This, in turn, will contribute not only to the educational sector but to all areas of a country's development.

2.8   Challenges of internationalisation in Africa

The challenges facing internationalisation in Africa are multifaceted. They include, but are not limited to, low quality of education; low levels of research; inadequate funding; overcrowding; and a lack of infrastructure (Alemu, 2014; Zaleza, 2014). For the purpose of this chapter, the top two challenges are discussed which the researcher considers to be the major push factors that influence a good number of international students in their choices against making Africa their preferred study destination.

The first challenge facing higher education in Africa is low quality education; in terms of equity and quality, Africa has the least-developed educational system (Alemu, 2014). In spite of the continent having 54 independent countries, there were no more than 300 higher education institutions that met the criteria for a university by 2004 (Teklu, 2008). A large number of young African students and scholars seek education opportunities abroad because they believe degrees obtained in developed nations, especially in Europe and America, are of better quality than those obtained in Africa (Madichie & Madichie, 2009). This has been a negative for the higher education systems in Africa since the colonial era. Over the years Africa has witnessed a vibrant growth in its higher educational systems but, sadly, the quality of education does not seem to be improving, except in a few countries, like South Africa and Egypt (African Union, 2014). In fact, employers constantly complain of the poor quality of graduates that are released into the labour market which has resulted in a high rate of unemployment and underemployment on the continent of Africa (British Council, 2014). The low quality of education in Africa is attributed mainly to a paucity of highly qualified academic staff and inadequate funding (Trust Africa, 2015). A study conducted by the British Council in four African countries, namely, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria, shows that Africa as a whole is experiencing rapid growth in student enrolments without a corresponding growth in resources which results in a drop in the quality of education and in poorly-skilled graduates. This explains why African universities are poorly ranked as compared to their global counterparts.

Little research output is another major problem facing higher education in Africa. According to Alemu (2014), research is an important segment of internationalisation; however, conducting research in an African university could prove to be a challenge. He is of the opinion that a major obstacle to conducting research in an African university is access to equipment and data. When the research is eventually

completed, disseminating the findings through publications and international conferences is a hurdle. African scholars find obtaining funding to conduct research and participate in international conferences daunting (Alemu, 2014). Trust Africa (2015) maintains that research is an essential instrument and a high priority in a knowledge economy but research productivity in Africa is the lowest in the world. In spite of the fact that Africa accounts for 12% of the world's population, it recorded the lowest number of researchers in 2009 at 2.1% and 143.8 per million population (Tagoe, 2012).

2.9   The challenges and opportunities presented by international student mobility

Eitzen and Zinn (2012) are of the opinion that student mobility can be seen both as a threat and an opportunity and that the onus is on a country and its institutions to determine how best to use this phenomenon in terms of their higher education. According to Knight (2007), the findings of the 2005 International Association Universities (IAU) survey reveal that although 96% of the responding 95 countries believed that student mobility was one of the dimensions of internationalisation that brought benefits to higher education, 70% were equally convinced that there were many challenges associated with the phenomenon.

One of the top benefits of student mobility is the phenomenon called brain gain. Batista, Lacuesta, and Vicente (2007) maintain that brain gain is the movement of the highly educated from poor or developing countries to rich and developed countries. However, their opinion suggests that student mobility is beneficial to developed countries only, which it is not and it is contrary to the brain drain perspective. The higher education of a country is affected negatively if it experiences a brain drain as the result of highly skilled personnel moving out and positively if it experiences a brain gain as highly skilled personnel move in (Knight, 2008). Any country - developing or developed alike - that is open to attracting internationally mobile students will surely experience a brain gain. Institutions that experience a brain gain see student mobility as an opportunity and not a burden; they will achieve a more reputable status in attracting more students from around the globe and, thereby, bring further development to the country at large. Teaching and research is the backbone of a knowledge economy which can be strengthened by the acquisition and development of new skills that come with mobile students. Bilas (2015) argues that higher education institutions often require certain skills from faculties that can be acquired through some knowledge of language and cultural diversity as well as interpersonal relationships. She adds that by means of strong networks, institutions may gain access to the archives of the country of international students by doing research.

Another benefit of student mobility is that it enhances cultural benefits; this explains why universities are increasing their efforts to attract international students (Pheralli, 2012). According to Wu, Garza and Guzman (2015) and Knight (2004), student mobility enriches the cultural diversity of institutions and

nations with their home culture and ethnic experiences. Furthermore, they suggest that international students are helpful to faculties and students in developing a cultural sensitivity and the skills needed to relate to people from different backgrounds. In addition, international students provide opportunities for domestic students and scholars to experience diverse languages, cultures and traditions. They note that "as an individual is exposed to diverse cultures, he or she has multiple opportunities to compare and construct a more diverse worldview" (Wu, Garza and Guzman, 2015:2).

Two major challenges of student mobility are cultural issues and the phenomenon called brain drain (Bilas, 2015). Cultural issues are often associated with internationally mobile students; the majority of international students reportedly struggle with language barriers and cultural settings which are challenges in their educational pursuits (Pherali, 2012). Language and cultural barriers prevent international students from engaging in social events and communication, the implication of which, for an institution, is that students who encounter unpleasant experiences in their host countries may cut their stay short and return to their home country.

Brain drain as another demerit of student mobility whereby a country loses its skilled labour which is already in short supply through outward migration. Brain drain has a global effect but African countries feel the effects more (Batista, Lacuesta, & Vicente, 2007) as most of the best talented students in Africa who migrate to developed countries for study purposes never return home. For example, countries that experience this phenomenon have a difficult time keeping up with research and innovation (Bilas, 2015) which restricts development in all sectors.

2.10   Global threat of terrorism in education

While some countries are recording an increase in their international student enrolments, many are experiencing a decline. Globally, terrorism is increasingly becoming a phenomenon that negatively impacts on education, in general, and on student mobility, in particular. Despite the fact that the US enrols the highest number of international students in the world, there has been a decline in its enrolment rates and prestige due to the 9/11 attack (University World News, 2011). In particular, the number of Chinese postgraduate students in the US has been reducing continuously for three years (University World News, 2016). Terrorism is not limited to the US alone; in November 2015 France experienced a shocking and unexpected terrorist attack by Islamic State (IS), killing at least 128 people (Dawn, November 2015). Africa is no exception to terrorist attacks; in 2014 one of Kenya's most prestigious universities was attacked by the Al-Shabaab group, killing 147 students (CNN, April 3 2015). As one of the regional hubs for international students in East Africa, Kenya now poses a security threat to intending students who would have chosen to study there (The Guardian, April 2015). In Pakistan the Tehreek-e-Taliban that literally means 'a movement of students' has been unleashing terror on Pakistani

schools. The database of the University of Maryland on global terrorism shows that more than 450 people died in Pakistani school attacks between 1970 and 2014. This number could, perhaps, be considered to be under-reported as the database for Education Under Attack (2014) indicates that there were more than 838 attacks on schools from 2009 to 2014 in Pakistan. Recently, in January 2016, Taliban militants launched an attack on Bacha Khan University, leaving 21 dead and 30 injured (University World News, 2016). In Nigeria the toll of terrorism by Boko Haram has rendered many schools in the Northern parts of the country desolate.

In her article in University World News of January (2016), Marguerite Dennis maintains that many countries will tighten their visa requirements and become stricter with international students as a way of curbing terrorism. She also makes the following predictions about the effects of terrorism:

- International students and their parents will consider the safety of locations and institutions.
- Countries regarded as the highest receivers of international students will witness competition from emerging countries, especially those in Asia.
- There will be an increase in student enrolments in regional hubs, especially in Asia, in order to keep students close to their home countries.
- There is a tendency that branch campuses will be replaced by global partnerships.
- There will be an increase in student enrolments, particularly from Africa, for online courses and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Five hundred universities currently offer 4,200 MOOCs and there are on-going talks by six universities to create an online global credit transfer system.

In lieu of the growing concerns about terrorism, recruiters and administrators need to ensure that safety measures are in place for international students or, in their best interests, cancel any sites that pose safety threats.

2.11   Terrorism in Nigeria: A set-back in education

Nigeria has been undergoing incessant terrorist attacks that are negatively impacting the education system of the country. At the mention of Boko Haram, people immediately think of Nigeria. Boko is a Hausa word which means 'western education' while Haram is an Arabic word meaning 'forbidden; therefore, Boko Haram translated into English means 'western education is forbidden.' This insurgency group was founded in 2001 by Uztaz Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno state in Northern Nigeria (Adamu, 2009). The group, which first caught the world's attention in 2009 when it launched a violent attack against the Nigerian security forces and against schools, has been mercilessly and openly causing havoc in the north-eastern part of Nigeria. Their activities include, but are not limited

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to, the gruesome killing of innocent people; the abduction of pupils; and the bombing of educational and religious institutions. Boko Haram was active in 14 of the 36 Nigerian states by the end of 2012 (World Review, 2013). This group consists of Islamic extremists who, at first, were thought to be opposed to Western education and Christianity, but now it is quite unclear what they are fighting for as they also bomb mosques. Abdulrasheed, Onuselogu and Obioma (2015) describe this group as "an insurgent group, rebels and anarchists clothed in the robes of religious deceit." Boko Haram again caught full global attention in April 2014 when it captured 276 girls from the dormitory of a government secondary school in the Chibok town of Borno state.

The group thrives on the mass poverty and illiteracy predominant among the growing population in Northern Nigeria which is stunted in terms of foreign investment, economic growth and development compared to the south. All public schools in the state of Borno, including universities, have been shut since 2014 (World Review, 2014).

Even though Boko Haram activities are limited to the Northern parts of Nigeria, the media does not reflect this; people outside Nigeria view this insurgency as taking place in every part of Nigeria which has hampered economic and educational growth at all levels in the country (Abdulrasheed, Onuselogu & Obioma, 2015). The number of international students in the country is declining as time passes because nobody wants to study in a location where there is threat to life.

2.12   Attracting internationally mobile students to Africa

The contributions of student mobility in terms of the attainment of African development have been discussed above. It is, however, not enough to examine these contributions without suggesting how to fully harness them. Asking the questions, *How can African countries become academically attractive to students and scholars? How can they develop and enhance those factors that will 'pull' internationally mobile students towards them? What do developed countries do that attract international students to study in their institutions?* are all geared towards suggesting what African countries could do to take advantage of the benefits of internalisation. Cremonini and Antonicz (2009), in their article titled 'In the eye of the beholder', argue that an academically attractive country markets knowledge effectively by supporting the inflow of international students and scholars; creates exportable ideas; goes beyond the boundaries of colonial ties in harnessing the opportunities of globalisation; and adopts an attractive client approach to students and researchers. They go further by maintaining the following:

- *National and institutional reputation:* The academic attraction of any nation depends largely on its higher education system's reputation. Well-established institutions act as flagships for their country, even though the reputation of a country is not easily measurable. Highly ranked

25

institutions have the potential to make a country reputable and, therefore, attract international students.

- *Financial support:* Studying abroad is an expensive investment, especially for students who are self-sponsored. Many nations provide financial support for their students but not for international students which could pose a problem for students and affect their choice of study destination. Students are 'pulled' towards countries where they know they would have access to financial support from the government or institutions in the form of scholarships, bursaries, loans or discounted tuition fees. African countries would make their countries and institutions attractive by providing financial support to international students, no matter how little to start.

- *Marketing of higher education institutions:* African countries need to promote their higher education institutions by means of targeted marketing strategies. Most institutions in developed nations attract international students by creating a global awareness of the opportunities they offer. There are various avenues for an institution to advertise the educational opportunities they offer; these include setting up recruitment agencies abroad; the use of websites and fliers; and by organising seminars to create awareness. Through viable advertising strategies, higher education institutions do not only open up their campuses to the benefits of internationalisation but also contribute to development in all sectors of a country.

- *Developing a client-approach towards international students:* Any higher education institution that has a culture of treating international students as clients by taking an interest in tackling the challenges they face will be attractive for these students. International students are faced with many obstacles. Cremononi and Antonowics (2009) identify two major obstacles faced by international students: bureaucratic obstacles posed by a country, such as non-friendly visa policies, and educational obstacles posed by institutions, including learning in a foreign language. Governments of African countries that want to reap the benefits of internationalisation are faced with the responsibility of making their countries accessible to those who wish to study at them. African Higher education institutions should identify the challenges faced by international students and develop institutional policies to deal with them.

- *Availability of courses in English:* English is, generally, assumed to be the international language of Science. Institutions that offer a large number of courses in English attract more international students than those who do not. English-speaking countries also experience a higher inflow of international students. Offering courses in English is a way of responding to the move of internationalisation in higher education and opening up opportunities for international students as well as attracting the best talent. Current research shows that the number of courses delivered in English in European universities has tripled in the past five years (Mastersportal, 2015; University World News, 2008, 2012). The Incharge Education Foundation (ICEF Monitor,

2012) reports that English has become the medium of instruction for more than 4,500 courses across Europe; their main reason is to attract international students. African countries should consider taking their cue from South Africa by offering more courses in English in order to attract international students. Sehoole (2011) refers to English as the language of the global economy and adds that the existence of quality English in universities and the use of English as the predominant language of learning in South Africa which serve as pull factors for international students contribute to South Africa's ability to attract more international students than any other African country.

- *Availability of resources:* The availability of research and teaching resources in an institution determines its attraction for international students and academics. Quality academic work requires quality resources and well-equipped research centres. African institutions will experience a boost in the number of international students and global partnerships if they make laudable investments in research resources and infrastructure which will reduce the rate of outbound student mobility and save the continent from a brain drain. It will also help in achieving the educational goal of the each nation. Outstanding research infrastructure gives a country and its institutions a competitive edge over those that are not well-equipped.

2.13   Conclusion

This review of the relevant available literature has shown that student mobility is influenced by pull and push factors as countries and institutions vie to offer the best academic opportunities around the world. Regional hubs have become a new trend in student mobility which has overtaken the one directional flow of students from developing to developed countries. Many countries in Africa are bracing themselves to meet the challenges of internationalising their higher education institutions to attract international students. As Sehoole (2011) points out, given the inequalities in a global economy, countries with the best higher education systems attract more international students, thereby boosting their economic and human capital capacity while countries with less attractive higher education systems lose students to the international community and, in the long run, suffer a brain drain.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, discusses the methodology adopted for this study.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology adopted for this study by providing analysis of the epistemology and research approach and design, touching on its advantages and disadvantages. It explains the sampling method, criteria used, size of the sample, research sites and rationale for the choice of the research sites as well as the participants. This is followed by the way data was collected and analysed and the quality measures that were put in place and, lastly, ethical considerations.

3.2 Epistemology of the study

Epistemology refers to 'how we come to know what we know.' The chosen epistemology for this study was interpretivism which is seen as a qualitative approach. Interpretivism emanated from hermeneutics, the study of theory and practice of interpretation which was developed in the 19th century as a philosophical theory of meaning, understanding and interpretation (Maree, 2007). Interpretivism

28

attempts to understand a particular phenomenon through the meanings that people give to it. According to Creswell (2014), the aim of this epistemology is to depend greatly on the participant's view of the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research focuses on understanding a phenomenon within its natural context and it is for this reason that this study adopted interpretivism - international students were interviewed in their institutions and country of study. In this study, it was not possible to separate what is being inquired about from the inquirer and knowledge therefore privileged the voices of the 'insiders' by taking into account the feelings, words and actions of international students and how they constructed meaning of the case under investigation (Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 2010). The participants in this study developed subjective meanings of their experiences. These meanings vary and so the researcher needed to look for the complexity of views instead of narrowing meanings into a few categories. The question in this kind of research is broad and open-ended so that the participants construct meaning of their situations through discussion or interaction with others. The intention of the researcher was to understand (interpret) the meanings others had about the world in their natural setting, i.e. Nigeria and their institutions of study.

Maree (2007) and Creswell (2014) suggest some assumptions concerning interpretivism which applied to this study thus:

- People construct meanings as they engage with the world they are interpreting and that is why qualitative researchers often make use of open ended questions so that participants can share their views. However, this study made use of semi-structured interviews in order to guide the participants in sharing their views of the phenomenon under study.
- Reality is socially constructed, i.e., people engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspective. This accorded a greater opportunity to understand the perceptions the international students have of their own activities when they are in their social context.
- Understanding human perceptions of their activities comes through interaction. The researcher did not distance herself from the participants; there was a great deal of interaction between the international students and the researcher
- Multiple realities of the phenomenon under study emerged and these realities differed across time and place.

3.2.1 *Advantages of interpretivism*

As interpretivism held some advantages for this study, the decision was taken to use it; it provided the researcher with an opportunity to interact with the international students at the institutions where they were currently studying and it privileged the voices of the students through interviews as they related

their own experiences. The form of questions asked enabled them to develop and express their views and thoughts. Data generated *via* interpretivism is associated with high level of validity because it tends to be trustworthy and honest (Seidman, 2013). By adopting interpretivism, the researcher was not only able to explain the actions of the participants; she was also able to explain the reasons why they chose the country and the institutions where they were currently studying. All the required information to answer the research questions was obtained in details *via* the chosen epistemology.

3.2.2 *Disadvantages of interpretivism*

The advantages of the selected epistemology notwithstanding, there were some potential challenges associated with it. The main disadvantage of interpretivism is its subjective nature and the room for bias on the part of the researcher (Creswell, 2008), the researcher therefore ensured she kept to the pre-determined questions except in a few cases when she had to probe further. Some of the participants also seemed to be emotional and biased which was not beneficial to understanding what was really happening. The use of semi-structured interviews helped the researcher to mitigate the challenge of comparability which is often associated with unstructured interviews. Another challenge associated with the chosen approach was that data generated could not be generalised as data drew heavily on personal viewpoints, which could compromise representativeness and generalisability of data.

3.2.3 *Overcoming the challenges of interpretivism*

Even though there are challenges associated with interpretivism, some strategies were adopted to overcome these challenges. In terms of the issue of reliability, it is believed that multiple and independent data collection means have greater reliability than a single approach to data collection. Therefore, in this research the interviews and the document analysis started with a broad research question and established a systemic collection of data. Although the findings of the study cannot be generalised, a quality case description has been offered, including a data collection procedure that would enable readers to repeat the same research procedure in other cases. In preparing for data collection in the field, the researcher underwent training on interviewing techniques by piloting the interview protocol. She used semi-structured interview for easy comparability of findings.

3.3   Research approach

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study was part of a larger study conducted in nine African countries. It was initially envisaged that data would be collected by means of a mixed methods approach by first having participants complete an online survey and those willing to continue to participate in the study would be interviewed. However, due to the challenges experienced during field work, a qualitative

approach was adopted; the survey was discarded; only interviews and documentary evidence were used for data collection.

Qualitative research emphasises the quality and depth of information provided. As pointed out by Huff (2009), this approach was appropriate for this study as it sought to understand social and cultural contexts in relation to behavioural patterns of the participants. The focus of this qualitative research was to understand the phenomenon of student mobility in a natural setting with the aim of describing it in terms of the meanings participants give to it using the pull-push theory as a theoretical lens. Creswell (2007: 37) defines qualitative research clearly and precisely as follows:

> "Qualitative research starts with assumptions, a worldview, theoretical lens and the study of research problems that enables a researcher inquire about the meaning individuals or groups assign to a particular human or social problem."

The following are the features of this qualitative study as opined by qualitative research methodologists, such as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) and Mcmillan and Schumacher (2014) Human beings make their own meaning out of a situation.

- Studies were conducted in their natural settings.
- Both the researcher and the participants were interactive and inseparable.
- Detailed narratives provided an in-depth understanding of participants' behaviours.
- Meanings emerged out of social situations and were handled interpretively.
- The researcher needed to understand the context in order to understand the situation because situation affects behaviour and behaviour equally affects situation.
- The situations of this research were unique and, therefore, not generalizable.
- Data was analysed in an inductive manner, with constructs emerging from data during research.

From the highlighted features given above, it can be said that the qualitative approach was relevant for this study. Firstly, this research was conducted in the natural setting of the international students. Secondly, participants constructed meaning based on their experiences and perceptions of Nigeria and their institutions and the people they relate with - as well as other factors in their environment. Thirdly, the research was interactive and subjective and, lastly, the way in which each participant responded to the study was unique in terms of their individual voices, their display of emotion and their use of words.

3.4   Research design

This study was carried out using a case study design because it was deemed fit as a design of inquiry in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case which could be a programme, event, activity, process or even one or more persons (Creswell, 2014). Cases are time and activity bound

according to Creswell; the researcher therefore collected detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures over a particular period of time. In consonance with Leedy and Ormrod's (2013) definition of a case study design, this study is an empirical inquiry that looked into a contemporary subject within a real-life setting as the boundaries between the participants and their settings were not distinctly evident. In addition, the case study provided a unique instance of real people in real situations, thereby allowing readers understand the phenomenon being studied better than just presenting them with abstract theories as argued by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011). This study recognises that there are many variables operating in a single case and that to have a full grasp of what these variables imply requires more than one tool for collecting data as well as many sources of evidence.

Nigeria and the two selected universities, namely, Covenant (private) University and the (public) University of Ibadan were the cases in this study. Nigeria is the most populous country with the largest higher education system on the African continent and the two selected universities are reputed for attracting international students, according to evidence gathered from the National Universities Commission (NUC).

3.4.1 *Advantages of a case study design*

Some of the main advantages of this design for this study, according to Maree (2007), as are follows:

- It allowed for the use of multiple sources of data collection and because the researcher made use of interviews and document analysis, the data collected was rich and captured the complexity of cases.
- It allowed the researcher to determine, in advance, specific evidence to gather and the data analysis technique to adopt in answering the research questions.
- It provided room for interaction, communication, relationships and practices between the cases and the researcher and, in so doing, enhanced the data.
- The researcher found it most appropriate for the study as she gained in-depth insights into the reasons why international students chose Nigeria and the institutions where they were studying; it also provided an understanding of their experiences using multiple tools for data collection.

3.4.2 *Disadvantages of a case study design*

The main challenge faced with this design was the criticism that it depended on the case of a country and two of its institutions and the findings are, therefore, not generalizable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The intent of case study research, however, is not to generalise. Although the findings cannot be generalised perfectly, the study has been contextualized by providing detailed national, institutional and student sample information from each institution. A further challenge of this design was that it required

32

spending time with participants (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). The researcher, therefore, ensured that she carried out the data collection process when she had sufficient time and not when she was in hurry or being distracted by other activities.

3.5   Sampling

A decision concerning where to conduct research and who to include in it is referred to as sampling (Maxwell 2013). Non-probability sampling was employed in this qualitative study. The researcher understood that the chance that an element or a unit of analysis will be included in a non-probability sampling is not guaranteed; in some cases, certain members of the population have no chance of being included in a sample (Welman, 2005). In selecting the participating universities, the non-probability sampling adopted for this qualitative study was purposive sampling. This was considered to be vital in selecting members who represented the target population that could best provide the information needed for the research (Maree 2007). Welman (2005:69) has the following to say about purposive sampling:

> "Researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population."

Two universities in Nigeria, one public and one private, were carefully chosen to be involved in this research. There has been an increase in the establishment of private universities in Nigeria over the past two decades to cater for the educational needs of students who are not able to gain admission to public universities (Jaja, 2013). Some of these private universities have a high quality standard and attract international students. Based on the fact that the researcher is Nigerian and has lived and studied there for most of her life, she made a judgment call from experience that Covenant University and the University of Ibadan were two of Nigeria's higher institutions of learning that attracted a good number of international students. Her selection of these two institutions as the best was affirmed during her visit to the National Universities Commission where she was informed that these two institutions were the best in terms of internationalisation in Nigeria, based on existing documents.

After selecting the participating universities, the next step was to sample the international students who would participate in this study. This was done through snowballing which is non-probability sampling whereby the researcher first approached a few persons from the targeted population; these people identified and informed others they knew who were relevant to the research; and they, in turn, identified and informed another set of people until the researcher had the desired sample size (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). McMillan and Schumacher (2014) describe snowballing as 'network' sampling. They believe that participant referrals are the basis for choosing a sample and that this strategy is useful in a situation where the required participants are scattered throughout a population. At both participating universities, a few international students were first identified in a scheduled meeting in showing a willingness to

33

participate in the research; they identified and informed other international students who could also participate. This process was instrumental in obtaining the intended sample size as it would have been very challenging for the researcher to identify them. A total number of thirty-five international students from both universities, who indicated a willingness to participate, were selected for face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interviews sought to understand the factors that influenced students to study in Nigeria and at their chosen universities; the encounters resulted in rich data as well as students' recommendations.

3.5.1 Selection criteria

The following selection criteria of participants were used for this study:

- Participants had to be international students.
- Participants had to be studying at either the University of Ibadan or Covenant University.
- Participants had to be able to speak English.
- Participants had to be an undergraduate or a post graduate student.

3.6   Data collection

Data collection is the way data needed to answer the research questions were obtained. The actual data collection process took place in terms of the following:

3.6.1 Seeking consent

The first step in collecting data for this study was to seek permission from the relevant authorities of the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the participating universities, Covenant University and the University of Ibadan. Letters of permission were sent to these institutions and this was duly granted. Meetings were arranged with the international students at both universities on different dates, where the purpose of the research was explained and consent for participation in the study was secured.

3.6.2 Interviews

A semi-structure interview guide - previously used in South Africa - was modified to accommodate the uniqueness of the Nigerian context and was used for this case study. A semi-structured interview allowed the researcher have a number of questions in mind that the interviewees were to be asked but which did not need to follow any particular order; and were not too many for the sake of manageability (Dicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Before the interviews, the researcher prepared a list of themes and questions to be covered which may vary from one interview to another (Welman, 2005). Coupled with the predetermined questions that the researcher had prepared, additional questions were required to

further explore the research questions and objective - based on the way the interviews unfolded – the process gave the researcher an opportunity to probe and clarify vague responses.

An advantage of the semi-structured interview was that it provided room for flexibility and allowed for the pursuit of unexpected lines of inquiry that were relevant to the research (Grix, 2010). The semi-structured interviews also provided for a wide range of data collection and were used for all age groups. Even though the same questions were posed to the participants, the researcher adjusted the formulation of terminology to accommodate participants from different countries, especially those for whom English is not their first language

One disadvantage of this kind of interview, however, was that some of the participants felt obliged to give information they thought the researcher would like to hear, thereby causing information to be "filtered" either in the views of the participant or those of the researcher (Creswell, 2008). The presence of the researcher also seemed to have an influence on the responses of the participants. In overcoming this challenge, the researcher encouraged the participants to be open and feel free to share relevant information and be sincere in doing so by assuring them that all information was confidential and would be used strictly for research purposes.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main data collection method for this study to provide for opportunities for personal and direct verbal encounters between the researcher and the selected students (Dicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The interviews were conducted face-to-face in selected quiet locations on the premises of the two universities. Coleman (2012) maintains that face-to-face interviews enable the interviewer to observe visual clues, such as body language and levels of comfort and discomfort; this allowed the researcher to fully control the interview process in this study.

A set of structured, but open-ended, questions on an interview schedule were developed for guidance during the interviews. These questions guided the participants and prevented them, as far as possible, from digressing from the focus of the research. Questions were explored in details and provided an in-depth understanding of the motivation of international students for choosing Nigeria and the institutions that they were currently attending. It was ensured that participants felt relaxed and all fears were allayed before commencing with the interviews. Interviews were conducted on an appointment basis and each interview was planned to last for 30 to 45 minutes to avoid taking up too much of the participants' time and becoming involved in unnecessary long discussions. Interviews were audiotaped with the permission of the participants, coupled with brief note-taking to support the recordings and for easy transcription.

However, it was observed that it was easy for students to be distracted with unnecessary aspects that were not related or important to the study. One way of controlling this was to guide the participants

back to the focus of the inquiry and for the researcher not to lose track of the predetermined research questions.

Some of the information sought to address the primary and secondary questions of the study included the following:

- Biographical information, such as course of study, level of study, country of origin
- Reason(s) for choosing to study in Nigeria
- Reason(s) for choosing the specific university for study
- How easy/difficult it was to come to Nigeria or apply to the university
- The issue of terrorism in Nigeria and how it affects international students
- Recommending Nigeria and the chosen university to peers in the home country.

There were two categories of international students at Covenant University (CU): those who were non-Nigerians and those who are Nigerians from the diaspora, i.e., Nigerians who were living abroad but came to study at CU. Twenty students were interviewed, comprising these two categories at CU, while 15 international students were interviewed at the University of Ibadan (UI). All the interview proceedings were used in this study to compensate for the survey questionnaire that had to be discarded.

3.6.3 *Document analysis*

Documents corroborate information gathered from other sources. Document analysis formed part of the data collection instruments for this study. The researcher agreed with Wells, MacLeod and Frank (2012) that educational institutions rely on diverse documents to record their activities and accomplish their work; documents, therefore, structure the reality of any educational setting. An analysis of relevant institutional documents, such as policy information, international students' recruitment materials, university handbooks, annual reports, trends in recruitment, graduate output, was carried out at the two participating universities. This process was useful in shedding further light on the phenomenon under investigation as it provided a clearer picture of the number of international students enrolled in each of the participating universities at the time of this study; the highest and lowest sending countries; and the national and institutional policies guiding the recruitment and enrolment of international students. This was also achieved through an analysis of national documents and data available at the National Universities Commission (NUC), an agency in charge of all university affairs in Nigeria. The researcher guarded against misinterpretation of information, poor organisation and integration of information and selective interpretation to suit her arguments which were some of the challenges that tended to arise, using this data collection instrument. This was achieved by transcribing the interviews *verbatim* and listening to them repeatedly for clarity and best interpretation.

3.7 Field work: Researcher's personal experience

The whole data collection process took approximately two months, from the end of November 2015 to the end of January 2016. The first institution contacted in Nigeria was Covenant University where the researcher met with the director of the International Office and Linkages. After introducing the study, it was agreed that the researcher would return in January when the students returned for the second semester. She then travelled to Abuja where the National Universities Commission (NUC) had its headquarters, after being advised by her supervisor to go there in order to find out which universities in Nigeria had the highest number of international students. She had also planned to visit the Federal Ministry of Education in Abuja because, on arriving in Nigeria, the situation looked bleak; it seemed that Covenant University and the University of Ibadan did not have the required sample size for this study. As this was supposed to be a mixed methods research, it would start with an online survey for one hundred international students at each university; however, on arrival in the field, this number of students did not appear to be in view. This necessitated going to NUC; the researcher had planned to go there for national data, but not that early. She never thought her assignment in Abuja would be as hectic as was experienced.

In Nigeria, it is generally believed that one needs a 'connection', 'link' or 'contact' to gain easy access into any big organization. With the help of a 'connection', access to a staff member of the NUC was obtained through the director of the Office of International Programmes (OIP) at UI; the researcher was able to acquire national data from NUC but this was not without going back and forth for three days; all she could imagine was what would have happened if she had had no connection at all. She was grateful that she obtained what she wanted in the end. At the JAMB office - a visit that was advised by a former VC of UI - the researcher was fortunate to see the director of quality assurance briefly who told her to apply for permission which she did almost immediately but never received a response despite following-up. The researcher's experience at the Federal Ministry of Education was most frustrating; the building had eleven floors with several offices on each floor. There was only one functional lift and there was always a long queue of people waiting to get into the lift that could not take more than 6 to 8 people at a time. In fact, on many occasions she had to climb downstairs from as high as the eighth floor to the ground floor - after waiting for the lift that seemed to take forever to arrive. She was sent to and fro from one office and one floor to another. Barely taking time to listen to her explanation of the research, the federal government officials were always quick to say something, like "Oh! This is not the right office. Go to the 5th floor" and "Sorry, we are not in charge of that here, an office on the 9th floor does that." Eventually, it was found that an office where they had initially said it was not their duty happened to be in charge of her request. This is typical of any government parastatal in Nigeria; the staff members have a negative attitude towards their jobs and expect to get paid at the end of the month. Finally, the

researcher was able to submit a letter of request for data and when an approval was given she was shocked to find that there was practically no data available; a discussion with the deputy director for tertiary education resulted in a guess talk.

At a scheduled meeting at the University of Ibadan, only five international students attended because the timing was not convenient for most who had lectures scheduled. Fortunately, the few that the researcher met with were all willing to participate in the research; however, she needed more students to participate and she took it upon herself to go to the likely faculties, departments and halls of residence where possible participants could be found. This was a hectic procedure, as UI is a large institution and the students are widely dispersed, which yielded little; in the end the desired sample size was obtained by snowballing. The director of OIP and her colleagues were supportive in providing the researcher with institutional data and by also by giving her a quiet office for the interviews and other important tasks which needed attending to during her stay.

Conducting this study at Covenant University was easier than at UI. When things seemed to start getting difficult and the researcher began to feel discouraged, she was able to obtain access to the Vice-Chancellor *via* the platform of her supervisor who had met him and the whole story turned around. The VC immediately introduced the researcher to one of the DVCs, instructing him to organise a meeting with the international students so that she could address them and also to ensure that the researcher acquired all the institutional data needed. Notwithstanding, this came with its own challenge: because it was the beginning of a new semester, all the international students had not returned and only a few were present at the meeting. Some days were spent interviewing those who had returned and through them others were identified and interviewed when they returned. The researcher was also given full access to the quiet board room of the Dean of Student Affairs for meetings and interviews throughout her stay. In terms of obtaining the desired sample size, the researcher once had to attend a Sunday chapel service, having being informed that all CU undergraduate students reside on campus and that chapel service was compulsory for them; she also had to visit their halls of residence to locate some of them.

Conducting a research in Nigeria turned out to be a herculean task. The overall experience was a hectic one, having to walk in the scorching sun, especially at UI and in Abuja as well as cope with incessant traffic and noise pollution. Having this first-hand experience, the researcher was able to relate to the argument of Alemu (2014) who maintains that conducting a research in developing countries is a daunting task.

3.8   Data analysis

Data from this study was first organised according to its sources in order to avoid any confusion between interviews of international students and institutional and national data. Different types of data were

sorted into different folders and labelled accordingly for easy identification and retrieval. The suggestion of Maree (2007) that data analysis must be approached in a highly organised way in order not to be overwhelmed by the large amount of data gathered, was taken into consideration.

Thematic analysis, a qualitative method of analysis whereby the researcher analyses data by identifying patterns within data and assigning themes to them, was engaged. Welman (2005) describes themes as "umbrellas" under which the researcher classifies similar information before, during and after data collection. This helped to minimally organize and describe data in details as pointed out by Braun and Clarke (2006). All the data gathered from tape-recorded interviews was transcribed and together with that from other sources was assigned themes related to the primary and secondary research questions. It was transcribed by the researcher in order to add all technicalities, such as non-verbal clues, slang and fillers, to the transcript - all of which are important for thick description and rich analysis. The reason for doing this was because she understood the language and some slang used by the participants and could relate better with their responses, having met them personally. Seidman (2013:118) has the following to say about analysing interviews which the researcher found helpful and which enriched her transcription:

> "Both the interviewer and the transcriber must realize that decisions about where to punctuate the transcripts are significant. Participants do not speak in paragraphs or always clearly indicate the end of a sentence by voice inflection. Punctuation is one of the beginning points of the process of analysing and interpreting data and must be done thoughtfully."

With reference to Ryan and Bernard (2003) in Welman (2005), the researcher made use of the following techniques to identify themes:

- Word analysis, i.e., word repetitions, keywords and indigenous terms
- Reading for larger units, for example, comparing and contrasting material and searching for missing information
- Intentional analysis of linguistic characteristics, such as metaphors, transitions and connectors
- The physical manipulation of texts, such as unmarked texts, pawing and cut and sort procedures
- Secondary data analysis.

To this end, the researcher looked for similar patterns, especially in the interviews with the international students, and assigned themes for easy analysis. Codes were assigned to different segments of the data for easy identification. Coding is the process of marking different categories of data with symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying names (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The researcher read through transcribed data, line by line and grouped them into different units. Whenever any meaningful segment in the data was located, a code was assigned to it. Huff (2009) is of the opinion that that the essence of

inductive analysis in qualitative data is to give room for findings to emerge from significant themes inherent in raw data; codes in the form of unique names were, therefore, assigned to different segments and also to each participant.

As soon as coding was completed and similar patterns had been grouped into themes, analysis was carried out. Themes were derived from the careful examination of the data in relation to those that emerged inductively from the literature on the research topic. The researcher put into perspective the notion maintained by Ryan and Bernard (2003) that themes should reflect the researcher's values or experiences and should also be constructed on the basis of common sense. Mouton (2006) believes that it is essential to be able to relate findings to existing theories in order to determine whether they stand true or false. Given that, the push and pull theory which accounts for factors responsible for international student leaving their country on one hand and factors that attract them to their country of study on the other hand, was used as a theoretical lens to understand the findings . As all this relates to the study, it is confirmed in a detailed discussion in subsequent chapters.

3.9   Quality measures

The following measures to ensure quality were taken in this study.

3.9.1   *Trustworthiness*

Trustworthiness is the acid test that was used in the data analysis, findings and conclusions of this study. Maree (2007) points out that trustworthiness in research has to do with transferability or applicability, consistency or dependability and neutrality or conformability. The researcher understood that trustworthiness is of the utmost importance in qualitative research, she therefore kept in mind the procedures that were required for assessing the trustworthiness of data analysis, some of which include:

- Keeping notes of every decision taken regarding the research
- Trustworthiness in coding data
- Avoiding generalisations
- Choosing quotes carefully
- Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity
- Stating the limitations of the study upfront.

More so, in ensuring the trustworthiness of this qualitative research, raw data was verified to check for errors and great caution was taken in coding the data.

3.9.2   *Credibility*

40

Ensuring credibility involves establishing that the results of the research are believable for participants and readers which depends on the richness and accuracy of the findings rather than the amount of information gathered (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the credibility of this qualitative study was ensured by doing the following:

- **Stakeholder-checking**: Feedback was received from participants on the accuracy of the identified categories and themes after a preliminary analysis of the first draft. This gave the researcher an opportunity to explain how data was interpreted and analysed; participants were asked to comment after examining the data analysis.

- **External audit**: A researcher who had not participated in the study was requested to conduct a thorough review of the study and give a report in order to avoid bias, this is in line with what Cantwell, Luca and Lee (2009) proposed.

- **A rich and thick description of the findings**: This was provided by explaining the total process of exploring the phenomenon under study; clarifying the theory underpinning it; and reporting factors that affected the research, in general (Maree, 2012).

3.9.3 *Triangulation*

The use of triangulation method was helpful for this study. As opined by Cohen *et al*. (2002), at least two data collection methods were employed within this single study for the purpose of ensuring that findings were valid. In other words, data gathered by means of interviews were cross-checked with data gathered *via* document analysis. In this study, triangulation helped to explore the research problem in-depth as the two main sources of data were used to complement and corroborate each other in order to enhance results. In addition, this quality measure was also instrumental in reducing the risk of systematic errors because information was collected from diverse individuals and institutions through diverse methods (Meyer, 2013).

In a nutshell, the two sources of data used, namely, interviews and document analysis obtained from different contexts helped to check whether there were any discrepancies in the findings.

3.10 Ethical considerations

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 (Maxwell, 2013). Attention was paid to ethical issues before conducting this research; at the commencement of the research; during data collection and data analysis; in reporting the findings; and in sharing and storing data.

Before the commencement of the field work, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria. This was in accordance to the Helsinki Declaration of 1972

that clearance needs to be obtained from an ethics committee to conduct any form of research involving human or animal subjects (Maree, 2014). This study complied with all the required documentation for ethical consideration and assured the committee of the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

Consent was sought from the National Universities Commission (NUC) to conduct this study in Nigeria and to have access to national data regarding the university system in Nigeria. Permission was also obtained by means of email from the authorities of the participating universities to conduct research in their institutions and to gain access to relevant documents. The emails detailed the rationale of the study; the purpose and importance of the study; the nature of the data required; the data collection methods; and an assurance to make the findings available to them which would be beneficial in terms of their recruitment of international students and the improvement of the services they rendered to current ones.

The informed consent of the participating students from each university was obtained before they took part in the research as they were all above the age of eighteen (Seidman, 2013). Before the commencement of each interview the researcher assured participants of anonymity and confidentiality by informing them that their personal information and identities would not be publicly divulged and that their rights to privacy would be protected (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2014). They were told pseudonyms would be used; this allayed the fears of those who showed some concern about giving specific information about the university which could affect them if the university found out that they had divulged sensitive information. Participants were informed that the information they provided would not be used for any other purpose than research. They were assured that their participation in this research was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from participating should they wish to do so and that this would not affect their relationship or status with their university. Their consent was obtained to tape record the interviews.

In addition, it should be known that data from this study will be kept with the researcher's supervisor for fifteen years, after which it will be destroyed.

3.11   Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the methodology adopted for the study. It examined the epistemology, research approach and design in relation to the merits and demerits they hold for the study. It also touched on sampling and methods of data collection. It gave a full description of the researcher's experiences of field work and it addressed ethical considerations. The next chapter, Chapter 4, deals with the analysis of national data in terms of the international students' rationale for choosing Nigeria, their experiences and the prospects of attracting more international students into the country.

CHAPTER 4

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN NIGERIA: RATIONALES, EXPERIENCES AND PROSPECTS

4.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses the analysis of the one-on-one semi-interviews conducted with international students as well as relevant documents that the researcher was able to access during the field work. The interviews were based on twelve questions which were guided by the primary and secondary research questions for this study (see Appendix); from these twelve interview questions, seven central themes emerged. In terms of the seven central themes, two main categories of themes emerged: four themes pertained to Nigeria and three themes to the two institutions under study. For the sake of convenience these two categories of themes are discussed in two separate chapters; the themes pertaining to Nigeria are discussed in this chapter while the themes pertaining to the two institutions are discussed in Chapter 5. Data from the documents is infused into the discussion in order to fully contextualize the interview responses and substantiate the findings through the theoretical lens guiding this study. To this end, the themes in the first category to be discussed in this chapter are as follows:

- Choosing to study in Nigeria
- The process of applying for a visa to study in Nigeria
- Terrorism in Nigeria
- Recommending studying in Nigeria to others

The participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality during the interviews and in keeping with ethical considerations, therefore, the researcher assigned the 15 participants from the University of Ibadan codes A1 to A15 and the 20 participants from Covenant University codes B1 to B20, accordingly. They were all asked the same questions, except in some cases where some were probed to clarify their responses. In order to better contextualise the interviews conducted with students in relation to Nigeria, an overview of Nigeria and its higher education system is given in this chapter. Participants and their countries of origin are as follows:

Table 4.1: Participants and their Countries of Origin

Country of origin	Number of participants
Cameroun	10
Zambia	4
United Kingdom	4
Liberia	3
United States of America	3
Kenya	3
Ghana	2
Botswana	1
Germany	1
Lebanon	1
Tanzania	1
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	1
Sierra Leone	1
Total	**35**

4.2   Nigeria at a glance

Situated in West Africa, Nigeria is the largest country in Africa with an estimated 182 million people (Wikipedia) covering an area of 923,768 sq. km (BBC, 2016). The country comprises 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja under 6 geo-political zones, namely: North Central, North East, North West, South East, South West and South South. There are over 500 ethnic groups of people in Nigeria speaking 500 different languages; they are identifiable in terms of a variety of cultures and the three major ones are Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa; and English is the country's official language. The official currency is the Naira and the three religions widely practiced are: Christianity, Islam and indigenous beliefs. Nigeria is viewed as a multi-national state with Christians living mostly in the South and Muslims in the North; a minority practice indigenous religion throughout the country. Nigeria is popularly referred to as the 'Giant of Africa' because it is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous in the world. Nigeria also became Africa's largest economy in 2014. The country gained independence from British colonial rule on 01 October 1960 and was under military rule for many years, but since May 2015 it has been under the leadership of a democratically elected president, Muhammadu Buhari. Since 2002, the Northern part of the country has witnessed violence from the Islamic terrorist group, Boko Haram, who have killed scores of people, leaving many injured and causing many to flee to neighbouring countries.

4.2.1   Higher education in Nigeria

The Nigerian higher education system (HES), with its long history, is one of the largest in sub-Saharan Africa with an enrolment of approximately 24 million (Jaja, 2013). To illustrate the importance of higher

education to national development, the country also has the highest number of higher education institutions in the whole of the West African sub-region. Higher education in Nigeria refers to all organized learning at tertiary level which includes universities, polytechnics, monotechnics and colleges of education. In total, there are 365 higher institutions of different categories, including the universities in the country (UNESCO, 2010). The focus of this study was on universities.

Higher education in Nigeria began in 1932 in the form of a technical college with the establishment of the Yaba College of Technology. Sixteen years later, in 1948, the first university in Nigeria, the University of Ibadan started as a college campus of the University of London. Nigeria has witnessed an impressive growth in the number of universities from only 2 at the time of independence in 1960 to 55 in 2004 and 128 as at 2012 (Jaja, 2013), thereby creating greater access to the ever-increasing population of Nigerian youth. The country has 40 federal, 38 state and 50 privately accredited universities that cater for many undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and also serve as an attraction for students from neighbouring countries. Data from the NUC reveals that enrolments in Nigerian universities increased from 769,347 in 2009/2010 to 1, 274,265 in 2012/2013.

The regulatory agency for Nigerian universities is the National Universities Commission (NUC). With the exception of students who possess the advance level certificate and are given direct entry admission into university at the second year level, an examination called the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) organised by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is compulsory for anyone who intends to attend university in Nigeria. The JAMB has 3,168 centres in 378 examination towns; however, the avenues for taking the examination outside the country are limited to six countries, namely: Saudi Arabia, Ghana, the United Kingdom, Benin Republic, South Africa and Cameroun which has implications for attracting international students to Nigerian universities. Many universities conduct additional screening in terms of post-UTME examinations before a final admission decision is made. Before gaining admission to any Nigerian university, intending students are also expected - in addition to a qualifying JAMB score - to have a minimum of six credits, including Mathematics and English, obtained from the West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC) or its equivalent, the General Certificate Examination (GCE) or National Examination Council (NECO). Notwithstanding, private universities devise their own modes of entry, such as students writing entrance examinations or attending interviews.

4.2.2   *Towards the internationalisation of higher education in Nigeria*

In a bid not to be left behind in the move to internationalisation, some of the measures taken by Nigerian higher education institutions include participation in international workshops and conferences, cross-campus research collaboration, partnerships with foreign education counterparts, exchange

programmes, inculcating an international dimension into the curriculum and encouraging the inflow of international students to study in the country (Robert-Okah, 2015). Nigeria attracts many international students to study at its institutions in spite of the fact that in Africa it is the highest sender of students overseas after Morocco and Algeria. A recent study shows that there are international students studying in Nigerian higher institutions, even though there is little data on the exact number (Jaja, 2013). However, the number keeps declining as a result of security issues associated with the country.

Despite what is often reported in terms of Nigeria lagging behind in internationalisation (Tagoe, 2012; Robert-Okah, 2014), the country is actually taking giants strides towards internationalising its higher education system. Referring to this process, the secretary-general of the NUC once said: "We welcome long term partnerships with the UK that help to strengthen Nigerian universities." (Universities World News, 2008) and in 2014, for example, the University of Benin signed an agreement with the University of Lancaster in the United Kingdom. The University of Aberdeen has also entered into partnerships with five Nigerian universities. These institutions have since developed split-site PhD programmes and forums to help bridge the gap between academia and industry in Nigeria as well as also strengthening academic staff qualifications (The Conversation, September 2015). Nigeria is pursuing collaborations with several institutions of learning around the world with an aim to increase student and staff exchange programmes, two-way curriculum development, field trips and mentoring.

4.3   Theme 1: Choosing to study in Nigeria

The discussion of the first theme identified in this study is centred on the factors that pushed international students, studying at the two selected universities, from their home countries and the factors that pulled them to study in Nigeria. The literature on student mobility (Lee & Kim, 2012; OECD, 2012) suggests that student mobility is not a new phenomenon and that since distant times students have been moving from one country and region to another for tertiary education. Eitzen and Zinn (2012) maintain that one major instrument of internationalisation that promotes the flow of international knowledge in a knowledge economy is the mobility of students. Bhandari and Blumenthal (2011:7-8) argue that many factors, real or perceived, can affect a student's choice of destination; these include: "*the cost and quality of higher education programmes, the value of the degree or professional credentials for future careers, the availability of certain areas of specialisation, access to the education system and a country, and important historical, linguistic and geographic ties between the home and destination countries.*" During the interviews conducted with the 35 participants from the two selected institutions, they all cited reasons why they were studying in Nigeria and their reasons were found to be both similar and different. These reasons have been classified under separate sub-headings.

4.3.1   *Parental influence*

46

A prevalent view showed that studying in Nigeria was not an initial option for consideration by the participants; they were studying in Nigeria because their parents wanted them to. A similar study conducted in the United States of America by Mazzarol and Souter (2002) reported that parental influence is a significant factor among undergraduate students when choosing a study destination. For instance, Participant A2 from Cameroun said that coming to Nigeria was never her wish and that she was barely consulted when her parents made the decision concerning her tertiary education; she only learned that she would be going to Nigeria to study when the planning had almost been concluded on her behalf. When asked why she chose to study in Nigeria, she bluntly replied, *"I didn't, my dad did."* This reason for studying in Nigeria was shared by participant B7 from Kenya who also said, *"My parents chose the university in Nigeria for me, it was not my choice."* Even though the participants' parents actually made the choice for them to study in Nigeria, two most common reasons emerged for their decision, especially for with those participants studying at Covenant University. The first has to do with religion and is due to the fact that the parents were members of Winners Chapel church that owns the university and which they wanted their children to attend.

The second most common reasons why some parents chose Nigeria for their children was because they wanted them to learn about the culture of Nigeria; they did not want them to be lost in another land when they knew nothing about their fatherland. This reason is the most common one amongst international students who were born and bred abroad, otherwise known as Nigerians from the diaspora at Covenant University; they explained how their parents thought it best that they should experience Nigerian culture. Participant B14 from the UK explained that his parents wanted him to be familiar with the way of life in Nigeria so that it would not be too big a shock for him if he decided to live there when he was much older.

Participant A7 from Cameroun admitted that there had been no direct parental influence; a friend of his father had been the main person behind the decision for his studying in Nigeria as he convinced him that studying in Nigeria was better than going to a faraway country abroad. This story confirms the argument in the ICEF Monitor (2016) that students now prefer to study in a nearby country rather than going to a more distant country. The above examples from the interviews supports the finding that participants were influenced in their decisions concerning their tertiary education in one or other form, but mainly by parents, close relatives and friends. These, however, refute the popular assumption that push and pull are based on demographic, environmental, economic and cultural factors. The theory does not make apparent provision for such factors as religion to be a possible reason why people choose to study abroad; even though similar studies (Mazarrol & Soutter, 2002; Sehoole, 2011) recognize that recommendations from parents, friends and relatives could play an important role in the choice of a study destination.

4.3.2   The love of the country or institution

As much as the participants cited their parents as having had a major say in their studying in Nigeria, there were those that came to Nigeria on their own volition, either for the love of the country or for the love of the institution where they were studying. According to Participant A9 from Cameroun, she chose to study in Nigeria for the love of the country and this love was made stronger by knowing that there was a reputable institution where she could study. This implies that she was not pushed from her country *per se,* as against the popular notion that a push from the sending country results in a pull to the host country. She beamed with enthusiasm as she said:

> *I＇ve always loved to come to Nigeria, like the sight we see on television and finally I got to know the University of Ibadan was a nice school producing good graduates and I wanted to be one of them; so I decided to come to Nigeria.*

This differed slightly from Participant B16 from Botswana who mentioned that it was not her plan to come to Nigeria but she had no choice because she really wanted to study at Covenant University which happened to be in Nigeria; she maintained:

> *It＇s not really Nigeria but I wanted to study in Covenant University because of the things that I have seen about it but it＇s in Nigeria, that＇s why I came but it wasn＇t the main idea to study in Nigeria.*

Mazzarol and Souter (2002) explain that some of the factors that determine the choice of a study destination could be inherent in the host country, the sending country or even in the students themselves. Here we see the love of Nigeria or the institution of study as being inherent in the students.

4.3.3   Scholarship and research opportunities

In addition to the above reasons, the participants, especially the postgraduate students at the University of Ibadan were reportedly studying in Nigeria either because they had a scholarship opportunity which stipulated that they should study in Nigeria or because of the availability of human and material resources in Nigeria for their research; for these participants it was not because they liked the institution or the country, it was simply because an opportunity had presented itself and they had decided to take it. For example, while Participant A10 from the USA was attracted to Nigeria because of the richness of the materials he needed for his research, Participant A11 from Germany chose to study in Nigeria because of her research topic - she wanted to collaborate with Nigerian scholars on her topic. This finding is in line with Knight's assertion (2010) that there are ten most highly ranked reasons why postgraduate students travel abroad, two of which are for collaborative research and to collect data/conduct field work. Participant A10 declared:

> *I chose to study in Nigeria because when I entered graduate school, I was interested in West African history studies and culture. I was introduced to a lot of Yoruba historical documents and I found*

that the historical materials for Nigeria were very rich and richer than other African countries that were presented to me, so I decided to study in Nigeria.

Participant A13, on the other hand, decided to make use of the scholarship opportunity he obtained from the PAN African University, a university initiative of the African Union for which UI hosts students studying Life and Earth Science. Thus, Nigeria serves as a regional hub for students who desire to study Life and Earth Sciences at the Pan African University. Njugunu and Itegi (2013) maintain that the emergence of regional hubs is a new trend in student mobility. The above example also supports the finding of Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2015) that availability of scholarships is one of the pull factors that attract students to a study destination. In the same vein,

Similarly, Participant A8 explained how a scholarship opportunity was introduced by the MacArthur Foundation in his country, Liberia, which influenced his decision to come to Nigeria. He added that he could not afford to go outside Africa on his own as donors do not always provide funds for students to study in Europe or America these days; some donors prefer African students to choose a university in Africa for the development of Africa. This point validates the findings of UNESCO (2009) and Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2015) that many students cannot afford the high fees and cost of living of studying at a foreign higher institution; therefore, those who study abroad go to neighbouring countries rather than to America or Europe. Similarly, cost issues have been identified as one of the reasons why students choose a particular study destination (Triana, 2015; Eric, 2014). Cost issues according to Mazzarol and Souter (2002) include cost of living expenses, school fees, travel cost and social cost. They argued that social cost entails the cost borne by the host country; the participants asserted that social cost indeed was a significant factor in choosing to study in Nigeria.

4.3.4 *Better educational opportunity than home country*

According to Shield (2013), the rise of international student mobility is informed by the increased demand for specialized and post-secondary education that prompts students to go abroad for educational opportunities that are better than those in their home country. The participants, especially those from Cameroun and Liberia, admitted that the quality of education in Nigeria was higher than that of their home country and that was the pull factor that made them choose to study in Nigeria. This notion is exemplified by Participant A13 from Cameroun who, when asked why he chose to study in Nigeria, answered: "…*it is better than what is obtainable back in my home country."* Participant A1 equally added that apart from the conditions of the scholarship he had received from the Pan African University, he considered education in Nigeria to be of good quality.

Despite the notion held by many researchers, such as Alemu (2014), Madichie and Madichie (2009) and Trust Africa (2015), that the educational systems in Africa, in general, and Nigeria, in particular, are

poor, it was found that the participants recognize that Nigeria could contribute to their academic development; they view the opportunities available to them in Nigeria as better than those they could access in their countries of origin. This corroborates the findings of many mobility scholars and, particularly, Hanushek and Hansen (2000) who maintain that the quality of education for the same degree differs across countries. Some foreign students return to their countries of origin with a quality of higher educational that is superior to the one they would have obtained if they had studied in their home country (Beine, Noel & Ragot, 2014). Moreso, a perception of the quality of higher education in the host country has been largely reported as an important factor in the choice of a study destination (Bhandari & Blumenthal, 2011; Eric, 2014 and Madiche & Madiche, 2013).

4.3.5   *An easy way out*

The emergence of this sub-theme has no strong root in the analysis of Lee's theory of push and pull; this shows that some factors that influence migration decisions tend to be more general and highly pronounced than others; whereas, there appears to be some silent but significant factors. There were participants that saw studying in Nigeria as an easy way out of the rigours involved in vying for admission to a university in their home country. Participants from Cameroun related how difficult it was to gain admission to one of the two effective institutions that offered their courses of interest back in their home country. They maintained that entering either of these institutions was highly competitive and that admission was not guaranteed - even after enduring the bribery and corruption practices in their educational system. It appears that it is difficult for just anyone who is not highly connected, especially to the French-speaking people who occupy top positions, to gain access.

Participant B13 cited a similar reason for choosing to study in Nigeria. He explained that universities, such as Cambridge and Oxford in the UK, were raising their entry grades and requirements; it, therefore, was more difficult for students to gain admission and with his A level result he found coming to Nigeria to study a 'short cut' to get away from the onerous university entry requirements of his home country.

4.3.6   *English as a medium of instruction*

Sehoole (2011) refers to English as the language of the global economy. He cites South Africa as an example of a country that attracts a high number of foreign students because of the existence of quality English in universities as well as the use of English as the major language of instruction in the country. The participants emphasised that they were pulled to Nigeria because of the availability of English as a medium of instruction in the country's institutions; they stressed that they would not have considered studying in Nigeria at all if the language of instruction in institutions was not English. This asserts the opinion of Tiana (2015) that commonality of language come play when deciding on a country of study. Although the participants gave different reasons why they were keen on an English-medium country,

their specific reasons were important to them and, subsequently, making it possible for Nigeria to 'gain' them.

Participant A6 explained that he was keen to study in an English-speaking country because he was forced to leave Liberia at the peak of the civil war in his country. He had only acquired a secondary school education when the war broke out and as he sought to further his education in his first country of refuge, the Ivory Coast, it was virtually impossible due to the language barrier; the Ivory Coast is a French-speaking country and Liberia is an English-speaking country. He then began the search for an English-speaking country where he could further his education; he found himself in Ghana but the international student fee requirement was prohibitive for him as a refugee, so he had to leave. Eventually, he found himself in Nigeria, an English-speaking country which recognised his refugee status, and he was charged local fees which were affordable to him.

4.3.7 *Close proximity and family reasons*

Another reason that emerged as to why international students chose to study in Nigeria is proximity. Those within the West African sub-region especially, believe that it made more sense to study in a country that is not too far from their home country. This reason is similar to the finding of Sehoole and Lee (2015) that international students from Southern African Development Countries (SADC) prefer to study in South Africa for geographic proximity, which promotes regional mobility. It has, however, been observed that those who chose Nigeria for the sake of proximity are married men who have wives and children back home and feel they should not go too far afield so that they can see their families as often as they want. For example, Participant A15 from Ghana made it known that

> ⋯a*lso the fact that I' m a married man I have a family and the distance between Ghana and Nigeria is not that much I can come today and go back the following day.*

Participant A8 would have loved to study in America or Europe but the scholarship opportunity offered to him only enabled him to study in Africa; he admitted that he had come to like the idea as Nigeria was closer to his home country, Liberia. He enjoys the fact that he could fly in to go see his family at any time, something he considers to be a great advantage.

4.4   Theme 2: Process of applying for visa to study in Nigeria

This theme is another that emerged from the analysis of interviews conducted with participants as well as the analysis of documents in the form of immigration policies pertaining to international students in Nigeria. It emanated from the interview question that sought to find out how easy or difficult it was for international students to obtain a visa to study in Nigeria. In his analysis of the push and pull theory, De

51

haas (2008) argues that the decision to migrate is often influenced by factors in the country of origin, factors in the destination country, personal factors and the so-called intervening obstacles such as immigration laws. He criticized the theory on the basis that it fails to explain why some people in a certain country or region migrate while others do not as well as the disparity in the mode of migration. Researchers who debate student mobility often talk about immigration policies and how they affect international students (University World News, 2012; Cremonini & Antonowics, 2009; Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2015). Emerging from this theme were four prominent issues, namely: countries that require a visa to travel to Nigeria; countries that do not require a visa for travel to Nigeria; the type of visa issued to study in Nigeria; and the renewal of visas. While a set of participants expressed satisfaction with the fact that they did not need a visa to travel from their country, others cited the difficulties they had in securing a visa as well as their disappointment with the type of visa they were issued with after a long period of waiting coupled with complicated renewal processes. However, one or two participants revealed that even though they needed visas to enter Nigeria, the visa was easily obtained. In the context of this study and in consonance with the argument of De haans (2008), the push and pull theory of migration is not sufficient in explaining the reason why participants from some countries experienced more difficulty in obtaining visas than others, the researchers therefore relied majorly on the interview responses in analyzing this theme.

4.4.1   Countries that require visa to travel to Nigeria

One needs to obtain a visa to travel from one country to another unless one's country is on the visa exemption list of the destination country. According to the Nigeria immigration policy, Nigeria requires foreign students who desire to study in the country to obtain a valid visa in their country of origin before embarking on their journey to Nigeria if the home country of such students is not on the visa exempt list of Nigeria. The Nigeria Immigration Service is the body responsible for all core immigration duties, including visas and passports, and they have offices in several countries around the globe in order to meet the immigration needs of the citizens of countries who wish to travel to Nigeria. Among the participants of this study, those that required visas to study in Nigeria were from Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Sierra Leone, USA, Congo, Botswana and Germany. When these students were asked how easy, or difficult, it was for them to obtain a visa to enter Nigeria, most of their responses revealed that they encountered difficulties in securing a visa. Cremononi and Antonowics (2009) are of the opinion that one of the obstacles faced by foreign students is the bureaucracy of a country, including unfriendly visa policies. This is exemplified in the experience of Participant B9 from Zambia who said:

> ···usually the challenge came in from the embassy about us coming in, collecting our visa, applying for our visa; it was quite difficult and it took time…

The visa application process delayed some of the students, thereby making them late for the start of the academic year at their institutions and missing out on some important aspects of their academic work. Participant B4 from Zambia also described his experience as hectic and cumbersome and expressed his unhappiness about how the delay in the issue of his visa had caused him to miss important tests.

Participant B11 from Congo equally confirmed that her visa took 5 weeks and was only issued after her institution had started a new semester. According to her, the delay was partly due to the fact that there was a back log of travellers waiting to get their visa applications processed by the Nigerian embassy in Congo.

The above participant experiences, notwithstanding, there were participants who required visa to enter Nigeria who were surprised at how fast and easy the process was; although they had expected some hassles, they experienced none at all. Participant A11 seemed not to have recovered from the surprise of receiving her visa very early; she happily commented:

> *After I knew what I needed and I got everything together, it was surprisingly easy and fast··· I applied for the visa on Monday night and on Tuesday; I had it in my hand.*

In the light of her experience, it could be said that not all international students are faced with difficulties in obtaining a visa - as suggested by Cremonini and Antonowics (2009). The discussion on the visa application process and experience can be captured in the following: students who had difficulty obtaining a visa and those who found it easy.

4.4.2   *Countries that do not require a visa to travel to Nigeria*

It was mentioned earlier that some countries identify specific countries on their visa exemption list where citizens of those countries do not need visas. For some countries it could be that their citizens do not need visas when they are going to that country for a short stay, such as three months. One reason why these countries are exempt could be because they have a special form of partnership or friendly tie. Normally, members of a regional body, like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), would be grant visa exemption as a deliberate effort to maximize the benefits of mobility by developing protocols to encourage the free flow of people and promote integration between member states (African Union, 2014; Knight, 2008). Some international students from ECOWAS who were studying in Nigeria confirmed that they did not need a visa to enter Nigeria. Participant B5 from Liberia proclaimed:

> *Actually, I'm from Liberia, a West African country, ECOWAS, so I don't need visa. It's visa free. I didn't pass through the process of obtaining a visa.*

As seen from the above statement, students from Liberia attested to the fact that they did not need a visa to enter Nigeria simply because their country is an ECOWAS member state. However, participants from Cameroun had slightly different visa experiences. When each of them was asked how easy or difficult it was to apply for a visa to come to Nigeria, three different responses were forthcoming. Some stated that they did not need visa to enter Nigeria; for example, Participant A2 replied:

> *Well, we don't need a visa to come to Nigeria from Cameroun; you will just come like that. You can just book your ticket and come.*

Others mentioned that they only needed a visa if they were staying for more than three months; according to Participant A12,

> *It was very easy because Nigeria and Cameroun have a good relationship. You don't need visa to come to Nigeria from Cameroun except when you want to stay for more than three months in each of the country.*

A third group presented a different scenario; they actually applied for a visa and the process was fast and easy. Participant A1 said:

> *It was very easy because my country has a bi lateral corporation with Nigeria where in you can come into the country and stay for 3 months without a visa; however that was not my case. I applied for a study visa for about $100 and after submitting all my documents, I received my study visa in less than 24 hours."*

Having listened to what the participants said about their visa experiences, the researcher made inquiries concerning what the Nigerian immigration policy actually stipulated. The policy states that visitors to Nigeria require a visa except if they come from one of the visa exempt countries which are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Cape Verde, Gambia, Senegal, Togo, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Morocco, Mali, Niger, Guinea Bissau, Seychelles, Chad, Sierra Leone and Ghana. All these countries are also ECOWAS member states, except Morocco, Seychelles and Cameroun which only have a special bilateral agreement with Nigeria and whose citizens are required to pay an amount of money if they stay in Nigeria for more than 3 months. The ECOWAS treaty states that nationals of member states have a free entry into Nigeria for 90 days; they also have the right of residence as well as the right to establish a business.

4.4.3. *Types of visas issued*

The types of visas issued to the students for study purposes were a subject of concern. Nearly all who required a visa were unhappy and disappointed that after waiting for a long period of time to obtain their visas, they were not issued the appropriate visa for their purpose of entering Nigeria; they were not given a study visa. From the interviews with these students, it was gathered that each were issued with either a business visa or a tourist visa and, according to them, what complicated matters was the length

of stay indicated on their visas - usually a maximum of three months. A policy document of the Nigeria Immigration Services defines the various categories of visa that it issues but for the sake of this study, a brief insight are given in terms of the definitions of a business visa, a tourist visa and a Subject to Regularization (STR) visa as these are the ones that were mentioned by participants at one point or the other of the discussions.

A business visa is a visa designed for business men/women and investors who enter Nigeria for business purposes; a tourist visa is for persons who wish to travel to Nigeria for the purpose of tourism; and a Subject to Regularization (STR) visa is issued to expatriates travelling to Nigeria to take up employment with individuals, corporate bodies or government. It should be noted that the Nigeria immigration policy makes no distinct mention of a study visa. It is not clear, therefore, whether provision is made for nationals from other countries who may wish to study in the country or whether the country is not keen to attract foreign students who wish to study at its institutions. Whatever the reasons might be, none of the students who claimed that they required a visa to come to Nigeria were issued with a study visa in their home country. Even for Participant A11 who happened to be the only one who had a smooth visa experience - amongst those who required visas - there was some kind of confusion about the type of visa she was issued. She said:

> After I knew what I needed and I got everything together, it was surprisingly easy and fast. There was just a little confusion as to whether I shouldn᾽t be given a student visa or a research visa because I᾽m conducting a research, instead of a business visa.

Obtaining an inappropriate visa type was not the only the concern of these participants; they also related problems experienced from the time they landed at the Nigerian airport. Immigration officers gave them a difficult time in terms of their reasons for coming to study in the country with a tourist visa and not a study visa; it was as if they did not acknowledge that it was their organisation back in the home country that had issued the visa.

All in all, a similar study by the University World News (2012) reveals that students are sometimes faced with the challenge of unclear visa regulation by the host country.

4.4.4   Renewing visas

Obtaining a tourist or a business visa was not much of a problem for the participants initially because they were assured that since the visa was issued by the Nigerian embassy in their home country, there would definitely not be a problem from the immigration officers on entering Nigeria and that they would be able to renew their visas. According to them, when they raised their concerns with the embassy as to why they were not given a study visa before proceeding to Nigeria, they were misinformed that they would be able to reclassify or regularize their visa to a student visa when they arrived in Nigeria;

55

however, they were faced with a different and stressful situation that they had not anticipated. Participant B4 said:

> At first, I was supposed to get an STR visa but we were misinformed by the Nigerian Consulate in Zambia, that 'no, just get a visitation visa, that's all'; when I come to Nigeria they would give me a student visa but when I came here as well they told me I was supposed to get an STR back in Zambia and that when I come here, they would regularize it and give me a student visa. So from Zambia, I got a visitation visa to Nigeria, when I got here, I had to go back to Zambia to get my STR and had to come back again.

Participant A10 from the United States of America was in a similar situation and at the time of the research he was still going through the process of having to reclassify his business visa as a study visa. He was told one thing back home in the US and on entering Nigeria he was told another; he wondered why there was a disparity in the communications he received from the same organization, but situated in different countries. According to him, the visa process was an ongoing process that he was still trying to sort out. He also found the process difficult and complicated as there appeared to be a back-and-forth process between the institution and the Nigerian embassy; he did not understand why the whole process could not be integrated to prevent him from going through such stress, especially when it came to renewing his visa.

Although the Nigerian visa policy states that nationals of Kenya can obtain a visa upon arrival in the country for a maximum stay of 90 days, the students from Kenya confirmed that they needed to apply for a visa in their home country as they were coming to study and would be in Nigeria for more than 90 days for the duration of each semester, which is not less than four months.

4.5   Theme 3: Terrorism in Nigeria – Boko Haram Insurgency

As mentioned in Chapter 3, this theme emerged during field work; it was not part of the original research questions but on entering the field it was found to be an important issue that impacts on inbound student mobility in Nigeria. This was confirmed during the interviews with the international students. A common response was that the participants were initially disturbed about coming to Nigeria to study because of the insurgency in the country caused by the terrorist group, Boko Haram. As suggested in the literature review, Boko Haram had become active in 14 of the 36 states by the end of 2012 (World Review, 2013). The students were also of the opinion that, generally, terrorism in Nigeria negatively impacts on the choice of students in coming to study in Nigeria. In relation to the push-pull theory of Lee (1966), push factors are traditionally known to be inherent in the country of origin. Interestingly, in the case of Nigeria, there is a slight shift as regards push factors. Some push factors are seen to manifest in Nigeria as the host country; the most prevalent being terrorism, as revealed in the findings. Terrorism in Nigeria does not only serve as a threat to present international students, it also constitutes a disincentive that causes prospective ones to be 'pushed' from Nigeria as a study destination option. In

a way, this refutes the equilibrium approach of the push-pull theory, in that it does not take into consideration the dynamics of different countries. Two sub-themes emerged in this theme: the concerns of students about Boko Haram and how the issue of Boko Haram affects the choice of prospective students to study in Nigeria. Terrorism and Boko Haram are used interchangeably in the discussion of this theme in the Nigerian context.

4.5.1 Concerns of students about terrorism in Nigeria

It may be questioned why students would choose to leave their country to study in a country where terrorism is perceived to be prevalent. An article published in the University World News (2016) by Marguerite Denis maintains that international students and their parents will consider the safety of locations and institutions. It is for this reason that the researcher decided to explore the international students' concerns about Boko Haram; whether or not they were aware of the movement before coming to Nigeria; and whether it bothered them or, perhaps, if it only bothered them once they were in the country. Different responses were gathered as discussed under three headings: some were concerned, some were not concerned and some were not aware before coming to Nigeria.

4.5.1.1 Some were concerned

It was discovered that some of the international students were concerned about the ongoing terrorism in Nigeria; however, their concerns were of different intensity. A set of students admitted out right that they were bothered, such as Participant B6 who emphatically exclaimed: "*Definitely! Definitely*!" Participant A8 admitted to being concerned - as was his family - but he believed that it was a risk worth taking and was of the opinion that Nigeria could not be as unsettled as his home country, Liberia, where a war had been going on for several years. When asked whether he was concerned, his sharp response was:

> *Oh yeah! One hundred percent! In fact my family were a little bewildered, every day we hear people killing, bombing. Myself, I got a little afraid but nothing ventured, nothing gained. Besides, there are other people living there so everybody is not going to die, they can`t kill everybody; if I`m just unfortunate, fine but I`m going in. And this country happens to be peaceful; I`ve been in a country where we fought almost fifteen years war.*

Participant A8 from Cameroun was a student who was greatly bothered, but was determined to come to Nigeria because she could not bear the thought of wasting a year applying for admission elsewhere.

For other students, coming to study in Nigeria bothered them, their families and their friends but they were able to overcome their fears to some extent because they had some information about the country that reassured them and encouraged them to proceed with their plans; since they had entered Nigeria, they had not experienced any terrorist attacks.

Participant A15 agreed with these students by emphasizing that he was really bothered but that the assurance given him by his friends who were studying in other universities across Nigeria encouraged him to come despite the threat of terrorism; they told him that terrorism in Nigeria was not as bad as people or the media reported it to be. That notwithstanding, his wives and children would occasionally telephone him to confirm that he was safe whenever they saw something about Boko Haram insurgents on television.

4.5.1.2 Some were not concerned

It was found that there were international students who were not concerned about Boko Haram and, again, these responses were also of a different intensity. Firstly, there were those that were not bothered because they were well-informed about the geography of Nigeria. They learnt that the terrorist group, Boko Haram, was operational in the Northern part of Nigeria (Abdulrasheed, Adaobi & Uzoechina, 2015) while the institutions they were attending were in the far South. One of them, Participant B8, when asked if she was concerned replied:

> *No, because I know Boko Haram is in the North and I'm here in Ota. Ota is in the South and I don't think from their past attacks they have ever done any attack in the South or in Lagos and the rest. They are mostly in Abuja and all those Northern areas, so it didn't really bother me.*

Participant A11 was another student who claimed she was not perturbed because she knew the location of Boko Haram and the location of her institution; she believed that nowhere was actually safe - based on her past experiences.

Secondly, there were those that were not concerned because they could relate to the ongoing terrorism in Nigeria based on the ongoing terrorism in their home country as well. One of them was Participant B11 from the Republic of Congo. Her response to the question on terrorism was:

> *No, not at all, because⋯first of all, I can't say it's contained because I'm not too sure of the politics here but Boko Haram is more of a Northern situation. And also in my country, in the East, there is a lot of war going on but it doesn't affect where we live, so it wasn't a concern.*

According to her, she understood the distance between the location of the terrorists and where she was because the same applied to her country. This was exactly like the story of Participant B2 from Kenya who cited a terrorist group called Al-Shabaab in Kenya and, based on his experience, he could compare the situation in his home country to what was happening in Nigeria. CNN (April 03, 2015) reported that Kenya's most prestigious universities was attacked by the Al-Shabaab group, killing 147 students.

Thirdly, another set of students, particularly those at Covenant University, were aware of Boko Haram before coming to Nigeria but they were not concerned because they strongly believed that they would be safe as they were attending a private institution that would have many safety precautions in place.

58

Their opinions were strengthened by the fact that Covenant University was a Christian institution and at that nothing evil would befall them.

They were determined to study in Nigeria in spite of the threat of terrorism. These students were sure that nothing would shake them in Nigeria as long as they were at that university. They had been there for a while and they felt that they could boldly say that since they came they had been safe. One of them, B15 from Kenya mentioned that there is always a high security at the institution to ensure that students were safe.

Lastly, there was another group of students who claimed that they did not know about the Boko Haram insurgency until they arrived in Nigeria. These students were not concerned in any way since they were not aware that any such thing was going on in the country. According to them, they came under the impression that Nigeria was a safe and peaceful country to study in and, therefore, they were not bothered about anything. Participant B12 from Sierra Leone said, *"Actually I wasn't aware of that till I stepped into Nigeria."* When asked how he felt after he entered the country and learnt there was terrorism, he said: *"I wasn't bothered because they didn't spread to this area but sometimes I get terrified and scared to be moving around."*

These students admitted that Boko Haram was a new and strange phenomenon to them when they first arrived in Nigeria. Those at Covenant University were calm even after learning about the terrorist movement because they were convinced that they were in a safe institution that was fully secluded from the outside world. According to Participant B16 from Kenya,

> *The issue of Boko Haram didn't even pop up in my mind, and people are always saying, 'Why are you going back to Nigeria? Shouldn't you change school? They will kill you, they will shoot you.' In my mind I was like I don't technically live in Nigeria because Covenant University doesn't feel like Nigeria, except for the heat. Covenant University is secluded from all these things; it's like we are not affected by what is happening in Nigeria. Our movement is restricted outside school and there is always high security; there are security guards in front of the halls, in front of the classes.*

However, for those at the public institution, University of Ibadan, there was little the institution could do to ensure their safety because students had the choice to either live on or off campus. These students felt secure in knowing that the Northern region where Boko Haram was active was far from them. However, according to the literature this insurgent group was founded in 2001 but only caught the world's attention in 2009 by mercilessly and openly causing havoc in the Northern part of Nigeria (Abdulrasheed, Adaobi & Uzoechina, 2015).

4.5.2   *How Boko Haram affects the choice of students to study in Nigeria*

In terms of the prediction of Marguerite Denis (University World News, 2016) that international students and their parents will consider safety in their choice of location or institution, this was another sub-theme that emerged in relation to terrorism in Nigeria. The number of international students studying in Nigeria has reduced since insecurity in the nation, largely caused by Boko Haram, arose. In this study, a review of documents collected from the National Universities Commission (NUC) related to student enrolments in Nigerian universities affirms that the number of international students studying in Nigeria dropped by approximately 60% within a space of ten years.   A former Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan said that the institution used to enrol a large number of foreign students from many countries until terrorism became a nightmare that 'pushed' them away.

The participants in this study were asked in what way they thought the issue of terrorism and Boko Haram affected the choice of students to study in Nigeria. All the participants agreed that terrorism in Nigeria was a major push factor to potential international students as those who heard and witnessed what was reported about Nigeria from afar were scared of just visiting the country, let alone staying for a long time to study. According to Participant A3, "*It tarnishes the image of the country as a whole. It makes people fearful to come here for studies.*" Participant B7 was keen to answer this question even before he entered Nigeria. He assumed the role of a researcher and decided to discover the motivation as well as drawbacks other applicants had about coming to Covenant University; his findings were consistent with some of the views of the other participants. He related details of his research:

> *If I may remember we were about a hundred plus or so students who applied, who really wanted to come into Covenant from Zambia through our church. So I now took it personally to say ok, let me find out from other students why really they feel they should come to Covenant University, what really inspired them, what are the challenges and what really is a drawback to them? From that survey I think I found out that the issue of insecurity in Nigeria, not just about Boko Haram but we hear of kidnapping, we hear of killings; all those things we watch from Nigerian movies, we hear about all those things, so it was a drawback, it was really a drawback to some of the students. Some of the applicants by then who wanted to come to Covenant University saw that as a challenge, huge challenge to say no, 'I would not like to study in Nigeria.'*

The participants were also of the opinion that the media did not help matters when they were broadcasting news about Boko Haram in Nigeria as they place greater emphasis on terrorist incidents in the country while paying little attention to or completely ignoring anything good; thus giving foreigners a wrong impression about the country. Participant B3 from the US maintained:

> *The media is brutal, so they don't stress how it's only a certain area and not everywhere. They just say 'Boko Haram blasts in Nigeria. Full stop!' So I think it does affect a lot.*

Other participants agreed with his view and believe that the media should stop scaring people away from Nigeria *via* the news; they should rather be specific in saying where Boko Haram is situated rather than giving the impression that they were in every part of the country. If they did this, outsiders would be better informed about the situation of terrorism in the country.

Furthermore, the findings from the semi-structured interviews revealed that just as Nigeria was missing out in terms of opportunities due to the rate of insurgency in the country, some international students were also being deprived of what was available to them in the country.

The participants expressed concern about the nature of terrorism in the country; they expected more from the Nigerian government in curbing or eliminating the insurgency. They displayed a good level of understanding on the subject of internationalization and student mobility, in particular. Some of them referred to Kenya by drawing attention to the fact that there was also terrorism there but foreign students still went there in large numbers because the situation was well contained by the government by means of strict security measures. From their responses, it may be concluded that other African countries still attract many international students and, in turn, they reap the benefits of internationalization. This is consistent with various research reports in the literature on internationalization which maintain that student mobility is beneficial to countries and their institutions, including providing an economic boost (Aloyo, 2008; Horden, 2012; Khadria, 2012; Ortiz, Chang & Fang, 2015). Participants were of the opinion that something had to be done urgently to save Nigeria from being perpetually disadvantaged when it came to matters concerning internationalization. Participant B15 from Kenya elaborated on her views as follows:

> *I think currently even if we were to have more international students coming to Nigeria to study regardless of what university, that number is dwindling because Boko Haram's hold on Nigeria is increasing and so Nigeria is no longer as much as an option as much as other African countries are. If the Nigerian government doesn't try and fix the problem in Nigeria, there will be a lot more brain drain in the next two years than it has been in the past four years and that's because the situation in Nigeria is getting worse and worse so people don't even have incentive to send their children to Nigeria. I know people would send their children to South Africa, people are sending their children to Kenya; a lot of Nigerians go to Kenya, there is this school called USIU, United States International University, a lot of Nigerians go there. So people are sending their children back to Africa to study but they are not sending them to Nigeria and you ask yourself why because in Kenya there is Al-Shabaab but Kenya has put very stringent security in place that regardless of how bad Al-Shabaab gets in Kenya, Kenya still feels safe for the students. Nigerian government needs to make Nigeria safe enough to the people in Nigeria and for people outside so they are willing to send their children back.*

In support of Participant B15, Batista, Lacuesta and Vicente (2007) suggest that brain drain is one of the major demerits of student mobility that has to do with a country losing its skilled labour - which is already in short supply - through outward migration. They add that brain drain has a global effect but that African countries are more susceptible to it.

4.6   Theme 4: Recommending studying in Nigeria to others

Participants were asked if they would recommend studying in Nigeria to others, especially peers in their home country. This theme emanated from the statement made by Lee (1966) in the analysis of his theory that "the flow of knowledge back from destination facilitates the passage for later migrants." Although,

migrants are not fully representative of their country of origin, the researcher aimed to find out how current international students would be instrumental in 'pulling' potential students to Nigeria. Three types of responses were elicited: yes; no; and it depends. Each of the responses was accompanied with a reason(s) which are discussed under three sub-headings, namely: 'Yes and why?', 'No and why not?' and 'It depends'.

4.6.1   Yes and why?

The participants in this category affirmed that they would recommend Nigeria to other foreign students as a study destination; some of them mentioned that they did that from time to time, particularly during the holidays when they went back to their home country. However, each participant had a reason(s) for making the recommendation. Participant B6 maintained that he would definitely recommend studying in Nigeria to peers in Tanzania as he thought that Nigeria offered quality education and that the country had a good exposure to technology. In addition, Participant B8 from Cameroun believed that Nigeria was one of the African countries that could boast of a high academic standard; his response was:

> *Yeah, the top most education in Africa is in Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, South Africa⋯ in terms of academics, they are high.*

A study conducted by the British Council (2014) in four African countries, namely, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria shows that, as a whole, Africa is experiencing rapid growth in student enrolments without a corresponding growth in resources which leads to a drop in the quality of education and to poorly-skilled graduates. Madichie and Madichie (20009), on the other hand, believe that over the years Africa has witnessed a tremendous growth in its higher educational systems with sub-Saharan Africa alone having 800 higher institutions of learning to cater for approximately 10 million students but the quality of education does not seem to be improving - with the exception of a few countries, like South Africa and Egypt. They reached this conclusion based on a study they conducted with Nigerian students studying in the UK where they found that the perceived low quality of education was the major push factor from their country. While the researcher is of the opinion that this is inconsistent with the position of the British Council (2014) that growth in student enrolment is not commensurate with growth in resources, it is - to an extent - consistent with the position of Madichie and Madichie (2009) who maintain that there are a few African countries that can boast of quality education. It is important to say, therefore, that the participant students perceived education in Nigeria to be of a high quality in comparison with their home countries. Participant A6 subscribed to the notion that the quality of education in Nigeria was far better than that obtainable in his country, Liberia, where war has impacted negatively on the educational system and on manpower development. He cited a solution initiative to revive the glory of education in his country and in conclusion mentioned that "*In fact, it is part of what we are trying to propose, student-faculty exchange programme between Liberia*

62

and Nigeria." This is consistent with the view of the British Council (2014) that student mobility leads to collaborative partnerships, such as student and faculty exchanges.

Closely related to the above reason was the view of some participants that there was an availability of quality learning resources in Nigeria and, therefore, they were willing to recommend the country. Their reasons were related mostly to their courses of study; they seemed satisfied and happy with the learning materials available to them.

Participant A10 from the US who was involved in postgraduate research at the time of this study added:

> *I will continue to recommend because like I said there is no experience like being in the country, and there are many African countries for people interested in African studies to go and I will also continue to promote Nigeria because it is an important African country to major in African culture. So when I return home, I think in addition to promoting it and telling people, people should be able to see in my work that it is a worthwhile thing.*

Rivza and Teichler (2007) agree by suggesting that when students study abroad, they benefit from a higher quality of education or specialisation which is not available in their home country. In the same vein, his responses validates the view of the proponent of the push and pull theory, Lee, that the flow of knowledge back form a destination country represents a good pull factor for later migrants considering international study.

Some of the participants intended recommending studying in Nigeria to others for cultural reasons. They recognized that Nigeria was a nation with a high cultural heritage and they believed that in addition to academic gains, it was an opportunity for international students to learn about different cultures.

Njuguna and Itegi (2013) believe that a new trend has emerged related to the subject of student mobility. According to the literature, internationally mobile students now prefer to study in their region – at a regional hub (Rumbley, Altbach & Reisberg, 2012). This is contrary to the disproportionate one-way flow in student mobility from developing to developed countries that has characterised the subject for many years. The participant students realised - in line with the report of the University World News (2014) - that it is more affordable to study in a country within their region than going very far away. In the light of this Participant A7 said, "*I will recommend because it's affordable, especially in this region.*"

Participants also mentioned that they were willing to recommend Nigeria because the people were friendly. They believe that international students will not have much trouble settling in because Nigerians are friendly and welcoming. Some of them shared their experiences of how they were taught how to speak Nigerian Pidgin, sometimes called 'broken' which is an English-based creole language spoken as a *lingua franca* across Nigeria; Nigerians see it as a fast and shortened form of English. The findings of this study show that local students have a positive attitude to foreign students; they are eager

63

to teach them to speak pidgin so that they do not feel left out of conversations with local students. This serves as a potentially high pull factor for international students.

Based on the above findings, it is a general notion that the above international students have good experiences in Nigeria and that they would be willing to recommend the country to peers. These students believe that Nigeria is a place for anyone who cherishes quality education; seeks an affordable education; desires to learn a new culture; and wants to be in the midst of friendly and welcoming people.

4.6.2   No and why not?

As much as some responses revealed that international students are more than willing to recommend studying in Nigeria to others, findings from the semi-structured interviews reveal that some are not. What informed their responses is largely based on the personal experiences they have had in Nigeria. They would not want anyone from their home country to go through any unpleasant experiences. The tone and the countenances of these students suggested that if they were given another chance to choose where they would study, they would never choose Nigeria. They would, therefore, not recommend Nigeria and they would discourage anyone who they knew intended studying in Nigeria from doing so. Participant A4 from Ghana who had already spent four years in the country and was in his final year of study replied to the question of recommendation as follows:

> *No, I will advise you to go abroad, find another school. I won' t want my fellow citizens to pass through what I passed through.*

His response suggests that he had not enjoyed his stay in Nigeria. Participant B7 agreed by answering:

> *Honestly, no. What I' ve gone through (laughs), was quite challenging so I would not really recommend for someone to come here and go through the same thing."*

In attempting to discover what some of these students actually went through when they declined to recommend Nigeria, Participant B2, a Kenyan and student at Covenant University, said that his institution was enclosed and the few times he had an opportunity to go outside the campus he found Nigeria too rough a place. The unpleasant experiences of others reflect a reality that they had to struggle for everything in Nigeria from registration to having easy access to lecturers and finding accommodation.

There were those who would not recommend Nigeria because Covenant University or the University of Ibadan was the only institution they had been to in Nigeria and, therefore, could not generalize the quality or level of student satisfaction at all Nigerian universities. Participants from Covenant University, especially, would not recommend studying in Nigeria because they had heard and seen on television that there was a high level of cultism at other Nigerian universities, particularly the public

64

ones and they would not want someone from their home country to fall victim of such a horrific occurrence.

4.6.3 It depends

When asked whether they would be willing to recommend studying in Nigeria to their peers at home, a set of participants maintained a middle position. They reported that on the one hand studying in Nigeria was worthwhile but, on the other hand, it depended on the individual student - based on factors that needed considering.

They maintained that they had experienced a high culture-shock in Nigeria and so anyone who intended studying in Nigeria should think carefully about whether he/she would be able to handle it. For example, Participant B18 from the US said:

> *Yes and no depending on the person because some people can't handle it, some people can't handle the culture shock. Some people can't just understand the food, the difference…it's more of culture shock but once you get used to it, you get used to it.*

A review of research in the literature on student mobility, like that by Pherali (2012), reveals that cultural issues are often associated with internationally mobile students and that a lot of them struggle with language barriers and cultural settings which pose a challenge to their educational pursuits. Moreover, language and cultural barriers hinder foreign students from engaging in social events and communication (Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2015). The implication of this for an institution is that students who encounter unpalatable experiences in their study country might have to cut their stay short and return to their home country.

Another perception by the participants was that choosing to study in Nigeria should depend on the course of study or research focus of the individual. Participant A11 from Germany said:

> *Yes, but of course it depends on what you want. For me working on literature, there are so many scholars right here in Ibadan and you can learn a lot from them.*

There were others who felt that studying in Nigeria was strictly a matter of choice. For them, Nigeria was a country where one had to be really determined and strong in order to succeed, so prospective students needed make well-informed choices. Inasmuch as they saw Nigeria as a great study destination, they said that they would present the facts about Nigeria to intending international students and leave them to decide rather than out rightly recommending the country. It was suggested that any intending students should reflect on their ability to cope because it took a lot to survive in Nigeria. Other factors to consider included electricity issues; slowness in getting things done; and strike action at Nigerian public universities.

65

This sub-theme affirms Lee's analysis of the push and pull theory of migration, that individual characteristics play an important role in migration decisions because people have varying coping abilities and therefore respond differently to 'plus' and 'minus' factors in sending and host countries, although emphasis is on the host country in this study. De Haans (2008) refers to this as migration selectivity which accounts for individual differences and risks associated with destination countries.

4.7   Analysis through the theoretical lens

The push and pull theory of migration has been described as an individual choice and equilibrium model (De has, 2008). The theory has been argued to appear attractive at first, incorporating all the factors that play important roles in the decision to migrate, such as environmental, demographic and economic factors (Eric, 2014; Tiana, 2015). On the contrary, this study has revealed that there are some intervening factors in the process of migration that are not considered in the theory. Although the theory has been very useful in conceptualising the reasons why people choose to leave their country of origin for another destination; there are more somewhat unpronounced factors that influence migration than enumerated by the theory. Firstly, it is true that economic, educational, environmental and demographic factors cannot be overemphasised as affecting migration as affirmed by participants' responses; factors such as religion, the influence of others and decisions emanating from self-motivation are not inculcated in the theory, as seen from the interview responses.

Secondly, in-transit factors that affect migration do not receive due attention in the theory. Findings from this study have shown that migration is not a linear phenomenon as portrayed by the theory. It transcends leaving a country of origin to a country of destination. There are underlying events that occur between leaving one country for another, which are silent in the explanation of the migration theory. For example, participants in this study met with immigration obstacles in coming to Nigeria. The issue of visa played a significant but uneasy role in their migration decisions. Further, the intensity of the obstacle encountered differed with individuals and countries of origin.

Thirdly, the argument that migrants are pulled into other countries that are better and richer is made in relation to an apparent poor condition in their home countries which causes them to be pushed out. In other words, the notion that conditions in the host country are more palatable than those in the sending country does not hold true as portrayed by this study. We see international students from developed nations such as Germany, USA and UK coming to study in a developing nation as Nigeria.

Fourthly, the push and pull theory does not give room for the dynamism of individual countries. Apart from the generic factors applicable to countries, there are factors that are peculiar to individual countries. For instance, terrorism is a unique factor that comes to play in Nigeria and which have an effect on inbound mobility in the country.

66

Lastly, the way people experience their destination country and their willingness to recommend it to others is not incorporated in the theory. The theory creates an assumption that people automatically find fulfilment in their destination, while ignoring the possibility of an entirely or partially different occurrence to the perceived one.

Historically, the push and pull theory is mainly used in terms of what pushes people from their country and what attracts them to the host country. However, in the context of this study, the theory cannot be applied technically in terms of how it has been applied in other contexts. Here, we see push factor manifesting itself more internally as a deterrent in the host country rather than as a push out from the sending country alone.

From the foregoing, I agree with De Haas that it is doubtful if the push and pull theory is of much analytical use because it appears to be more of a descriptive model in which the various factors that play a role in migration decisions are elucidated in a somewhat arbitrary way.

4.8   Conclusion

This chapter discussed four of the seven themes that emerged from data obtained for this study; the four themes are those that relate to national data. Findings revealed that participants have varying views on why they chose to study in Nigeria; the process of applying to a Nigerian university; the issue of terrorism in the country; and in recommending studying in Nigeria to peers at home. Their responses were substantiated from the reviewed literature as well as an analysis of relevant documents in conjunction with the push and pull theory of migartion. The next chapter, Chapter 5, continues the discussion in terms of the remaining three themes as they relate to institutional data.

CHAPTER 5

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: CHOICES, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Introduction

An analysis of the second category of themes is presented in this chapter as a continuation of the four themes discussed in the previous chapter. As mentioned earlier, these themes are based on institutional data. The two case institutions in this study were the University of Ibadan, a public institution, and Covenant University, a private institution. International students from these institutions were interviewed in one-on-one semi-structured interviews and institutional documents related to the research were also analysed. Codes, as used for participants in the previous chapter, are also employed in this chapter. Data from the two institutions is not for comparison in any way, but strictly to fully understand the views of the students in relation to the research questions. In this chapter profiles of the two participating institutions are presented for easy contextualisation, followed by a discussion of the three emerging themes, namely:

68

- Choosing an institution for study
- Process of applying to the institution
- Recommendations

5.2   The University of Ibadan (Institution A)

The University of Ibadan (UI) was the first university to be established in Nigeria. It began in 1948 as a college campus of the University of London in a special relationship scheme to serve the West African Anglophone countries; it attained full university status in 1962, two years after Nigeria gained independence from Britain. Beginning with academic programmes in Arts, Sciences and Medicine, UI as it is fondly known is now a model institution in Nigeria and a comprehensive citadel of learning offering academic programmes in thirteen faculties, namely: Arts, Social Sciences, Law, Science, Basic Medical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Dentistry, Public Health, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine, Technology, Education, and Agriculture and Forestry. There are also specialized Institutes of Advanced Medical Research and Training, Child Health, Education and African Studies. In total, the university runs 77 undergraduate and 396 postgraduate programmes; new postgraduate programmes, both academic and professional, have been approved by Senate to enrich the pool of postgraduate programmes at the university. Being the oldest university in the country, it is committed to offering academic excellence which is targeted at meeting society's needs for innovation; hence, its slogan, 'The first and the best.' The university is currently rated number one in Nigeria and number eight in Africa, according to the Webometrics ranking of 2015. It is also known for research in the areas of tropical medicine, public health issues and sustainable development, African studies, Agriculture, and Biotechnology.

UI is one of the leading postgraduate institutions in Africa, supplying the human capital needs of Nigeria and other African countries, particularly those in West Africa which constitutes 60% of its international student body. Student enrolments at the university as at 2015 stand at 29,359, made up of 12,894 (44%) undergraduates and 16,465 (56%) postgraduates. This is moving rapidly to the attainment of the university's vision of a 60:40 postgraduate to undergraduate ratio. The female to male ratio at the university stands at 59:41. UI produced 4022 graduates and 3,277 postgraduates including 262 doctoral degrees in 2012 and 4243 graduates in 2013. UI boasts of quality human resources that consist of academic staff and researchers as well as technologists and administrative staff. At the time of this research, professors and readers accounted for approximately 30% of academic staff (which exceeds the National Universities Commission [NUC] prescription of 20%); senior lecturers were approximately 400 and there were about 699 lecturers. This explains why the university is able to foster a high level of postgraduate training and research. There has been a phenomenal postgraduate enrolment growth from 4,864 in the 2001/2002 academic year to 16,465 in 2014/2015. This implies an average increase

of 26% *per* year over a period of 13 years. In response to this increase, the university has constantly upgraded postgraduate facilities and programmes and engaged the services of resourceful retired professors as well as increased funding to enhance cutting edge research.

In pursuit of internationalization, the Office of International Programmes (OIP) was founded in May 2009. The OIP is tasked with the responsibility of assisting UI staff and students as well as international scholars, students and visitors to maximize the benefits of global engagement. However, the number of international students could not be ascertained from the OIP at the time of this study. In a bid to make internationalization a top priority, UI has established over 170 collaborative ventures with institutions and agencies around the world. The university has also recorded a growth in its number of new global centres of excellence - funded largely by the MacArthur Foundation - dedicated to multidisciplinary research and postgraduate training as well as to promoting regional and international partnerships to meet both local and international needs in diverse fields. With a mission to promote quality in African higher education and research, the UI, in recognition of its academic and research excellence, was chosen by the African Union as the West African hub for the Pan African University for Earth and Life Sciences (PAULESI). PAULESI has a record of the attendance of a large number of scholarship students from West Africa who come for postgraduate studies at the university. UI is also committed to producing graduates who are innovative, self-reliant and trained to be employers of labour rather than adding to the congested world of unemployed graduates.

5.3   Covenant University (Institution B)

Covenant University (CU), founded in October 2002, is a private Christian university located in Canaan land, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. It was established by the World Mission Agency, an arm of the Living Faith Church Worldwide - also known as Winners Chapel. Dr David Olaniyi Oyedepo, who is the President of the Living Faith Church Worldwide, is the visionary chancellor of the university. Founded on a Christian mission and ethos, the university is vision-driven and committed to pioneering academic excellence. CU is known for pioneering the revolution in higher education in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. It was the first private university in Nigeria to have the fastest approval of its operating licence from the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the first in the history of the Nigerian higher education to begin full academic and administrative activities with full facilities at its permanent site. The university is also the first to obtain approval for all the 16 programmes presented to the NUC for accreditation. According to Webometrics (2015), CU is rated the best private university in Nigeria. Academic programmes at the university are run in four colleges and six schools within two annual semesters, namely: Alpha Semester which runs from August to December and Omega Semester which runs from January to May. The university is built on seven core values which are: spirituality, possibility

mentality, capacity building, integrity, responsibility, diligence and sacrifice and at the time of the study, CU had 9,086 students and 1,113 staff members - a favourable lecturer-student ratio.

Covenant University's drive towards internationalisation led to the establishment of its International Office in October 2007 with 14 international students; later the name changed to the International Students' Office and then it changed again to the International Student Services; due to the expanding scope of the institution, it is now known as the International Offices and Linkages (IOL) with 31 international students as at the time of this study. The IOL is responsible for the development of internationalisation at CU through the initiation, coordination and facilitation of all internationally-related initiatives and activities. As part of its internationalisation moves, *inter alia*, the university has established partnerships with several universities globally; it also engages in faculty, student and material exchanges; research participation and conference planning; recruiting international students; and internationalising its curriculum. Thus far, the IOL has facilitated collaborative talks between Covenant University and more than 32 foreign universities and cooperative organizations. According to a policy document of the institution, an international student at CU is defined as any intending student applying to the university for admission who is not a citizen of Nigeria or is a Nigerian who will be attending the university from a foreign country.

An analysis of the student handbook of CU reveals that the institution has a set of well-defined policies to which the participants often referred during the interviews. For easy contextualization, the following are paraphrased and highlighted as they pertain to this study:

- Mobile phones or any gadgets that are capable of making and receiving calls are not allowed (p. 67).
- All students must live in the halls of residence provided by the university (p. 35).
- Students must possess a minimum requirement of 5 credits in the West African Examination Council (WAEC)/National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB), a pass mark from Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) and post-JAMB before being considered for admission (p. 54).
- Attendance of Chapel services and all religious activities organized by the school is compulsory for all students (p. 62).
- Students are not allowed to complete exit forms to leave the institution more than four times in a semester (p. 66).

5.4 Theme 5: Choosing an institution at which to study

This theme emerged from the research question that sought to discover the reason(s) why the international student participants in this study chose the institution where they were studying. Responses were peculiar to each institution, as can be seen in the discussed below.

5.4.1 *Choosing the University of Ibadan*

The interview responses suggest that the reputation of the University of Ibadan was a major factor that pulled international student to it. As the first university in Nigeria, students and scholars generally seem to believe that it is the best - just as its motto says: 'The first and the best.' When asked why he chose UI, Participant A from Ghana replied:

> *The University of Ibadan is actually regarded as the first and the best, so I couldn᾽t go to a university less than the first and the best.*

The participants attested to the fact that Institution A has a long standing academic reputation not only in Nigeria but also in Africa, especially the West African sub-region. For example, Participant A15 from Ghana explained that his organisation was only willing to sponsor his PhD programme if he was willing to do it in West Africa. After a search of institutions he found that the University of Ibadan stood out in the region. He commented:

> *I couldn᾽t have gone outside West Africa if I wanted them to sponsor me so I looked at the University of Ibadan as against other universities within the sub-region and I saw that it has got the characters and the needed pedigree for me to study here.*

Beine, Noel and Ragot (2014) maintain that the quality of universities in destination countries is a major attraction for international students. The participants, particularly those from Cameroun and Liberia, repeated that Institution A was reputed for its academic quality; superior learning facilities; and high profiled faculty members – better than they had in their home countries. They admitted that the institution was well-known in their countries and served as a point of reference for Nigeria. Coupled with high academic standard, they also believed that the conducive learning environment and the serene and peaceful location were advantages.

The participants expressed the notion that a certificate obtained from UI was highly recognized and respected worldwide. In a similar study conducted in seven South African universities Lee and Sehoole (2015) found that one of the reasons why students chose South Africa as their study destination was because they believed that the certificate or degree obtained from any of its well- ranked institutions would give them an edge in the global labour market.

Scholarship opportunities were another major reason that made UI the choice of some of the participants which is consistent with the literature that states that students are 'pulled' towards countries where they know they would have access to financial support from the government or institutions in the form of

scholarships, bursaries, loans and even discounted tuition fees (Cremonini & Antonicz, 2009). Their scholarships only allowed the participants to study at UI and while some liked the idea and willingly accepted the offer, others accepted it only because they had no other choice and because it was close to their home country. Lee and Sehoole (2015) also found out that students prefer to study at a destination close to their home country. As established earlier that UI is a regional hub for the PAN African University in West Africa, international students are granted scholarships to study there.

One of the benefits of internationalisation is that it fosters partnerships between institutions. According to the British Council study (2014), student mobility leads to collaborative partnerships, such as student and faculty exchanges as well as research and degree collaborations. Participant B11, amongst others, confirmed that she was conducting her research at the University of Ibadan because of the relationship that existed between UI and her institution back in Germany. When questioned why she made UI her choice, she stated:

> *My university already has relations with this university here and I just met scholars who are interested in my field here so it's great for me to present my ideas and discuss with them.*

Similarly, this rationale is consistent with what Madichie and Madichie (2013) suggest - that partnerships in higher education are being developed between Africa and the most unlikely nations that have no colonial links to Africa, something they described as a paradigm shift in higher education. Apart from the partnership, Participant B11 pointed out that the availability of scholars who were interested in her research area pulled her to UI. The literature on internationalization emphasizes that through collaboration and partnerships among academics and institutions, research has become internationalised and that some research projects cannot be effectively carried out at a national level (Eitzen & Zinn, 2012). International study affords scholars the experiences and avenues to meet people who promote collective creativity.

In addition to the above reasons, most of the participants were largely influenced by the testimony of other people who either knew UI and its pedigree or who were part of its alumni. They admitted that these people had been influential in their decisions to study at UI; these testimonies strengthened their decisions to study at UI. Again, this affirms the opinion of Mazzarol and Souter that referrals and recommendations from others, be it former migrants, constitutes pull factors in choosing a destination country or institution.

Others admitted that they did not initially know much about the institution - as in the case of Participant A13 who related the following:

> *At the beginning I was unaware of the standard of the university. I learnt about the university through the PAN African partnership scheme and I researched further to discover the historical*

reputation of the university. I also discussed with some brothers and friends of mine living in Ibadan, they encouraged me and regarded the university as the best in the country.

The above confirms that recommendations from people go a long way in influencing the choice of institutions for study. Participant A13 also mentioned that he learned from alumni that UI was void of cultism as opposed to other public universities in Nigeria where the practice was strong.

5.4.2 *Choosing Covenant University*

The reasons for participants' choice of Covenant University were, to a large extent, different from those of their UI colleagues. The most common reason why participants chose Covenant University was because it was a Christian institution with a high spirituality and moral standing. Participant B2 affirmed this:

> *I chose Covenant University because it is a Christian University; it' s an acclaimed Christian university in Africa and I' m a Christian. I always like to grow spiritually even as I grow mentally and physically.*

A popular response from the participants indicated that they were Christians and that they recognized the need to develop spiritually from a young age. They made it known that there was a high level of morality and zero tolerance for ill-discipline at CU. They believed that it was more beneficial to attend an institution that would build the 'total man' which would make them well-rounded people.

A section of the institution's handbook indicated that the university's commitment and vow was to make a 'Total Man' of the students. It states that "the Total Man Concept (TMC)" is Covenant University's custom-built programme that constitutes the core concept of her academic programmes. This concept centres on 'developing the man that will develop his world.' It is designed to make the student intelligently conscious of his environment and, thus, able to maximize his/her potential. The programmes of the university are directed at 'the person' before his/her profession. In this way, the university intends raising a generation of experts who possess the capacity to face and manage challenges. The TMC Programme centres on three components of the human personality: the spirit, the mind and the body (Covenant University Student Handbook, 2015:6).

Although some students admitted that their parents had made the choice for them, it was the fact that CU was reputed to be an institution with an uncompromising Christian standard that sealed their choice. The parents believed that their children would, in addition to acquiring an education, imbibe Christian values and virtues that would shape their lives before graduation. They believed this would help to curb the youthful exuberances that these students were prone to at their age. One of the participants who attested to this was Participant B19 who explained that her parents were not happy with the her lifestyle

74

back in the UK and, therefore, decided it would be best for her to come to a Christian school where they believed she would imbibe Christian virtues to lead a decent life. She said:

> *I did not choose this university; my parents chose it for me as they felt it was a place where someone can get training, they can be tamed and get Christian virtues and coming from where I was coming from, UK isn't a particularly Christian place, so they felt this would be the best school for me to come to and adapt.*

As indicated in the previous chapter, the most abiding reason for the choice of CU was that participants in this study were members of Winners Chapel, a church branch of the institution in their respective countries. They were aware of the school and it was, therefore, easy for them and their parents to make the choice; the teachings they are exposed to at church would be strengthened by those of the institution.

The responses of the participants also suggested that they were attracted to CU because it was a private university with high quality education. Being a private university, it has no record of strike action that is characteristic of public institutions in Nigeria and that causes students to spend longer studying than they should (Jekayinfa, Yahaya & Yusuf, 2010). Referring to private universities in Nigeria, an NUC document states that the need for private universities arose because the public universities were becoming internally inefficient due to incessant strike action arising from disagreement between the government and university staff members (NUC, 2010).

Participants also alluded to the fact that a degree certificate obtained from CU was highly valued and much respected in the labour market, making it easy for them to obtain jobs. The students added that they knew quite a few students who had graduated from the university with good grades.

Participant B16 developed a passion to attend Covenant University when she read about the institution on their website. She was drawn to the fact that the learning environment was conducive as well as to the motto that states: "Raising a New Generation of Leaders." When probed, she added that she had become more passionate about enrolling at the institution when she discovered that it was highly rated academically.

Her response was in agreement with that of Participant B5 from Liberia who commented that after his mother had informed him that he would be attending Covenant University, he did a Google search about the institution and discovered facts that motivated him.

As with their UI counterparts, the interviews with the participants at CU suggested that some of them were influenced in their decisions to come to the university by current and/or former students or people who were well-informed about the institution; they agreed that even though they had considered coming to CU, the influence of these people had helped strengthen their decisions. In the response of Participant B7, the idea enrolling at CU was that of her parents; however, she was encouraged to come there by

people she knew who had graduated from CU with good grades. She said: "*I have family friends who studied at this university and graduated with good grades.*"

5.5   Theme 6: Process of applying to an institution

Each participant had to go through the process of application before gaining admission to a university. The participants were asked for their views on the process of applying to their institution of study. Basically, this theme focuses on how easy or difficult the application for admission was for international students. An analysis of participants' responses is given according to each institution.

5.5.1   Institution A

The international students at the University of Ibadan gave different views of their experiences regarding the application process. Their responses revealed that very few found the process easy; some found it to be quite difficult while others saw it as partly easy and partly difficult. Those who found the process a relatively easy task had applied online in their home country before coming to Nigeria and their experience of the whole process was a smooth one. When asked how easy or difficult the application process was, Participant A9 remarked:

> *It was not so difficult, thanks to advancement in technology. I just got my admission through the internet, I applied online. It was very easy.*

The students acknowledged that they found Nigeria advanced in technology; they did not have to travel to apply as they did everything online. Only after receiving feedback that they had been granted admission did they travel to Nigeria to begin registration and settle down to study.

There were those who shared a common view that the admission process was not difficult simply because they knew people in Nigeria who helped them with their applications, thereby facilitating the process. As Participant A5 stated:

> *For the admission, it was a family friend who actually helped us but I think it was straight forward compared to Cameroun because I didn′t have to give a bribe for anything and once my grade were good from my advanced level. We sent the credentials to UI and they gave me the admission. There was nothing really challenging once the grades were good, it was easy. I was one of the second set of people they took for direct entry in UI.*

 Participant A11 from Germany explained that the fact that her institution was in partnership with the University of Ibadan made the process of application easy. She made it known that scholars and faculty members at UI were very helpful in ensuring that her application was smooth and successful. These examples underline some of the measures taken by universities in Nigeria not to be left out of the move to internationalization and Robert-Okah (2015) is of the opinion that partnerships with foreign education counterparts are one of these measures.

For another group of students, the process of applying to the university was a difficult one. They made it known that despite the fact that they had applied online, the process was still not easy. One common issue they referred to was the delay they encountered in receiving a feedback regarding their applications. For example, Participant A8 who had come from Liberia on a scholarship cited the frustrations experienced during the process. When questioned about the application process, he narrated his experience in the following way:

> It took a long time, there were lots of delays; it took a long time because I had applied for the programme in 2012, around February and I even wrote my institution requesting that I leave for school by September 2012 because that was the cut-off point but I didn't get ticket and the order of financing to come over and my institution began saying, "Ah! Are you sure that's an authentic scholarship…Nigeria…", I said, "Yeah, I'm sure" but then they said, "If you can't go by December, maybe we will have to lay you off" but then by December I got the ticket and by January 7, 2013 flew into Nigeria. So it was really delayed.

Participant A10 from the US who also complained about delays, said he eventually got people in the US to help to contact prominent people, like professors, in Nigeria in order to facilitate his application process. According to Participant A4 Nigeria, particularly, was lagging behind in technological advancement that was sweeping across the globe. He had expected the process of application to be done online so students would only need to travel down to proceed with their studies. Contrary to expectation, application was done online to a limited extent; after applying online, he still had to attend to some aspects in person in order to complete the process.

Participant A4 was not the only one whose expectations were not met; others also expected the University of Ibadan to be fully digital in terms of applications for admission. In corroborating the views of Participant A4, but slightly differently, it was discovered that there were others who found the online application easy but not without their challenges. For example, Participant A15 said:

> It was fine to me, I feel they've gone digital and everything is now done online. Application and everything we have to do it online, but sometimes we have problems with networks and sometimes we want to download something it becomes a problem. One other problem is that they give indication that if you have a problem dial this numbers but sometimes they don't pick calls or even reply messages.

Another challenge that was encountered was with payment. Some of the participants admitted that their application was easy and done online but that there was a need to travel to Nigeria to make payments which could not be done online.

All in all, an emphatic response was that the application for admission to the University of Ibadan was not as easy as they had expected in this 21st century where almost everything has gone digital. Their hopes that the university would be the first and the best in Nigeria were, therefore, dashed. Their notion

agreed with of Tagoe (2012) who maintains that poor technology is one of the reasons why many African institutions lag behind their world class counterparts.

5.5.2   Institution B

The interview responses revealed that international students at Covenant University all applied online and that while some found the process easy, others did not. For those who did not find the application process easy, one common issue was the uploading of their results as well the conversion of their high school grades to those of the Nigerian system. As mentioned in the previous chapter, at least five credits including Mathematics and English in an O level examination which could be either WAEC (West Africa Examination Council), NECO (National Examination Council) or GCE (General Certificate of Education) coupled with a pass mark from the JAMB is required for admission into any Nigerian University. This was a major challenge for most of the international students at CU. They maintained that the university portal for admission did not specify a platform on which international students could apply and, therefore, it was difficult to upload their results.

Their responses further suggested that the institution did not consider the fact that international students would be interested in applying for admission to the university. Their system was stereotyped in requesting the uploading of Nigerian O level results whereas different examinations are peculiar to different countries. Although the handbook of the institution states that international students must meet the requirement of the JAMB and post-JAMB screening, international students do not write the JAMB examination to gain admission to CU; most of them are admitted based on the examinations they wrote in their respective countries as well as a few that wrote an entrance examination or attended an interview organized by the institution. Participant B16 from Botswana asserted:

> It was really hectic because I was applying online, and our documents are not the same as they use here. They are using NECO, JAMB and WAEC while we are using IGC, so in the application form you'll see that you have to upload your WAEC and JAMB and I was using IGC, so that is one of the things that I experienced that really gave me a hard time.

Participants who were members of the Living Faith Church mentioned that they were able to obtain help with their applications from their pastors who assisted in contacting the university. They suggested that those who were not members would have had a tough time with their applications, adding that they would have expected the website to have a direct link where international students could fill in forms, upload results and make payments but it did not.

Coupled with the difficulty of converting and uploading results was the challenge of communication. When some participants encountered difficulties in their applications, they tried to contact the school which was another challenge. It emerged from the findings that when participants eventually located a

78

university official with whom they could communicate for the right information, that person did not always give them timeous feedback.

Amongst other difficulties experienced was that of payment. It was a prevalent response that participants had a problem figuring out what account to pay to as well as how much to pay because the stipulated amount was only in Naira. However, one or two admitted that the problem was rectified which implies that some improvements were recently made on the website for a better application service. Evidence from the interviews suggests that newer students had few or no problems with their applications. The motivation for the developments online can be traced to a recent statement in the policy handbook of Covenant University: "The Webometric initiative began as a mandate to ensure an acceptable ranking in the overall Webometric rating of Universities and Institutions of Higher Learning Worldwide." which resulted in a revamped university website with increased content and visibility and with a definite move towards the deployment of dynamic content management systems across departments. (Covenant University Handbook, 2015:31)

Despite the difficulties experienced by the international students, there were others who found the application process easy. Just like their colleagues, they also applied online but, according to them, they encountered no difficulties. Participant B9 from Zambia, particularly, found it easy, he remarked: "*The process of applying was quite easy because it was online, it was user friendly."* It also emerged that those who regarded the process as easy identified one or two requirements that could be a hindrance to some international students who may be interested in applying for admission. One such requirement was, as stated in the handbook of the institution, that a letter of reference from a Pastor/Imam/Priest must be submitted or uploaded with the application. In spite of the fact that the policy does not mention a recommendation from only a pastor, participants still felt that it was an unnecessary requirement. Even though CU is a Christian university, it does not only admit Christian students as long as they are prepared to abide by the rules of the institution and practice Christianity for as long as they are on campus - irrespective of their religion.

5.6   Theme 7: Recommendations from the participants

This theme is divided into three sub-themes based on the research questions, namely: recommending the university to others: recommendations to improve the university; and recommendations to improve services for international students at the university. All these were geared towards obtaining the views of the students on how satisfied they were with the services they received at their institution which would determine whether or not they would be willing to recommend the institution to others in their home country. Cremononi and Antonowics (2009) are of the opinion that higher institutions of learning

should develop a client-approach towards international students and, by doing this, they would receive feedback to help improve their services and, consequently, attract more students.

5.6.1 *Recommending the institutions to others*

Participants were asked if they would recommend their chosen institution of study to others and what recommendations they would make to encourage students to enroll at the institution. With only a few exceptions, the participants at Institutions A and B seemed willing to recommend their respective institutions. In so much as some of their responses were peculiar to their separate institutions, similar perceptions and recommendations were apparent.

One general response was that participants were satisfied with the quality of the available education. They attested to high academic standards at both institutions in terms of facilities, modes of lecturing and environments.

Participants generally acknowledged that the academic quality at their institution was better than what it would have been if they had studied in their home country. For example, on asking Participant A7 if he would recommend studying at the University of Ibadan to his peers at home, he was quick to reply by saying, "*Of course, yes, in fact anytime I go home, people call me UI. I always tell them about UI.*" When probed further on what recommendations he would make about UI, he replied:

> *One, the University of Ibadan is of good quality; two, they have good student-lecturer relationship and three, the people here are welcoming, the authorities here are understanding generally and the people love foreigners. Another thing I would say is that we don't have some opportunities in Liberia, I just mentioned that if I was in Liberia I wouldn't have done PhD; such opportunities we don't have back home, we could have here.*

To a large extent his response supports the argument made by Beine, Noel and Ragot (2014) that some international students return to their country of origin with a higher educational quality than the one they would have obtained if they had studied in their home country.

Participants at both universities said how highly ranked their respective institutions were in Nigeria and in Africa. In January 2016 the University of Ibadan was ranked the overall best university in Nigeria and the 16th in Africa while Covenant University was ranked the best private university in Nigeria and 33rd in Africa (Webometrics, 2016).

From the foregoing, the responses of the international students appear to question the view of Madichie and Madichie (2013) that higher education in Nigeria has lost its competitiveness internationally and, worst still, in sub-Saharan Africa.

In talking about CU, the students could not help gushing about the spiritual benefits and excellent Christian ethos they receive from the institution. Participant B15 passionately recommended attending Covenant University as the spiritual aspect alone made it a wise decision. She maintained that it was important to build a strong spiritual foundation early in life in order to confidently face the outside world and that if one got it right spiritually, one was most likely to get it right in all other aspects of life. She mentioned that although the rigorous spiritual training might not be palatable at first, after spending at least four years at the university it became a habit to engage in matters related to God. She added that besides the amazing academics, enrolling at CU gave students a spiritual edge. She concluded with the remark, "… *I think that is the thing Covenant University has over every private university in Nigeria.*

It also emerged from participants' responses that they would recommend CU because of its vision. They made it known that the institution was working towards being one of the best ten universities in the world by 2022 and it was also committed to raising great leaders who would make an impact Africa on because of its core values. They revealed that irrespective of the rules, CU was a dynamic institution with superb infrastructure; great faculties that are dedicated to teaching and learning; high online presence; undisrupted academic sessions; and a safe environment that is void of cultism and other vices. A popular response was that Covenant University was an institution that grooms students all-round.

With regard to the University of Ibadan, participants declared that they would recommend the institution because it was highly affordable. They also noted that highly qualified academic staff members; well-equipped laboratories; and a peaceful and conducive environment for learning would be their basis for making recommendations. This finding is inconsistent with the opinion of Trust Africa (2015) that universities in Africa lack highly qualified faculty members.

Participant A10 strongly believed that UI was a fantastic place for anyone who was interested in African studies; he asserted:

> *In general, I think I will definitely recommend it to people across Africa and across the world, anything particularly relating to cultural studies or African studies, it's a very great place to do that.*

On the other hand, the international students felt that notwithstanding the good recommendations about each university, coming to a specific institution should be a well thought out decision on the part of any prospective student. Participant A3 believed that UI was a good institution but she would not recommend it out rightly to anyone; she would present the facts about the institution and leave it to whoever might be interested to make a choice. Participant B13 admitted that as much as he would recommend CU, the final decision rested with the individual in terms of whether they believed that they would be able to cope with the way of life and the stringent rules and regulations.

It can be concluded from the above responses that the two institutions under study would be highly recommended by international students. Both are highly ranked in Nigeria. Participants' responses from both institutions reveal that they have no regrets for their choice of institution; they are satisfied and happy that at least their certificates will be highly recognised - even abroad.

5.6.2 *Recommendations for improvements at the university*

The discussion of this sub-theme arose out of the interview question: *"Is there anything you would change at this university if you could?"* Basically, it centered on the general improvements international students wished to see at the university where they were studying in terms of the treatment of international students. Kritz (2013) in her article on student mobility points out that despite the fact that countries in Africa allocate a huge amount of money to education in their budget, higher institutions of learning still do not measure up to their European and American counterparts. This study has provided a lens and the perspectives of the participants that assisted the researcher to understand the shortfalls of their respective universities as well as their recommendations that could be instrumental in bringing about improvements. Although there were a few common recommendations for both institutions, most of them were peculiar to each institution and are, therefore, discussed under institutional headings.

5.6.2.1 Institution A

One common response from the participants at the University of Ibadan was that they would like to see an improvement in electricity at the university. In terms of the position of UI as the first and the best in the country, the unsatisfactory state of electricity at the institution is highly disappointing. When asked if there was anything he would like to change at the university, Participant A7 replied: *"The first I would change is electricity, it's not up to standard for the university."* It was particularly shocking for students who had come from countries where there are hardly any power outages. Although some of the students recognized that the issue of erratic power supply was a common problem in Nigeria, they expected the university, with its highly acclaimed intellectuals, to find a solution to the problem. It was obvious from their responses that as much as they enjoy studying at the university, electricity is major challenge that disrupts their academic and personal activities in the school environment. A statement in the university's annual report (2015:83) reads:

> The university could not achieve its desire for a 24/7 power supply which is expected to be 'normal' for a university environment. The high cost of municipalities including cost of electricity distribution from the Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC), diesel and raw water as well as maintenance of facilities has affected the University on many fronts and has been a source of drain on the University's meagre funds distracting it from spending on core academic areas.

According to participants, as much as one may wish to reason with the university in terms of this challenge, there is no justification for the deplorable state of electricity at this great citadel of learning.

Participant A10 felt that the problem of electricity was so disruptive for academic progress that he would not only recommend a solution but would be willing to show his support by obtaining a generator for the library, if he had the resources. He said:

> *If I could change anything, I would just say I would support getting a generator for the library, to keep lights on in the library because I'm concerned not just for my own sake but for Nigerian students. I want them to get to the library and be able to read the materials they need for their research either through scholarship or otherwise. So I would say to support getting generators for the library so that students can read because some days when I get to the library, I can't do any work because there is no light; and then some parts in the library are very dark.*

Participant A14 mentioned that in addition to an improvement in the power supply that was needed for a conducive learning environment, the books in the library were very old and needed to be replaced. His response implies that the fact that UI is an old institution (in fact, the oldest in the country) does not follow that the books should also be.

Another recommendation for improvement relates to student-faculty relationships. Two notions emerged from this point: one, there was a need for lecturers to change their mindsets towards students; they had to realize that without students their services at the university were not needed and, therefore, they should devote more time to their students. Participants expressed their pain when a lecturer or supervisor left them to work with little or no supervision and to discover, after much hard work, that they had worked away from the course and would have to start all over again.

They would also like to see an improvement in the interaction between students and staff members, especially faculty members. They alluded to the fact that while most students were afraid of speaking their minds to lecturers and administrative staff members for fear of being victimized, most lecturers also saw themselves as 'gods' and were, therefore, not approachable. When asked what he would change if he had the power, A13 answered, "*Lack of freedom of expression among students, lecturers and administrative set up at large.*"

One response that did not gain popularity but seemed emphatic was what Participant A2 gave. She said one improvement she would like to see is that lecturers should stop the use of vernacular in class. It is not that lecturers do not deliver their lecturers in English but they often chip in vernacular at one point or the other, something she finds offensive because not everyone understands the Nigerian local languages. Wu, Garza & Guzman (2015) also found out from their study on a similar subject that language barrier is one the challenges faced by international students.

5.6.2.2 Institution B

One major improvement that international students at Covenant University long to see related to the use of mobile phones and they all had something to say on the issue. They could not hide the fact that they

were unhappy with the ban on the use of mobile phones on the university's premises; they are not even allowed to bring them to the institution - if they do, they are confiscated. Although they claimed that they were allowed to use other gadgets as alternatives, such as computers and tablets, these cannot replace phones in this technological advanced age. They maintained that the use of phones would aid communication and make life easier for them. Participant B7 stated:

> *Well, if I could, I would definitely change the aspect of phones. I would really like the phone to be re-introduced. I heard it was allowed before but now there is a policy that the phones be taken away due to certain reasons but I really feel if it can be re-introduced, it's going to really make life easier. You know there are times you want to communicate with your parents back home, you really want to chat with them; I think those phone will really make life easier for them.*

The findings revealed that students are aware of this rule before accepting admission as it is stated in the policy handbook of the institution that

> No student is allowed to possess or use mobile phones or any other gadgets or devices that are capable of placing and receiving calls on campus within or outside the Halls of Residence. MDA/PDA (Machine Data Acquisition/Process Data Acquisition) devices with Sims are not allowed for use in the university. No student is allowed to make use of the phones belonging to a staff member or service providers in the Halls of Residence. There are phone centres available within and outside the Halls of Residence. (Student handbook, p. 67).

The students, however, admitted that even though they wished to be allowed to use mobile phones, they understood that the university put this rule in place to ensure that students were minimally distracted. Covenant University vigorously enforces all its policies; it is, therefore, uncertain whether the rule on mobile phones could be changed, especially since students are aware of it when choosing to attend the institution. While the university has a right to its policies, the researcher agrees that a ban on mobile phones in the 21st century hampers communication and affects the inbound mobility of foreign students. International students feel the need to stay connected to their families and loved ones in order to, at least, break distance barriers; in a situation where there is no free flow of communication, they feel that an important part of life is missing. The participants said that they knew of people who would have enrolled at CU but changed their minds because of the ban on cell phones. As much as cell phones have distractive tendencies, their merits outweigh their demerits.

There were a few other changes that the participants in this study would like to see effected at CU. One of them, as pointed out by Participant B20 from Lebanon, is that students should be allowed to leave the school premises more often. In agreement with other participants, he added that the corporate dress should not be imposed on students. When asked about what he would change if he had the power, he stated:

> *Well, the first thing I would change is, can going out of the school not be as hard as it is? And the second thing I would change is that I don't like dressing corporately. The way you dress should be a choice. If you make everybody wear the same thing that means you are trying to make*

everybody be the same way, so you are creating a set of robots instead of being creative and expressive.

There were others who wanted more fun activities, like sports and entertainment, to make up for the restrictions on going outside campus. Participant A15 felt that there were stringent rules at Covenant University because students as young as fourteen and fifteen years of age were being admitted resulted in the university treating everyone like children. She recommended that the university should take a cue from universities in the UK where there are age limits for admission.

5.6.2.3 Common grounds for improvements

Despite the varied improvements suggested by the participants from each university, two improvements were common to both. The participants believed that employing international personnel as members of the faculties would make an impact on the institutions. This is consistent with what Robert-Okah (2014) describes as the 'process approach' which is mainly concerned with international dimensions that are reflected in teaching, research and community services that take place in Nigerian universities. According to the participants, these members should not, necessarily, be non-Nigerians; they could be Nigerians who had studied and lived in the diaspora for a long while. Their view was that these individuals would help to change the *status quo* of 'this is how things are done here' which is characteristic of Nigerians' mind set. Employing foreign staff would make a difference to the institution and keep students motivated. Supporting this view, Participant A7 said, *"If I had the power, I would have loved foreigners to be lecturers here, to have some foreign professors here."* Participant B17 from CU also suggested that having some foreign staff members in the cafeteria would also add a touch of variety to the food that was prepared. This reinforces the concept of internationalisation at home which advocates the inculcation of both international and intercultural abilities in the guiding policies and procedures of institutions (Beelen & Leask, 2011; Kinght, 2006; Teekens, 2013). Similarly, Zeleza (2012) argues that recruiting international students and scholars as well as making use of students and scholars who have studied abroad helps boost internationalisation. In terms of this view of the participants, it may be said that it is insufficient to be an international student just for the sake of the name or status attached to it without actually experiencing any form of international dimension at a university. Zeleza (2012:6) supports this idea by stating:

> Clearly, faculty cannot teach global literacy when they are globally illiterate themselves. By the same token, students cannot be expected to become internationalized in their learning if their teachers are provincial in their personal experiences, professional interests, and intellectual horizons.

A few responses suggested that even though some of the students interviewed admitted that there were issue that they hoped would improve, they believed that they were beyond the control of the universities. One prominent issue that was mentioned as being out of control of the participating institutions was

85

strike action at UI. As mentioned in the previous chapter, public universities in Nigeria are often faced with strike action that lead to extended institutional calendars and, subsequently, make students spend more time there than anticipated. Jekayinfa and Yahaya (2009:55) are of the opinion that public universities in Nigeria are becoming internally inefficient due to incessant strike action which has led to the establishment of private universities; several years after taking this leap, Nigerian public universities are still caught up in the web of strikes.

Despite the prevalent view that the participants would like to see some changes, there were those who said that they were satisfied with everything at both institutions. They, therefore, did not see room for improvement; everything was perfect the way it was. According to Participant A9 from Zambia, "*Actually, everything is looking perfect already; I've not thought of what I could really change; everything is cool.*"

5.6.3   *Recommendations to improve services for international students*

This sub-section relates to the views of international students concerning the challenges they faced and the recommendations they would make for the institution to alleviate the challenges. Feedback from them was, therefore, deemed important in order to serve them better and, thereby, pull more international students. These students were open with their comments during the interviews expressing their optimism in seeing the desired improvements.

In both institutions, a general notion was that accommodation was a major problem that they wanted their respective institutions to address. In terms of the large amount of money they paid as international students, participants expect more comfortable accommodation than they were given. As Participant B19 from the UK said: '*What is the essence of paying so much money if we will not be made comfortable*?' She compared international students to guests and the country or institution to a host. She explained that just as a guest, who comes to visit in one's house, would be made comfortable, international students should be made comfortable in their host country at their institution in order for them to feel at home.

The issue of accommodation, as pointed out by the participants, cannot be overemphasised. A popular response from participants depicted that international students should be given a separate hall of residence. They believe that being separated from local students was essential because it would help international students to settle more rapidly and integrate well into their environment. Amongst other responses, Participant A5 from Ghana, when asked if there were recommendations she could make to improves services for international students, said:

> *Yes, especially the issue of accommodation, if they can get a hostel just for international students,*
> *that will be good so that at least they can feel like international students and not Nigerians because*

once you pay the fees, you are on your own. There should be at least people to take you around and make you feel at home and welcome.

Participants at UI thought it was essential for international students to have a separate accommodation where they could leave their belongings during holidays and not be faced with the stress of moving them, like local students, and not knowing where to store them. For some of them, the poor state of accommodation offered was not as disappointing as leaving their countries of origin only to arrive at the institution without immediately having somewhere to sleep. This appeared to be more applicable to UI students; they felt that accommodation should be allocated online before students arrived in the country to avoid the frustration of finding somewhere to stay.

Participants in this study suggested that international students should not struggle as the local students did to obtain things. They were quick to compare the way international students were treated in their home countries to the way they were being treated in Nigeria. For example, Participant B7 from the Kenya said:

> *When I compare how students from other countries are treated in my country, it's really different from here. Like if you've got to get something, it's quite a struggle before you get it but that should not be the case. We should have a platform so that once you require something; the platform should immediately be there.*

It is almost unthinkable that Nigerian universities still adopt orthodox means of doing things in this jet age. Participant B11 from the Democratic Republic of Congo claimed that her sister who was also an international student did not experience 'stress' at her institution like students in Nigeria did. She could not hide her disappointment when she said:

> *They should stop making students miss class by going up and down. My sister was an international student in her school and when she arrived, everything had already been done, all she had to do was go to class but over here when you arrive, you have to do clearance, you have to go and do your medical aid, you have to go to senate building so they know you have paid your school fees, so that they won't disturb you.*

The question arose as to why these institutions that claim to collaborate with international institutions could not maximize the use of internet in accomplishing simple issues, like registration. Was it that they did not learn from their international partners or that they just did not want to move out of their comfort zone of the orthodox way of doing things?

Participant A4 made it known that international students at UI were not recognised; they had a sense of not belonging. In his statement, he admitted that most of his colleagues did not know he was a Ghanaian until he was in his final year. This contradicts what McMurtie (2011) believes to be one of the benefits of student mobility when he maintains that international diversity provides a great opportunity for a learning experience and social interaction of domestic African students who may not have travelled abroad to be enriched. The participants recommended the possibility of celebrating international

students' day that would give the international students a voice and enable them to showcase their cultures as well. Eitzen and Zinn (2012) are of the opinion that, in so doing, they would feel well integrated into the system and their environment.

In talking about visa processing, the participants wished that their universities could be more involved in assisting students with the process. According to them, the institutions profit in no small measure from admitting international students; they should, therefore, make these students feel welcome by assisting them with immigration issues. For Participant A10, obtaining a document from the Office of International Programmes at UI to support his visa application was a daunting task; getting the institution involved processing his visa seemed unimaginable. His testimony suggests that as much as these institutions want to attract international students, their actions are not aligned with their intentions. It seems that attracting international students is not as important as treating them correctly which would determine whether they were retained and whether they would recommend their institutions to their peers at home.

CU participants cited a few particular improvements they would like to see. One was that they would like more variety in the kind of food they were served as they relied solely on the food that was prepared in the cafeteria. They are rarely allowed to go outside campus and are not allowed to cook in their hostels; international students should, therefore, be considered when preparing meals. Participant B12 said: "*Based on the food, we should have our own food because it is not all the food we are used to.*" They all complained of having no choice but to eat what was available and that most Nigerian food contained too much chilli. The second was expressed by Participant B16 as follows:

> *I will say we should be given some kind of excursion to get to know Nigeria because as I'm here, it's like I'm not in Nigeria, I'm just kept somewhere. We don't really know Nigeria. We have to explore to see what Nigeria is; for example, sometimes I get scared when I go outside school because our population in Botswana is just 2 million and Nigeria is 200 million. So 2 million is the people living in Ogun State alone, Ogun State is just like Botswana to me, it's just that in Botswana, we are dispersed but here they are in one place. So we really have to go out to see the cultural differences, to see the real Nigeria because I believe if you can live here in Nigeria, you can live in any part of the world.*

There is also a need to revamp web pages, the application process and institute a distinct package for international students. In addition, Participant B13 recommended that there should be improved communication for international students, such as in informing them early enough on what they owed and posting their bills in dollars rather than naira; this would facilitate payment. It emerged from the findings that if Covenant University is to achieve its vision of becoming one of the top ten institutions in the world by 2022, it has to measure up to the standards of Ivy League institutions around the world.

It also emerged that participants would like their institutions to be more flexible on admission requirement for international students. At UI, for example, there are more postgraduate international students than undergraduates because of the JAMB requirement to gain admission into Nigerian universities, an examination that is not conducted in most countries. With reference to Knight's (2008) activity approach, Robert-Okah (2014:149) agrees with the participants by stating:

> Some activities of higher education constitute obstacles to internationalization, especially in the area of attracting foreign students and faculty. The admission process is the most unfavourable. For instance, the central examination system by JAMB and other sets of examinations by individual universities have become obstacles for accessing higher education in Nigeria.

Apart from admission requirements, participants at both universities also recommended that institutional rules and regulations should be more flexible for international students.

Generally speaking, international students at both institutions are not satisfied with the way they are being treated. A more prevalent view from the international students points to the fact that they would like preferential treatment. However, there were a few who were satisfied with the treatment they received at their institutions. Some participants felt that treating international students specially might breed some kind of segregation between local and international students.

5.7   Conclusion

This chapter discussed three themes that emanated from institutional data. The presentation of these themes was under different headings derived from the data and was guided by the research questions and theoretical framework of this study. The researcher reflected on the findings from the interviews and the documents analysis and, simultaneously, considered how they aligned with reviewed literature which led to the conclusion that the institutions in the study are lagging behind in pulling international students.

The next and final chapter, Chapter 6, draws conclusions and makes recommendations using the reported findings as points of departure.

CHAPTER 6

COLLATING THE FINDINGS: WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR AFRICA, IN GENERAL, AND NIGERIA, IN PARTICULAR?

6.1   Introduction

This study set out to examine and analyse the reasons why international students chose Nigeria and its institutions where they were enrolled to study. It identified the motivation for their decisions and touched on their experiences before coming to Nigeria as well as during their stay. It also revealed their attitude to recommending their respective institutions and Nigeria as a whole. The general theoretical literature on the subject of student mobility and, specifically, in the context of Nigeria is inconclusive on several vital questions. This study, therefore, sought to answer the following secondary questions:

- *Why did international students choose to study in Nigeria?*

- *How did international students in Nigeria choose the institutions they were currently attending?*

- *To what extent has on-going terrorism affected inbound student mobility in Nigeria?*

- *To what extent would international students recommend studying in Nigeria to prospective students?*

- *How satisfied are international students with their institutions and how does this affect their willingness to recommend the institutions?*

The aim of this concluding chapter is to present a summary of the empirical findings that emanated from the analysis of interviews and documents as discussed in the previous two chapters. This is done systematically to ascertain that the data collected has adequately answered the research questions posed for this study and core ideas are identified for the purpose of synthesizing the findings. In addition to the presentation of the findings, the theoretical implications, recommendations made concerning policy and practice as well as suggestions for further research are discussed.

6.2   Empirical findings

This section identifies the key findings, based on the discussion in the two previous chapters, and how they align with the objective of this research. The main empirical findings that emerged are specific to the individual research questions and are, therefore, discussed accordingly.

6.2.1   Why did international students choose to study in Nigeria?

The findings showed that not all the participants initially considered studying in Nigeria; in fact, it never occurred to them because nothing about Nigeria fascinated them. However, one or other influence was responsible for their decisions. For participants at Covenant University, parental influence was a major factor that led to them studying in Nigeria. There were more postgraduate participants than undergraduates at the University of Ibadan and it was discovered that scholarship opportunities pulled them to Nigeria. A popular response showed that the participants never really thought of Nigeria as a destination for study purposes. Participants from neighboring countries chose to study in Nigeria because they perceived its quality of education to be superior to that which they could obtain in their home countries. One factor that seemed to be common with the participants was that they did not like the idea to begin; however, as time passed, they agreed that they had come to like the country as they discovered the truth for themselves about it and they realized that what they had heard or seen on TV or in the movies about Nigeria was not entirely true. Whether through any form of influence or personal decision, the researcher agrees with Kritz (2013) that student mobility - the core of this study - is a phenomenon that is rapidly rising in Africa as a result of globalization. The findings also show that of the 35 students that participated in the study, only 9 were from outside Africa which supports the view of the African Union (2014) that a larger part of African international mobility takes place within Africa - often in neighbouring countries. It was further reported that there was a 13% increase in international migration within Africa between 2000 and 2010.

A more common response was indicated that participant encountered difficulties with their visa application process to come to Nigeria. These were students who are from countries on the visa-exempt list of Nigeria. Nationals of some countries do not need a visa to study in Nigeria either because they

are from a member state of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or their country has a bilateral agreement with Nigeria. It was gathered from the interview responses that there are no clear lines of communications between the Nigerian Immigration Service in Nigeria and their representative offices in the countries of the participants; these students experienced undue stress when applying for visas. From the policy document of the Nigeria Immigration Services it can be seen that information regarding study visas is not well stipulated. The best type of visa students could get that would enable them to study without many problems was the STR (Subject To regularization), one which they had to renew every year. The students wished that there could be a more integrated and streamlined approach in the issuing of visas. They believe that they should have been issued a study visa to study in Nigeria as opposed to tourist and business visas. Beine, Noel and Ragot (2014) argue that countries should be more liberal in issuing students visas as opposed to other types of visas in order to attract international students but this appears not to be the case in Nigeria. This gives a bad impression of Nigeria and the thought that most of these students never wanted to come to Nigeria in the first place exacerbates the impression.

6.2.2   *How did international students in Nigeria choose the institution they are currently attending?*

Choosing an institution of study was an important decision that the participants had to make and a lot of factors were, therefore, considered in making the decision. The interview responses suggested that in terms of both Covenant University and the University of Ibadan, their good academic standing attracted international students to study there. Cremonini and Antonicz (2009) assert that the academic attraction of any nation depends largely on the reputation of its higher education institutions. They add that well-established institutions act as flagships for their country, even though the reputation of a country may not be easily measurable; highly ranked institutions, however, have the potential to make a country reputable and, thereby, attract international students. The students' positive assertions were motivated by the ranking of their institutions among others in Africa and having been at the institution for some time. In contrast to the students' perceptions, Tagoe (2012) believes that Nigerian universities still have a long way to go to find a place among the top universities - even those in Africa; he refers to the Webometrics ranking of 2012 in which no Nigerian universities appeared in the first 25 position; only 10 appeared among the first 100 in Africa, thereby showing the wide gap between Nigerian universities and their world class counterparts in the UK and the US. Notwithstanding the general perception of high academic standing at both universities, Covenant University students had their particular reasons for praising their institution. The most abiding reason was that they were members of the church branch of the university; they and their parents were, therefore, aware of the core values of the institution.

With few exceptions, participants generally found the application process to their respective institutions difficult. They found that the internet portal for admission to Covenant University could not readily

accommodate international students in terms of uploading foreign qualifications. One would think that for an institution of its calibre, CU would be abreast of international practices but it appears not to be so. Some of the students were able to identify a contact person at CU to assist them but the process still proved difficult. It may be asked how many intending students who have no link with CU or the church would persevere with their applications rather than forfeit their chances of enrolling at the university. The international students at UI could not see the need for an online application when they still had to travel down to Nigeria to complete the process. This underlines the fact that African universities are not yet fully equipped for internationalization. The researcher also agrees with Kritz (2013) and Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2015) that African higher institutions of learning are still faced with the challenge of accommodating the increasing demand for higher education that is being ushered in by internationalisation.

6.2.3   *To what extent has on-going terrorism affected inbound student mobility in Nigeria?*

The participants in this study agreed that the issue of terrorism in Nigeria affects the choice of people to study in Nigeria. They were of the opinion that people are scared to study in Nigeria; some of them admitted that they personally knew of people who would have loved to study in Nigeria but changed their minds due to the activities of Boko Haram. Boko Haram in Nigeria is problematic in terms of the education sector in Nigeria; it has been reported that in Borno State 900 schools have been destroyed (UNICEF, 2014) and that all public schools in the state have been shut since 2014 (World Review, 2014). Despite the fact that mainly the Northern part of the country has suffered the brunt of terrorist attacks, it is not surprising that parents outside Nigeria cannot bear the thought of sending their children to Nigeria; their fears are exacerbated by media reports.

Findings show that there were participants who were also concerned about Boko Haram. Those who were not concerned were mostly well informed about Boko Haram operating in the North while they would be studying in the South - a great distance apart. However, those who were concerned about their safety before coming to Nigeria had their fears allayed on getting into the country and discovering that the terrorist group was nowhere near them; none of them had personally experienced any form of terrorism since arriving in the country.

6.2.4   *To what extent would international students recommend studying in Nigeria to prospective students?*

The findings that emerged from this research question contradict the popular belief that no one leaves his/her country to study in Nigeria. The literature on student mobility suggests that Nigeria experiences more outward mobility than inward mobility (Madichie & Madichie, 2013). Kritz (2013) reports more precisely, stating that in 2005, 20,000 Nigerian students studied abroad. In practice, a good number of

Nigerians seize every opportunity to migrate out of the country to pursue tertiary education. However, there were international students who saw Nigeria as a land of opportunities although there were others in this study said they were not happy with Nigeria and would, therefore, not recommend it to their friends and family; a prevalent notion was that participants were prepared and willing to recommend it to their friends. There are three popular reasons for recommending the country. Firstly, from the interview responses it may be concluded that, particularly those from Cameroun, Botswana and Liberia, were satisfied with the quality of education available in Nigeria. According to the responses, Nigeria has quality teaching and learning resources coupled with a more conducive environment than they would get in their individual countries. Secondly, it was learned that they would recommend studying in Nigeria because it was affordable. They mentioned that those who desired quality education but could not afford education in South Africa or Egypt - the top providers of quality education in Africa – would find Nigeria to be their next option. Thirdly, their recommendations would be based on the notion that Nigerians are friendly and welcoming; they added that an environment that is void of hostility is the best atmosphere for learning.

However, one important point that emerged from participants' responses is that positive recommendations about Nigeria, notwithstanding, intending international students should be prepared for strike action and power supply outages which are part and parcel of the Nigerian system. In his article Robert-Okah (2014) describes strike action as anti-internationalisation; he argues that a situation where it takes six years to complete a four-year course does not speak well and he asks whether an international student is prepared to cope with such a delay.

6.2.5 *How satisfied are international students with their institution and how does this affect their willingness to recommend the institution?*

According to Martin and Peim (2004) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are regarded as essential commodities that have to be purchased by customers; customer satisfaction is, therefore, essential to enhancing their opportunities in the marketplace. In terms of the findings, a general notion was that international students in this study were found to be dissatisfied with the level of services they were receiving at their institutions of study. Despite the two institutions involved in the study being highly ranked, they believe there is room for improvement at the universities, in general, and for international students, in particular. While almost all the students recommended improvements, the differences in their recommendations are important.

The most popular improvement students wanted at Covenant University was a change in policy concerning the use of mobile phones. It is stated in the policy handbook of the institution that no mobile device that has the capacity to make and receive calls is allowed on the university premises; the students

94

want this rule abolished. As these students were aware that mobile phones are not allowed at the university before coming to study there, the question to be asked is: *'Why did they accept the offer of admission when they knew they were not pleased with the cell phone rule?'* A consensus from the participants' responses was that their acceptance of the offer was because their parents wanted them to attend CU.

At the University of Ibadan, the major challenge faced by students was the erratic electricity supply. The findings show that participants were not happy about this issue. One of them actually expressed disappointment that UI, with its highly intellectual faculty, could not generate its own electricity by way of a lasting solution to the issue of power supply. Some expressed their shock and disappointment at discovering that the university's biggest and most popular library meant for researchers and scholars could not be accessed when there was power outage; one student expressed the desire to raise funds for a generator for the library.

An improvement that was prevalent amongst the international students at both institutions concerns accommodation. Their responses reveal that international students at both institutions are not happy with the kind of accommodation provided. They do not understand why they pay so much for the poor services which are rendered. They see the two institutions as lagging behind in its web-design and marketing strategies. They stated that only in Nigeria have they seen that a highly ranked institution such as theirs cannot give sufficient information to prospective students about their programmes and what they need to know without forcing students to visit the school or gain access to a contact person from whom they could obtain the required information.

A more prevalent notion was that the participants are willing to recommend studying in Nigeria and at their institutions to their peers at home. However, the findings suggest that high academic standards, alone, are not sufficient to attract international students to these institutions. It is for this reason that recommendations for improvement were made for the institution and in relation to international students. As much as the participants all indicated their willingness to recommend their institutions, they want the authorities to address the problems they cited.

6.3   Overview

From the responses of the international students at the two institutions who participated in this study, the following has been established:

- International students are not naturally pulled to Nigeria as a nation; most of the participants came to the country because they had a scholarship that allowed them to study in Nigeria. They

are attracted to specific institutions because of their reputations or due to parental influence - as in the case of most Covenant University students.

- There is a lack of coordination and proper communication between the Nigerian embassy and its representative offices in the home countries of the international students which led difficulties in terms of visa processing for the international students.

- International students are attracted to their institutions of study largely based on their high academic ranking. However, these institutions appeared not to be fully prepared to admit international students as most of the participants did not find the online application processes easy.

- Terrorism affects inbound student mobility to Nigeria as the number of international students studying in Nigeria has drastically reduced due to concerns about terrorism. The international students, their families and friends were concerned about Boko Haram, concerns which were later allayed by their knowledge of the location of the insurgent group.

- Participants would recommend Nigeria based on the quality of education which they see as superior to that which is available in most West African countries; the friendly and welcoming nature of the people; and the affordability of education in the country, especially public universities.

- International students are willing to recommend their institutions but they would like to see improvements in the way they are being treated in terms of accommodation and power supply, particularly at UI.

6.4   Theoretical Implications

The researcher deemed it necessary to take a closer look at the push-and-pull theory of migration in order to further understand the discourse of student mobility in terms of the dynamism of the international students in this study. This theory has been used to explain the reasons for inbound and outbound mobility of international students (Sehoole, 2011 and Kritz, 2013).

The push-and-pull theory of migration suggests that students are pushed out of their countries based on factors that they consider less attractive in their home countries and pulled to a foreign country because they consider them attractive and regard them as 'magnets of opportunities' (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Traditionally, push factors are attributed to negative factors in the country of origin while pull factors are associated with positive factors in the destination country. It can, however, be noted from the study that such attributes are not, necessarily, applicable to all international students - based on reasons given by the participants. Some of the reasons why the participants in this study chose to study in Nigeria imply that students are not always 'pushed' from their home countries. In fact, the findings reveal that there are instances in the home countries of international students that are better than those in Nigeria.

96

Although the researcher agrees with Bhandari and Blumenthal (2011) that pull factors are positive with respect to the receiving country, she slightly disagree with Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) and Cremonini and Antonowicz, (2009) who are of the opinion that students are pushed to study in another country because there are unpalatable motivating factors in their home countries. Suffice it to say, therefore, that international students could willingly decide to study in another country for more neutral reasons, such as the exploration of different cultures - as reported by Lee and Sehoole (2015) in a similar study conducted in South Africa.

6.5   Recommendations concerning policy and practice

One argument upon which this study is premised is that African countries are following the trend of internationalisation and may also be seen to be attracting internationals students from all over the world, like South Africa which is regarded as an icon of success (Du Plessis & Fourie, 2011). The African Union (2014) reports on a survey carried out in 35 African countries; it reveals that 27 (77%) of them had national policies or programmes in place to address international mobility and that 32 (91.4%) had established institutions to combat problems associated with mobility. Despite all these policies and institutions, Africa still seems to be struggling with the issues of mobility, including the significant aspect of student mobility. Evidence from several studies, such as those by Madichie and Madichie (2013) and Teklu (2008), and empirical findings from this dissertation suggest that Nigeria has not fully embraced internationalisation. It is on this basis that the researcher makes the following recommendations and, as much as these recommendations stem from the findings of the study in Nigeria, they may be applicable to Africa as a whole.

6.5.1   Rebrand institutional websites

The first source of information for anyone wanting information about an institution is the web site of that institution. As an online presence of an institution contains a great deal of information about a university, when prospective students visit the web page, they should find the information they need rather than being forced to visit the institution or call someone there. An inability to find required information could discourage prospective students which might put an end to their interest. In this technological age, there are many ways that the internet could be used to maximize benefit. It should be used to market the institution; the institutions should make more online 'catchy' packages in order to attract more international students; it should be utilised for registration purposes which will save students the stress of going back and forth when they are supposed to be in class; and it should provide information that will alleviate the fears of intending students and their loved ones about terrorism in the country. The onus rests largely on the international offices of institutions to develop ideas that will actualise this objective. Institutions should ensure that the online application process is user friendly for

international students; if these students are expected to apply online, then the application portal should be designed in a way that will not be problematic, such as experiencing difficulties in uploading foreign qualifications. African institutions should take their cue from top institutions in the world so that they stand a greater chance of attracting more international students than they currently do.

6.5.2 *Revisit immigration policies*

There are two perspectives to this recommendation. Firstly, Nigeria needs to ensure that its immigration policies are clearly stated. Irrespective of where students come from, they should not be given contradicting information by the Nigerian Immigration Office in their home country and the one in Nigeria. More importantly, it is strongly recommended that anyone who applies to study in Nigeria should be issued with a student visa as there is no logical explanation for issuing someone who is going to study with a business or tourist visa which is valid for only a short time. Student should not worry about visa renewals at short intervals which adversely affect their settling down. Nigerian Immigration Authorities should be considerate about the time that the visa application process takes so that students do not miss out on their academic work. Secondly, institutions should assist international students with their visa applications; they should be willing to supply students with all the necessary documents and they should inform the embassy of the students' intentions to study in order to facilitate the process. One of the outstanding benefits of student mobility is that it is a viable means of income generation for not only the institution but also for the whole country.

6.5.3 *International students as clients*

If current international students are well-treated, there is hope that others will be attracted to study in Nigeria as the best form of advertisement is the testimonies and experiences of others. Poor accommodation should not be an issue which international students have to deal with; they should be made to feel as comfortable as possible, considering the fact that they have travelled long distances and they are probably alone in the country. Secondly, the tuition fee they pay should be commensurate with the services they enjoy and they should be recognised and have a sense of belonging by institutions organizing events, such as international student days for them. Thirdly, inasmuch as institutions want to attract international students by making their packages attractive, they should not promise what they are not able to deliver; disappointed international students will not give a good report of the institutions to family and friends. Lastly, if Nigeria and its institutions are keen to boost dwindling number of international students in the country, they should ease their entry requirements; if the JAMB and WAEC remain the entry requirement to an institution, then they should work on establishing examination centres in different countries. If this is not feasible, then it is recommended that they make available an alternative, but equally standardised examination, for international students which could be taken

online. Better still, they could adopt the method used in South Africa by evaluating foreign qualifications before they are being considered for admission to an institution of higher learning.

6.6   Suggestions for future research

The scale of the debate on internationalisation is undoubtedly extensive even at a national level. In order to generate achievable policy strategies and developmental goals regarding student mobility as an aspect of internationalisation, there is a need to involve more case institutions at the national level and more case countries at a continental level. This will make room for the exploration of broader dimensions of the subject.

For her PhD thesis, therefore, the researcher will like to examine the reasons why students from West Africa, perhaps Nigeria and Ghana as case studies, are pushed from their home countries to study in Europe or America. By so doing, factors that attracted them to these countries will be revealed which could then be adopted and applied to make Nigeria more attractive.

In addition, this study only considered the views of international students. Future research could include the views of other stakeholders in institutions in order to reach more balanced conclusions. This could be done using a more comprehensive methodology, such as mixed methods.

6.7   Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to examine the reasons why international students chose to study in Nigeria and at the two selected higher education institutions. It was seen that not only international students from the West African region are studying in Nigeria but also those from developed nations of the world and the key findings show that there are various reasons for this but the most prominent one is that students find the high academic ranking of Nigerian institutions attractive. However, their stay in Nigeria and at the two institutions was not without challenges; recommendations for possible solutions were made. It is hoped that these recommendations will be put into practice in order attract more international students and, perhaps, reduce the rate of outbound mobility of Nigerian students and, thereby, stop the brain drain.

Despite the challenges and the notion mostly presented in theoretical debates that higher education students do not find most African countries attractive as study destinations, this study has shown beyond reasonable doubt that there is actually a passage of higher education students to Nigeria.

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(SARUA) Leadership Dialogue on Building the Capacity of Higher Education to Enhance Regional Development, Maputo, Mozambique, March 21-22, 2012.

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

11 May 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I have language edited and proof-read the dissertation by **OLAIDE AGBENIGA**, entitled:

HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT MOBILITY IN AFRICA: A PASSAGE TO NIGERIA

The language editing/proof-reading process included the checking of spelling, punctuation, syntax and expression. An attempt was made to simplify complex sentences and, where necessary, combine short sentences to clarify meaning. Attention was given to the use of various language elements, such as prepositions, consistency in language usage and formatting as well as tenses and capital letters.

Prof. Walter Greyvenstein (D Litt et Phil; TTHD; LTCL)

44 Second Street
Linden
Johannesburg
2195

Tel. No.: 011 782 6174
E-mail: wgreyven@lantic.net

111

Appendix B: Letter to Covenant University

Faculty of Education

International Ofiice and Linkages
Covenant University
KM. 10 Idiroko Road
Canaan Land
Ota 11001, Ogun State
Nigeria
Cc: The Vice Chancellor
Date: November 2, 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON ACADEMIC STUDENT MOBILITY IN AFRICA. A CASE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT COVENANT UNIVERSITY IN NIGERIA.

The above subject refers. The Department of Education Management and Policy Studies of the University of Pretoria in collaboration with the University of Arizona in the United States of America are planning to conduct the above study. Professor Chika Sehoole of the University of Pretoria in South Africa and Professor Lee Jenny of University of Arizona are the lead and co-researcher respectively.

While Africa is generally viewed as a victim of brain drain, there are some African countries and universities that play a vital and increasing role in receiving the world's top higher education students, particularly from within its continent. Nevertheless, there remains very limited empirical research on this significant trend. The aim of this study is to examine phenomenon of international student mobility within Africa; and Nigeria has been chosen as one of the nine countries that are part of the project. The other countries are Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Uganda, Egypt, Cameroun, Senegal and Morocco. The Nigerian study will use two insitutions as case studies namely The University of Ibadan and Covenant University which according to our preliminary research are major hosts of international students in Nigeria. The project seeks to answer the following questions: Why did international students choose their respective African countries they are studying in, and more specifically, the institution they are currently attending? What are international students' academic experiences and future plans and how do they vary by region and country of origin. The findings from study will provide much needed yet lacking information for African countries to better receive and prepare the world's students.

The data collection will be done through online survey and interviews of students who will be willing to participate in this project. In order to faciliate ease of access and data collection, we have identified a focal person by the name Olaide Agbeniga (+2348035474523, +27617428166/ laidestar@yahoo.com), an MEd student and a Research Assistant at the University of Pretoria. She will use this data as part of research for her master's degree studies. Data from this study will solely be used for the publication of books, journal articles, dissertation and theses in the field of students mobility. However, it is within the powers of the nine participating countries to adopt the study findings to inform their higher education policies and better serve the international students.
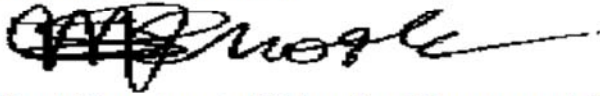
The purpose of this letter is two fold: first to request your permission and support to conduct this study at your university. Secondly, as a participating university, to request relevant documents such as policies, reports/ statistics that will inform the study.
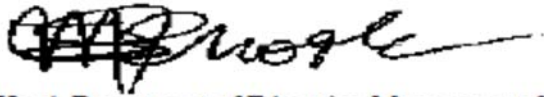
In case of questions that need clarifications, please contact Jenny Lee at JennyLee@arizona.edu. Or chika.sehoole@up.ac.za

I look forward to your support on this project.

Regards,

Professor M.T. Sehoole

Head, Department of Education Management & Policy Studies
University of Pretoria
South Africa

Appendix C: Letter to the University of Ibadan

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

The Director
Office of International Programmes
University of Ibadan
UI Road, Ibadan
Oyo 200284
Nigeria
Tel: +234(0)8057320466
Cc: The Vice Chancellor
Date: November 2, 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON ACADEMIC STUDENT MOBILITY IN AFRICA. A CASE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN IN NIGERIA

The above subject refers. The Department of Education Management and Policy Studies of the University of Pretoria in collaboration with the University of Arizona in the United States of America are planning to conduct the above study. Professor Chika Sehoole of the University of Pretoria in South Africa and Professor Lee Jenny of the University of Arizona in the United States of America are the lead and co-researcher respectively.

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The data collection will be done through online survey and interviews of students who will be willing to participate in this project. In order to faciliate ease of access and data collection, we have identified a focal person by the name Olaide Agbeniga (+2348035474523, +27617428166/ laidestar@yahoo.com), an MEd student and a Research Assistant at the University of Pretoria. She will use this data as part of research for her master's degree studies. Data from this study will solely be used for the publication of books, journal articles, dissertation and theses in the field of students mobility. However, it is within the powers of the nine participating countries to adopt the

study findings to inform their higher education policies and better serve the international students. The purpose of this letter is two fold: first to request your permission and support to conduct this study at your university. Secondly, as a participating university, to request relevant documents such as policies, reports/ statistics that will inform the study.

In case of questions that need clarifications, please contact Jenny Lee at JennyLee@arizona.edu. Or chika.sehoole@up.ac.za

I look forward to your support on this project.

Regards,

Professor M.T. Sehoole

Head, Department of Education Management & Policy Studies
University of Pretoria
South Africa

Appendix D: Letter to the National Universities Commission (NUC)

Faculty of Education

The Executive Secretary
National Universities Commission
26 Aguiyi Ironsi Street
PMB 237, Garki GPO
Maitama
Abuja Nigeria
Date: November 27, 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT MOBILITY IN AFRICA: A PASSAGE TO NIGERIA

The above subject refers. The Department of Education Management and Policy Studies of the University of Pretoria in collaboration with the University of Arizona in the United States of America are planning to conduct the above study. Professor Chika Sehoole of the University of Pretoria in South Africa and Professor Lee Jenny of University of Arizona are the lead and co-researcher respectively.

While Africa is generally viewed as a victim of brain drain, there are some African countries and universities that play a vital and increasing role in receiving the world's top higher education students, particularly from within its continent. Nevertheless, there remains very limited empirical research on this significant trend. The aim of this study is to examine phenomenon of international student mobility within Africa; and Nigeria has been chosen as of the nine countries that are part of the project. The other countries are Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Uganda and Egypt. The Nigerian study will use two insitutions as case studies namely The University of Ibadan and Covenant University which according to our preliminary research are major hosts of international students in Nigeria. The project seeks to answer the following questions: Why did international students choose their respective African countries they are studying in, and more specifically, the institution they are currently attending? What are international students' academic experiences and future plans and how do they vary by region and country of origin. The findings from study will provide much needed yet lacking information for African countries to better receive and prepare the world's students.

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The purpose of this letter is two fold: first to request your permission and support to conduct this
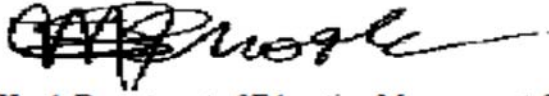
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study in Nigeria. Secondly, as a participating country, to request relevant documents such as policies, reports/ statistics that will inform the study.

In case of questions that need clarifications, please contact Jenny Lee at JennyLee@arizona.edu. Or chika.sehoole@up.ac.za

I look forward to your support on this project.

Regards,

Professor M.T. Sehoole

Head, Department of Education Management & Policy Studies
University of Pretoria
South Africa

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

Dear Participant,

This is a comprehensive study on international students in nine African countries led by Prof Chika Sehoole of the University of Pretoria in South Africa and Prof Jenny Lee of the University of Arizona in the United States. The nine countries are Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Morocco, Cameroun, Tanzania, Egypt, Uganda and Senegal. I, Olaide Agbeniga, have been identified as a focal person to conduct this study in Nigeria. The data collected for this study will further our understanding of international students' experiences and address the needs of current and future international students in Nigeria.

You have been invited to participate because you were identified as an international student. Your identification will be strictly anonymous and your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation in this project at any time and should you wish to do so, know that this will not affect your status or relationship with this university.

This interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

If you are willing to participate in this study, kindly fill the attached consent form and return to me.

....

Consent form

I am willing to participate in this study. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time.

....

Participant's name   Participant's signature   Date

Appendix F: Interview Protocol

1. Why did you choose to study in Nigeria?

2. How easy or difficult was the process of applying for visa to come to Nigeria?

3. What is the main reason you chose this university?

4. What were the major events/people that led to your decision? (E.g. family, friends, alumni, advert, etc.)?

5. How easy or difficult was the process of applying to this university? (In terms of the application process, entry requirement, online user friendliness, etc.)?

6. How would you describe the fees you pay as an international student compared to what local students pay?

7. In choosing to study in Nigeria,

   (a) Was the issue of terrorism i.e. Boko Haram a thing of concern to you?

   (b) If so, elaborate

8. Do you intend to recommend this university to other peers at home country, why or why not?

9. Is there anything you would change at this university in general if you could?

10. Any recommendations specifically to improve services for international students at this university?

11. Do you intend to recommend studying in Nigeria to other peers at home country, why or why not?

12. In what way(s) do you think the issue of Boko Haram affect the choice of people to study in Nigeria?