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**A Naturalistic Inquiry of Nigerian Immigrant Nursing Students'
Experiences in United States (U.S.) Baccalaureate Nursing Programs**

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**A Naturalistic Inquiry of Nigerian Immigrant Nursing Students’
Experiences in United States (U.S.) Baccalaureate Nursing Programs**

by

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Dedication

I want to thank God first and foremost for being the head of my life and leading me on my ultimate path. Only God knows the good and the bad it took to get to this point in my life. I am forever grateful for God walking with me in each aspect of my life. This degree is dedicated to my family, who have stood beside me from beginning to the end. A special dedication to my husband and children, who never left my side and understood all the workings of finishing this degree. Thank you to my mother, who has always given me a warm congratulations in everything I accomplish. Thank you to my grandmother whose words have pushed me further and shown me what I could do with just a little effort. I also send a heavenly thank you to my guardian angel, Sharon Denise Sapp, my Nana. If it wasn't for you pouring into me the wisdom that was bestowed unto you and guiding me to this place in my life, I truly don't know where I would be. You gave me love and protection. You told me I could, and I always have because of you pushing me further than I could ever imagine. This journey started because I wanted to make you proud. I hope I have succeeded!

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A Naturalistic Inquiry of Nigerian Immigrant Nursing Students’ Experiences in United States (U.S.) Baccalaureate Nursing Programs

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Nigerian immigrant nursing students have been identified in the literature as having difficulty in making a transition to the teaching methods used in nursing programs in the U.S. Among the problems they experience are understanding the vocabulary and terminology of the Western culture. Previous research suggests Nigerian students remain silent in seeking help regarding the challenges of their learning in part due to the isolation they face from peers and faculty (Sanner, Wilson and Samson, 2002).

There is a paucity of research associated with Nigerian immigrant nursing students and how they acclimate to U.S. nursing programs. This study utilized Naturalistic Inquiry (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to explore the perceptions and experiences of ten Nigerian immigrant nursing students. Study participants were Nigerian immigrant nursing students and the researcher recruited students enrolled in baccalaureate nursing programs in Texas. Interviews, face-to-face or by telephone, for the ten participants were conducted in a private, agreed upon place.

Data were collected until reaching saturation, indicating data redundancy, and with no new themes evolving. Analyzed data used procedures described by Lincoln and Guba

(1985) and Erlandson et al. (1993) to seek emerging patterns. Guided by Lincoln and Guba (1985) procedures, the five emergent themes included *Stepping into America*, *Navigating the Rough Waters*, *Unexpected Changes*, *Searching for Consistency*, and *Hopes of Finding Clarity*. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria were used to evaluate trustworthiness of the data. Study findings revealed that Nigerian immigrant nursing students experience positive and negative encounters with faculty and classmates, challenges and obstacles related to the American English language, their Nigerian accent, family expectations, and work obligations. The study findings may aid U.S. nursing schools and faculty to incorporate strategies in the learning environment to assist Nigerian immigrants and other international nursing students, to better acclimate to Western programs to achieve success.

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List of Abbreviations

AACN	American Association of Colleges of Nursing
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
ESL	English as a second language
IIE	Institute of International Education
IRB	Institutional Review Board
NCLEX-RN	National Council Licensure Examination- Registered Nurse
NCSBN	National Council of State Boards of Nursing
NI	Nationalistic inquiry
NLN	National League for Nursing
P	Participant
US	United States
UTMB	University of Texas Medical Branch

Chapter One: Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one provides an overview of a Naturalistic Inquiry (NI) study, which explores how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the teaching-learning environment in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs. Chapter One opens with the background of the study. This chapter focuses on the study problem, purpose, significance, and research question. Finally, an overview of the remaining chapters is given.

PHENOMENON OF INTEREST

Entering higher education is a difficult transition for many students including nursing students. International nursing students, in particular, face a host of challenges as they enter their nursing educational program, including using English as a second language (ESL), having to work and care for a family while in school and making the overall transition into a nursing program. Although these issues are not unique to international students, such challenges may create additional difficulties for nursing students within and/or from different cultures. Educational practices in the United States (U.S.) present a wide variety of active teaching and learning strategies, however, those strategies may not account for cultural diversity or previous learning experiences (Sanner, Wilson & Samson, 2002). In the 2017-2018 academic year there were a total 35,169 international students enrolled in health professions (Institute of International Education (IIE), 2019). In the 2018-2019 academic year, there were a total of 72, 781 foreign-born nursing students enrolled in baccalaureate nursing programs in the U.S. (American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 2019). The large number of foreign-born students (34.2%) enrolled in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs makes it vital that nursing faculty address the issues

arising from globalization and adapt to the needs of students who were not born in the U.S. (Xu & Davidhizar, 2005).

STUDY PROBLEM

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) nursing students, also referred to as international students by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), have an abundance of stressors while in nursing school. Learning styles and learning needs of the international student can be a contributing factor for lesser than acceptable performance. Evidence has shown that many international students struggle with a language barrier, which could prevent them from achieving above average performance within the guidelines of a nursing program (Mitchell, Del Fabbro & Shaw, 2017). There is a need to increase student performance by utilizing culturally sensitive teaching strategies to attain improved learning outcomes among the international nursing students (Carty, Hale, Carty, Williams, Rigney & Prinicipato, 1998). Nursing educators have a duty to discover innovative strategies to ensure international students are provided the essential nursing content and can apply that knowledge in practice (AACN, 2016).

NCLEX pass rates

Internationally educated nursing students have difficulty passing the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) (NCSBN, 2018). A review of NCLEX-RN pass rate reports for 2013-2017 reveals that internationally educated nursing students' NCLEX-RN pass rates are significantly lower than U.S. born students (NCSBN, 2018). International students, as a group, have NCLEX-RN pass rates that are low on their first attempt and lower on the second attempt (NCSBN, 2018). According to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) (2018), one in three internationally (33%) educated students pass NCLEX-RN on the first attempt and one in five (20%) pass on the second attempt. Additional data show a decrease in U.S. students'

pass rates and a decrease in international students' pass rates in relation to the change of the NCLEX-RN test plan in 2016 (NCSBN, 2018).

Diversity in the student population

U.S. nursing programs have a commitment to educate students from diverse backgrounds because nurse educators are challenged with an increasingly diverse U.S. population (Debrew, Lewallen & Chun, 2014). The National League for Nursing (NLN) (2016) has charged faculty in schools of nursing with effectively educating all students including international students and preparing them to provide culturally competent care. According to Debrew, Lewallen & Chun (2014) even though nurse educators attempt to treat all students equally, nontraditional students, inclusive of international students, may feel singled out due to their demographic differences. Increasing cultural competence among faculty and students has become a collective goal for nursing education in which nurse educators are faced with successfully adjusting curriculum to include cultural diversity (AACN, 2019). Nurse educators play an important role in increasing diversity because it encompasses organizational and institutional behaviors in nursing, nursing education and health care (NLN, 2016). The patient population is diverse leading to a need for a more diverse workforce. Faculty may need to assess their own practices to better serve the diverse population of students (Debrew, Lewallen & Chun, 2014).

Challenges faced during nursing school

Nursing students in general face many difficult situations while in school such as family commitments, financial stressors, time commitments, lack of family support and communication inconsistencies related to verbal and writing skills (Wojciechowski, 2017). A major challenge is the initial transition into a nursing program, which can be a pivotal factor for success in the program. The initial transition creates difficulties for reasons such as not having a school-life balance and ineffective time management skills

(Wojciechowski, 2017). These problems affect international nursing students on a much larger scale. In addition to the difficulties faced by all nursing students, international nursing students' challenges involve acculturation to American life, adapting to American language and a new educational system exemplified by the nursing program (Wojciechowski, 2017). Moreover, the stress of the typical challenges of an educational program may be heightened for international students by the additional need to acculturate to a new country.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question that guided this NI study was: "How do Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs?"

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the teaching-learning environment in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs. Foreign-born students have been identified as having difficulty with language barriers that lead to academic challenges while enrolled in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs (Brown, 2008). Nigerian students, in particular, report difficulty with social isolation and adjustment to the classroom setting in addition to language barriers. These elements can combine to create an unsupportive environment in U.S. nursing programs for Nigerian nursing students (Sanner, Wilson & Samson, 2002).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is a paucity of established research on acclimation by Nigerian students to U.S. nursing programs particularly related to individual issues and concerns of Nigerian immigrant nursing students. The review of literature yielded only one study specific to

Nigerian nursing students and their experiences in U.S. nursing programs. The study conducted by Sanner, Wilson and Samson (2002) revealed a lack of English language proficiency including vocabulary and terminology, and feelings of social isolation as a potential influence on the Nigerian students' acclimation to the teaching-learning environment. This further warrants the need for additional and current research.

The goal of the current study is to offer insight into how Nigerian students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. nursing programs. The current qualitative study used Naturalistic Inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) to explore the perceptions and experiences of Nigerian immigrants who are students in U.S. baccalaureate nursing schools. Moreover, findings from this study may contribute to the creation of more culturally sensitive teaching strategies and methods to promote academic success. Additionally, culturally sensitive strategies may promote a more positive acclimation for Nigerian students in the U.S. nursing programs.

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study utilized Naturalistic inquiry (NI) as described by Lincoln and Guba, (1985) and Erlandson et al. (1993). NI is a research methodology that emphasizes how people behave when engrossed in general life experiences in natural settings (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). Naturalistic inquiry incorporates beliefs that findings are created, not discovered, in relation to the emerging constructs. The goal of naturalistic inquiry research is to develop situation specific declarations related to multiple, created realities of the vital participants (Erlandson, et al., 1993). In an NI study, the research is conducted in the participants' natural environment and the researcher must meet them where they are, in the field, in order for data collection to occur while the participants are in their daily routine (Erlandson, et al., 1993). NI researchers attempt to delve into the social context of the participants and gather information to enhance their knowledge base (Erlandson et al., 1993). NI researchers also have the opportunity to test their preconceived

constructs with the constructs of the participants to expound on and build a common understanding (Erlandson et al., 1993).

The theoretical underpinning of NI is birthed from the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. Guba defined a paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guides action (Essays, 2018). Munhall (2007) suggests qualitative research approaches are inductive including the use of unique methods of discovery and various ways of reporting what is discovered. Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe NI as an alternative constructivist methodology affording the ability for individuals to study the human world differently. Moreover, in the minds of the constructivist, people understand and experience the world in a different way according to their perceptions, expectations, values, cultures and relationships (Essays, 2018).

Before beginning any recruitment procedures, the current study was approved by the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) Institutional Review Board (IRB). The current study utilized semi-structured interviews, conducted both in person and by phone. Ten Nigerian immigrant nursing students enrolled in Texas baccalaureate nursing programs participated in the research study. Data for the study contained demographics inclusive of age, gender, years in the U.S. and current semester in school, interview transcript data, the researcher's field notes and reflective journals.

According to Erlandson et al. (1993), data analysis is an ongoing, progressive process. The purpose of data analysis in NI research is to categorize the parts formed from data collection and reformulate the data into a significant whole to answer the research questions (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Data analysis occurred in a two-step approach in which the data were analyzed during data collection at the site and away from the site during interviews, after interviews, and at the completion of data collection (Erlandson et al., 1993). NI data analysis and data collection go hand in hand, resulting in rich data that generate emergent categories (Erlandson et al., 1993). Inductive analysis was used to sort data into categories that provide descriptive information about the Nigerian immigrant nursing students.

PLAN FOR REMAINING CHAPTERS

Chapter Two will provide a review of the literature discussed in the study. Chapter Three will explain the application of Naturalistic Inquiry related to the study. Chapter Four will provide an overview of the study findings. Chapter Five will provide a summary of key findings, comparison of findings to extant literature, strength and limitations. Implications, recommendations and conclusions of the study.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two provides a literature review focused on the difficulties of international students, nursing students in general, international nursing students, Nigerian immigrant nursing students and identifies the gaps in the literature. The literature review begins with an overview of international students, historical background of international students including challenges of international students related to language, cultural expectations, communication barriers, and cultural sensitivity of the NCLEX-RN exam. Then there will be an overview of challenges of nursing education in general for any nursing student followed by an in depth look at Nigerian students and their cultural background. The chapter closes with a discussion of the gaps in the literature and how the results of this study may support the success of Nigerian immigrant nursing students in U.S. baccalaureate nursing schools.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The U.S. is the country of preference for international students with over 1 million accounted for in higher education in 2018 (Zong & Batalova, 2018). International students or foreign students are defined in several different manners in higher education. For the purpose of this study, students born outside the U.S. will be referred to as international students. In the U.S. an international student is classified as an individual enrolled in a post-secondary academic educational institution outside of their own citizenship (Mitchell, Del Fabbo & Shaw, 2017). The country of origin, inclusive of the culture, may have an impact on the success of the international student while in the U.S.

The international student strives to accomplish a successful experience in American universities. Within that experience, these students face challenges that can affect their academic achievement such as the American English language barrier, the American

teacher-student relationship, culture shock, and social challenges (Alzahrani, 2017). The American English language can be difficult to learn, and the international student may have many misunderstandings related to common terms and local accents and idioms (Alzahrani, 2017). Many of the international students are not accustomed to academic environments where approaching a faculty member is acceptable (Hopkins, 2012).

Faculty relationships are an example of a cultural change the international student may face. Thinking of a professor as a partner in the academic environment is not typical of all cultures. Social interaction can be an obstacle for the international student because they may be waiting for the American students to approach them, which may never occur (Hopkins, 2012). There is an adjustment period for international students before they understand there is a cultural difference in education and they aren't alone in needing guidance (Hopkins, 2012). Although, all international students face challenges, traditional and non-traditional nursing students regardless of culture or country of origin face obstacles unique to nursing.

CHALLENGES OF NURSING EDUCATION

Nursing is a difficult degree program with a variety of complexities compared to many other programs in the university or college setting. Nursing school prepares students for caring for patients' lives inclusive of administering medications and treatments, developing care plans and performing physical exams. Nursing education includes clinical practice as well as classroom learning. Nursing school can be difficult for any student. Many students encounter individual obstacles such as time management, adjustment to objective type exams, financial obligations, family expectations and anxiety and stress (Minority Nurse, 2017; Nelson, 2015; Tagher, 2017).

Nursing students are expected to maintain a balance between academic studies and their personal lives (Minority Nurse, 2017). There is an added responsibility with the demands of nursing related coursework, reading and comprehending homework and

adapting to the responsibilities of clinical practice. Students are expected to set priorities and organize their daily tasks daily, which many find overwhelming (Nelson, 2015). Often students are not prepared for the complexities of organizing their day to align with the demands of nursing school classes and clinical experiences (Nelson, 2015). Deciding what to complete first or whether to study or entertain one's family or friends entails an adjustment for many students.

NCLEX style exams are another challenge nursing students may have to overcome while in nursing school. Multiple-choice questions, or objective style questions, are the standard question format on nursing exams, including the NCLEX (Smith, 2018). Multiple choice questions are used to measure knowledge and skills in nursing and are developed to test understanding and application and assist students in preparing for the NCLEX-RN exam (Smith, 2018). The recognition of learning styles can be used as a guide for developing study habits which will assist students on in-class exams as well as the NCLEX exam. Nursing students have many different learning styles such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic or a combination of all three (Nurse Journal, 2020). Active learning strategies that require hands-on experiences may benefit all types of learners and provide deeper learning related to the nursing curriculum (Nurse Journal, 2020).

Many students face financial obligations which may be overwhelming (Richardson & Dawson, 2017). Financial issues include the ability to pay tuition and fees, access to scholarships and grants, and locating resources to pay for their education as well as non-nursing obligations such as housing. Additionally, nursing students may experience stress and anxiety (Tagher, 2017). According to Turner & McCarthy (2017), nursing students encounter more anxiety than many students in other healthcare disciplines. Sources of stress consist of working while in school, responding to the rigor of the nursing curriculum, balancing didactic and clinical courses simultaneously, and dealing with financial, family and/or life issues (Tagher, 2017). Nursing students may express feelings of stress over a lack of the study skills necessary to understand and synthesize nursing concepts. On

nursing exams and in practice, it can be a challenge for nursing students to change their study skills from memorization to application of the knowledge learned. The cumulative effects of stress and anxiety may affect overall performance leading to less than acceptable grades or failure.

INTERNATIONAL NURSING STUDENTS

In addition to the issues faced by all nursing students, the reviewed literature encompassed repeated themes outlining the difficulties of international students including student language, cultural expectations, and communication barriers; cultural sensitivity of the NCLEX-RN exam; availability of financial support for international students pursuing nursing degrees; and strategies to facilitate NCLEX-RN pass rates (Malecha, Tart & Junious, 2012; NCSBN, 2017; Elder, Jacobs, & Fast, 2015; Cunningham, Stacciarini & Towle, 2004). Each topic will be discussed in detail within the sections below.

CHALLENGES FOR INTERNATIONAL NURSING STUDENTS

Recent literature focuses on challenges international students face in their transition into nursing programs (Cunningham et al., 2004; Sanner et al.; Xu & Davidhizar, 2005). Cunningham, Stacciarini & Towle (2004) offered a statement acknowledging the importance of U.S. nursing schools educating students from diverse backgrounds. The need arises from the increased diversity of the U.S. population and the shortage of nurses in the U.S. Although many international students are from those diverse backgrounds, many speak English as a second language (ESL). The lack of strong English language skills may place these students at an increased risk of encountering testing difficulties, failing to pass the licensure examination, and thus unable to contribute to the workforce (Cunningham et al., 2004).

Cunningham et al. (2004) completed a descriptive study identifying several challenges for ESL students preparing for the NCLEX-RN including medical and

nonmedical terminology in English, deciphering multiple-choice questions, managing time constraints of multiple-choice questions, interpreting concepts related to the American culture, self-esteem and belonging, and coping with cultural pressure. Such challenges may contribute to the higher failure rates on the NCLEX-RN of international students.

Salamonson, Everett, Koch, Andrew, and Davidson (2008) completed a quantitative study on two hundred and seventy-three first year ESL nursing students to determine the relationship between English-language acculturation and academic achievement. Salamonson et al. (2008) used the Cummins Model of Language Acquisition, which states two years is needed to acquire fluency in everyday face-to-face conversational language. Cummins model suggests educators should not assume non-native speakers who have been exposed to everyday spoken English have the corresponding academic language proficiency (Salamonson et al., 2008). Many nurse educators overlook the amount of understanding an ESL, international student has because the students either don't ask for clarification or educators don't inquire about understanding one on one, outside of the classroom community (Salamonson et al., 2008).

STUDENT LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

International students who speak English-as-a-second language (ESL) may have greater testing difficulties including understanding the language on exams and interpreting what is being stated. Cunningham et al. (2004) emphasizes the notion that even though international students speak English, and may do so very well, they may disregard the specifics of English grammar and sentence structure. Interpretation of concepts may also be different for international students in which the meaning of a word or phrase in the American culture can be totally different than in their native culture. The interpretation, or lack thereof, and attempts to understand can limit the time an international student has on an exam and place them at risk of not passing or receiving an unwarranted grade. Nursing

faculty need to acknowledge cultural values of ESL students while assisting them with culturally appropriate teaching and testing strategies (Cunningham et al., 2004).

Xu & Davidhizar (2005) completed a descriptive article on cultural variability and intercultural communication. Xu & Davidhizar (2005) identified in their study that globalization and changing American demographics are key factors that could affect the manner in which faculty communicate with international students. Factors that can affect the relationship include, but are not limited to, faculty understanding the needs of the international students and being able to set aside time to handle those needs. Being proficient in English can be a predictor of educational outcomes and nursing success (Xu & Davidhizar, 2005). The faculty are often so overwhelmed with faculty workloads that they mismanage the issues with international students (Xu & Davidhizar, 2005). American faculty may also have expectations of the international student and biases related to international students that can influence the intercultural relationship (Xu & Davidhizar, 2005). The increasing diversity in the nursing classroom may eventually force faculty to set aside time to acknowledge the unexpected challenges the international students face and learn about their cultures in order to assist the students.

Malecha, Tart & Junious (2012) completed a comprehensive review of literature and reported that based on the review, foreign-born students encounter difficulties while in nursing school related to language, communication, discrimination, prejudice, cultural issues and isolation. The study suggested that foreign-born students experienced a variety of communication barriers, which occurred when faculty spoke with them during classroom and clinical interaction, how questions were asked, and how exams were written, particularly when unfamiliar terms or phrases were used (Malecha, Tart & Junious, 2012). The students felt isolated or alienated because they thought if they asked questions they would be scrutinized and if they didn't ask questions, they would possibly fail the course. Moreover, students also found themselves in trouble because they plagiarized many assignments because they did not want to use incorrect terminology and were unsure of

how to integrate material without plagiarizing (Malecha, Tart & Junious, 2012). Identifying these factors may give nursing directors and faculty insight on what strategies need to be in place to reduce attrition of foreign-born students, improvement of intercultural communication and commitment to revise the teaching-learning environment.

ACCULTURATION

Language acquisition and education acculturation have been identified as critical challenges for international nursing students (Mitchell, Del Fabbro & Shaw, 2017). Mitchell et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative inquiry study to explore the learning and acculturating experiences of international nursing students to identify opportunities for teaching innovation. Interpretation of the American language often hinders the student's educational experience and may impede the student's effectiveness as a novice nurse. International students must read content in English and although they may be familiar with many words, students find the meaning may be different within the context of the American language and culture. International students are also tasked with adapting to different cultural norms leading to the need for faculty to lend extra support for this population of students. The study findings revealed that international nursing students took longer to study similar content than their American counterparts, they needed supportive opportunities to develop English proficiency and they felt isolated in the process (Mitchell et al., 2017). Nursing faculty must advocate for international students and provide support in a culturally competent manner that leads to a safe learning place for international students to thrive (Mitchell et al., 2017).

PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL NURSING STUDENTS

Gardner (2005) completed a qualitative study of fifteen minority nursing students and discussed the students' perceptions of a lack of understanding from student peers regarding cultural differences, lack of support from faculty, and difficulty coping with

insensitivity. In Gardner's study, minority nursing students were questioned regarding their experiences in predominately White nursing programs in the U.S. There were Nigerian students in this study who stated they were treated differently from their White peers and they expressed feelings of isolation (Gardner, 2005). In alignment with Gardner's study, the Sanner et al. (2002) study focused solely on Nigerian nursing students. Sanner et al. (2002) used a naturalistic approach to explore the perceptions and experiences of eight female Nigerian nursing students after their junior year in nursing school. The students encountered ineffective interaction with non-Nigerian peers, isolation, loneliness, and language and communication barriers (Sanner et al., 2002). Additional differences of Nigerian students will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

NIGERIAN POPULATION IN GENERAL

Analysis of the U.S. census bureau reports indicated that African immigrants make up 4.8% of immigrants in the U.S., with Nigeria being one of the primary countries of origin (Anderson, 2017). Clarke (2016) states Nigerian immigrants make up about 400,000 people in the U.S., with approximately 6,000 (1.5%) working in nursing. There were 10,674 Nigerians studying in the United States during the 2015-16 academic year (U.S. Mission Nigeria, 2016). Nigerian students study largely at the undergraduate level (50.8%). The top five institutions receiving these students are in Texas, particularly in Houston and Dallas (U.S. Mission Nigeria, 2016). According to the International Institute of Education (IIE) (2018), Texas is third among U.S. states in the number of international students hosted.

Nigerians may interpret language differently due to the influence of the British educational system. The British forced their culture onto the people of Nigeria because they assumed "Black people were innately inferior to whites, and they did not see a point in learning the ways of an "inferior race"" (Anele, 2010). The indigenous culture of Africans suggests that education is a prominent part of their belief system and they are

habitually lifelong learners (Szilagyi, 2014). The traditional African educational model entails aspects of memorization, demonstration, recitation and storytelling (Szilagyi, 2014). The African population also values social responsibility, job orientation and moral standards (Szilagyi, 2014). Okoro (2011) discussed that critical thinking, questioning the logic of the African ancestors and analyzing meanings is discouraged in the African culture. These attributes are considered to be disobedient to one's elders and one should "be seen and not heard". In nursing, critical thinking and analysis are essential to clinical practice and may contribute to the struggles Nigerian nurses and nursing students face in Western education.

NIGERIAN NURSING STUDENTS: CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Not all international students face the same problems and persons of specific cultures may face obstacles specific to differences between nursing school culture and their personal cultures. For example, studies revealed Nigerian nursing students may not be familiar with the use of idiomatic English that can be unique to different areas of the U.S. (Sanner et al., 2002). Sanner et al. (2002) completed a qualitative study of eight female Nigerian nursing participants aged 25- 48, who had been in the U.S. between 5 and 20 years, each in their junior year of a baccalaureate nursing program. The study suggested that Nigerian students had difficulty with the unique vocabulary of nursing and remained silent and did not ask for help (Sanner et al., 2002). American faculty also had reservations about the Nigerian nursing students implying they were concerned about their ability to perform successfully in the nursing program, particularly in writing skills, comprehension of nursing content, and successful communication with clients (Sanner et al., 2002). In the study by Sanner et al. (2002), Nigerian students reported feeling uncomfortable expressing themselves in front of their American peers and faculty, stating that their peers and faculty resented their heavy accents, resulting in intentional and non-intentional isolation from peers and faculty in U.S. nursing schools. The Nigerian immigrant nursing students

reported they preferred to work amongst themselves as they would support each other, something they felt they would not receive from their American peers.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

The common expectation of students is for them to adhere to stated policies and procedures. In nursing, students are held to a higher standard of academic integrity and academic conduct (Childers, 2015). Students are often given acknowledgment documents to sign that states they will adhere to rules related plagiarism. An issue arises when the students signed the documents with no reliable explanation from the faculty regarding the meaning of the document. George (2014) completed a qualitative study of seventeen participants and stated plagiarism exists in nursing academia among non-Western cultures. Nigerian students may plagiarize based on the value of collectivism, resulting in the use of others' work without citing the author. The Nigerian students tended to place greater value on group membership than on individual accomplishments (George, 2014). Nigerian students are community-oriented, based on their native culture, and the meaning of work is a collective responsibility. This may lead to unintentional plagiarism on nursing assignments (George, 2014). Due to the rapid expansion and educational reform in Nigeria between 1948 and 2011, academic integrity was not monitored effectively, which led to the weakening of educational standards and teaching excellence (Szilagyi, 2014). The U.S. definition of plagiarism in nursing programs is a challenge among Nigerian nursing students, who are attempting to be acculturated to the U.S. in nursing programs but rely on their initial learning as a foundation for their behaviors (George, 2014).

THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

FACULTY ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

A common finding in the literature addressed international nursing students and the need for the faculty to assist students to improve their success through various strategies

(Elder et al., 2015; Hunter-Scheele, Pruitt, Johnson & Xu, 2011; Olson, 2012; Salamonson et al., 2008; Sanner et al., 2002). This group of studies focused on international students who were having difficulty with respect to cultural differences, language barriers, English language acculturation and lack of support services available from the nursing program (Elder et al., 2015; Hunter-Scheele et al., 2011; Olson, 2012; Salamonson et al., 2008; Sanner et al., 2002). Based on the literature, educators should consider learning styles of international students when planning nursing curricula that will be presented to this population of nursing students (Donnell, 2015; Zoghi et al., 2010). The researchers agreed there is a need for nurse educators to learn how to integrate culturally competent teaching into nursing curricula (Pross, 2003; Shattell, 2013). NCSBN (2017) discusses incorporating cultural competence in prelicensure nursing programs and the resources available from NCSBN are a starting point for nurse educators to learn strategies to accomplish this task. Pre-licensure nursing programs are programs that accept students that do not have a registered nurse license and are taking courses to learn the academic and practical components of nursing.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN NURSING CURRICULA

A review of literature revealed that nurse educators need to move in the direction of incorporating cultural competence in their nursing curricula (Abu-Arab & Parry, 2015; Carty et al., 1998) Abu-Arab & Parry (2015) completed a quantitative study of 27 participants, inclusive of educators and students, and Carty et al. (1998), completed a descriptive study of twelve participants, discussing the difficulties for faculty in responding to international nursing students, the problems of not being well prepared for the task of educating international students, and the challenges with communication. Abu-Arab et al. (2015) discussed the value of students from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background using culturally acceptable and effective strategies for communicating with patients. Abu-Arab & Parry (2015) used a survey questionnaire that asked educators what

issues they experienced with international nursing students and a survey that asked international students their general experiences with clinical placement and assessment of communication in English. The nurse educators discussed in the Abu-Arab & Parry (2015) study insisted they needed more preparation about how to change their traditional methods of instruction to meet the needs of international nursing students. The students in this study agreed, insisting they would benefit from practice of oral skills and specific nursing vocabulary along with orientation sessions to assist in the clinical practice setting.

Carty et al. (1998) utilized a case report to present the challenges, experiences, and strategies of providing a cross-cultural educational experience. In this study, orientation sessions were used to introduce the Saudi Arabian culture to U.S. nursing faculty to help them understand the challenges male Saudi students face. Students in this study also had an orientation to Western cultural teaching and learning methods (Carty et al., 1998). The goal of the study was to properly prepare both faculty and students to effectively communicate despite the cultural differences and preconceived biases. Preparation for faculty included flexibility of teaching methods to allow the faculty to develop culturally sensitive teaching techniques appropriate for international students (Carty et al., 1998). The outcome of the study revealed faculty may need to provide more one-on-one guidance in administration of patient care and increase faculty availability for discussion of challenges to provide a support system to these students.

GAP IN THE LITERATURE

These studies provide a stepping stone to the current study as they offer an insight into how international nursing students feel and react to U.S. nursing programs but not how the students adapt. The gap existing throughout the reported research is how international, foreign nursing students acclimate to the themes identified; how do they make their learning environment efficient and effective. Little is known regarding how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate in U.S. nursing programs. Therefore, the current

study using naturalistic inquiry (NI) explored the experiences of the Nigerian immigrant nursing students in U.S. nursing programs.

Chapter Three: Methods

INTRODUCTION

Chapter three presents the research design and methodology utilized in this Naturalistic inquiry (NI) study, which explored how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs. The study was conducted using one on one interviews. The chapter begins with a description of NI and the researcher's justification for selecting NI. The researcher then discusses the methodology including recruitment, sampling, setting, data collection procedures, data management, and data analysis. The chapter ends with discussion related to the trustworthiness process and ethical considerations.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The current study utilized Naturalistic inquiry (NI) as described by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Erlandson et al. (1993). NI is a research methodology that emphasizes how people behave when engrossed in general life experiences in natural settings (Frey et al., 1999). Naturalistic inquiry incorporates beliefs that findings are created, not discovered, in relation to the emerging constructs. The goal of naturalistic inquiry research is to develop situation specific declarations related to multiple, created realities of the vital participants (Erlandson, et al., 1993). In an NI study, the research is conducted in the participants' natural environment and the researcher must meet them where they are, in the field, in order for data collection to occur while the participants are in their daily routine (Erlandson, et al., 1993). NI researchers attempt to delve into the social context of the participants and gather information to enhance their knowledge base (Erlandson et al., 1993). NI researchers also have the opportunity to test their preconceived constructs with the constructs of the participants to expound on and build a common understanding (Erlandson et al., 1993).

The researcher is the primary research instrument in NI research (Erlandson et al., 1993). NI was distinctively appropriate for this study because it uses interpretive and exploratory techniques to discover patterns in behavior and accepts there can be numerous valid viewpoints of the same concept (Erlandson et al., 1993). Additionally, NI focuses research endeavors on how people behave in natural settings, while engaging in life experiences. NI methodology was utilized to explore how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs by conducting one on one interviews. Moreover, NI allowed the researcher to delve into the social context of the Nigerian immigrant nursing students and gather information to enhance the knowledge base related to their experiences in U.S. nursing programs.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question that guided this NI study was: “How do Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs?”

METHODOLOGY

Recruitment

Purposive and snowball sampling was utilized in the current study to recruit study participants. Purposive sampling is the process by which participants are chosen because they are identified as having unique information and can best enlighten the researcher about the research problem under examination (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Snowball sampling is the process by which participants refer others who could potentially participate in the proposed study (Richards & Morse, 2013). Discussions with members of the Nigerian community suggested to the researcher that primary recruitment of participants should occur among members of the Nigerian community rather than sending out initial emails due to the “close knit relationships developed in the Nigerian

community” (W. Ndichu, personal communication, 2017; P. Ekpo, personal communication, 2018). To help promote recruitment, Nigerian nursing students who participated in the study were asked to refer other Nigerian nursing students who might be interested in participating in the study.

The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the research study prior to recruitment. Refer to Appendix A for the documentation of IRB approval. After IRB approval, the researcher began recruiting Nigerian immigrant nursing students. Directors of baccalaureate nursing programs or designated staff in the Houston area and the Nigerian-American Multicultural Council of Houston gave permission for distribution and posting of flyers (see Appendix C for sample flyer). The researcher contacted the directors by email and/or phone and all questions related to the study were answered by the researcher. Two universities requested the researcher’s IRB approval letter and it was provided before flyers were distributed. The flyers were posted in areas where students would have access to the study details. Two schools also sent emails to the student body to inform them of the study. The study flyers introduced the researcher, included pertinent contact information and were posted at surrounding schools of nursing. The flyers included inclusion criteria and the purpose of the proposed study. Nigerian nursing students who participated in the study were asked to refer other Nigerian nursing students who might be interested in participating in the study to contact the researcher.

PARTICIPANT INCLUSION CRITERIA

The study participants were recruited from seven traditional, baccalaureate nursing programs in Southeast Texas that include Nigerian immigrant nursing students. Participants in this study were Nigerian immigrant nursing students who:

- 1) Self-identified as Nigerian and received their primary education (K-12) in their home country

- 2) Resided in the U.S. for a minimum of one year
- 3) Enrolled in a RN baccalaureate nursing program in the U.S., in good standing (as evidenced by minimally set GPA for each respective nursing program) at the time of the study
- 4) Successfully completed a minimum of one semester of nursing school
- 5) Indicated a willingness to participate in the study
- 6) Stated their ability to speak, read, and write English

Nigerian immigrant nursing students, male or female, were welcome to participate in the study since gender was not a consideration for the study. Study participants were recruited until data analysis revealed redundancy and/or saturation within the collected data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The actual number of participants was eleven but only ten met the inclusion criteria. Recruitment was completed due to data redundancy and replication of findings. Data redundancy is an indication of saturation, in which no new information is populated during the interview process (Richards & Morse, 2013). The researcher determined sampling was adequate when sufficient data accounted for all aspects related to the phenomenon of interest (Bowen, 2008). No new potential participants contacted the researcher after data collection ended.

Sample

The recruitment strategy generated eleven participants. Nigerian students who were interested in the study contacted the researcher by telephone or email. If the potential participant contacted the researcher by email, the researcher asked the participant for a contact telephone number and permission to call. During the telephone conversations, the researcher explained the study, verified their eligibility and answered any questions. If the participant remained interested in participating in the study and met the inclusion criteria, a time and date convenient for the participant and researcher was chosen for the interview.

The demographic form was sent by email to the participants to complete and return before the interview took place. The majority of the study participants (8 of the 10) emailed the demographic form back to the researcher, while two brought the form to the interview.

Setting

Participants were interviewed by phone and in person. Participants who chose in person interviews identified a location feasible for both participant and researcher. The participants' personal home was excluded due to potential distractions during the interview process. The interviews took place in a setting that provided privacy and confidentiality. All interviews were recorded, and each eligible participant was asked to read and review the consent form to ensure an understanding of the research and that the correct person was being interviewed. Verbal consent was achieved from all ten participants.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred through face-to-face and telephone interviews in pre-selected locations. Data collection began once a participant agreed to participate in the study, met inclusion criteria and verbally consented to participating in the study (Appendix B). Demographic data forms were reviewed by the researcher to verify inclusion criteria. Study details were discussed by phone before scheduling semi-structured interviews with each participant. After the participant agreed to participate, the consent form was sent by email for the participant to review. All participants gave verbal consent.

Data for the study consisted of demographic data (Appendix D), interview data, the researchers' field notes and reflective journals. Demographic data collected included gender, age, race, place of birth, tribe, languages spoken, time in the U.S. (months or years), and nursing program enrolled in at the time of the study (Appendix D). The researcher conducted all interviews. The semi-structured interviews began with a guiding question

asking the Nigerian immigrant nursing student how long they had been in the U.S. (Appendix E). The interview questions used were:

- “Would you please tell me about your experiences as a Nigerian-born nursing student studying in the U.S.?”
- “What did you do to help you successfully complete your nursing program courses?”
- “Can you tell me about any experiences, positive or negative, you encountered in your nursing program?”
- “What individuals and/or situations helped you successfully complete your nursing courses?”
- “What would you share with nursing faculty about your experience in nursing school?”
- “Would you briefly explain your educational background in your home country?”

The researcher asked each question and allowed the participant time to respond before moving on to the next question. The researcher was able to dialog with the participant and ask the questions that elicited usable data related to answering the research question.

The researcher kept detailed field notes during the study to help capture observations of the participants during the interviews and included the researchers’ impressions, thoughts and feelings regarding the interviews (Owen, 2012). A reflective journal was kept throughout the study with the researcher’s ongoing thoughts, ideas, and questions concerning the research study (Erlandson et al., 1993). Journaling allowed the researcher to capture the perspectives about the study journey and the progression of the study.

The researcher began each interview by greeting the participant and reiterating the purpose of the study. Participants were told they have the option not to answer a question or not to discuss any issues of their choice; and that they could terminate the interview and

participation in the study at any time. Once the participant's questions and concerns had been answered, the researcher asked if the participant was still willing to participate in the current study. After the participant agreed, the researcher turned on the digital recorders and again asked the participant if they are willing to participate, which captured the verbal consent and allowed the data collection to begin.

The interviews were digitally recorded, using two digital recorders with code lock protection to assist with keeping all identifying information confidential. During phone interviews, the phone was placed on speaker so the interview can be recorded. Each participant was assigned an alphanumeric code to maintain anonymity. One initial interview was conducted for each participant. The researcher requested an open line of communication via email and/or phone until completion of the study for the researcher to ask further questions for accuracy and clarification. The participant was also informed they could contact the researcher to add further commentary during the time frame of the study, approximately six months after the study began. Each interview lasted between 10 and 35 minutes, with an average of 20 minutes. A timer was used to ensure time limits were followed. The researcher did not have to contact participants for follow-up interviews related to the original questions.

Prior to conclusion of the initial interview, the researcher asked the Nigerian immigrant nursing student if there was anything else the participant wanted to elaborate on related to their acclimation to U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs. Six out of ten participants shared additional thoughts with the researcher. The researcher offered all participants the researcher's email if they thought of anything else they wished to share after the conclusion of the interview. Each interview ended with the researcher thanking the participants for their participation in the study.

Data saturation is defined as inviting new participants into the study until the data set is complete, indicating data redundancy (Bowen, 2008). The researcher ended the study when data from multiple participants fit into the themes already devised with previous

interviews and no new themes emerged. The replication of the data in themes from interview transcripts assists with ensuring comprehension and completeness (Bowen, 2008). The researcher developed five themes from condensed data that was interpreted through data analysis. These themes provided explanations of the phenomenon of interest, perceptions of Nigerian immigrant nursing students studying in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs.

Member checking is when data and interpretations of data are verified by the participants within the study (Erlandson et al.,1993). According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), member checking provides a source of credibility and validity to the interpretations and conclusions of the data. Eight out of ten participants agreed to be accessible for member checking. The participants were sent an email and/or a text message asking if they were still willing to assist and if so, what date and time would be convenient for a telephone meeting. Four participants agreed to participate in member checking. On the agreed upon dates and times, the researcher called the participants, reminded them that consent still applied until the end of the study and requested if they were willing to participate in this portion of the study. After verbal consent was established, the participants were given a summary of the study. The researcher discussed the completion of data collection due to redundancy of data with no new themes that yielded new insights emerging. The researcher presented to the participants the five themes that emerged from the data, gave summaries of the study findings and allowed them to review the findings and provide feedback regarding whether the findings aligned with their experiences as Nigerian immigrant nursing students in a U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs. The participants agreed unanimously that the findings were straightforward, and they felt the themes and summaries showed a strong association with their perceptions and experiences. The transcripts from the member checking were analyzed and included with the findings of the study.

Data Management

The interviews were digitally recorded and all identifying information was kept confidential. Additionally, a second recorder was used concurrently to capture data in the event of equipment failure. Each participant was assigned an alphanumeric code to maintain anonymity. The first interview was coded as P01, the second P02 and so on for each subsequent interview. All digital recordings and field notes were maintained in a secure, locked filing cabinet at the researcher's home office. The interview files were saved on a flash drive that was kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office until the study was complete. The recordings were transcribed by a transcription service. All transcribed data were compared with the tape recordings for accuracy. All information related to the study was destroyed at the completion of the research and written reports.

Data Analysis

According to Erlandson et al. (1993), data analysis is an ongoing, progressive process. The purpose of data analysis in NI research is to categorize the parts formed from data collection and reformulate the data into a significant whole to answer the research questions (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Data analysis occurs in a two-step approach in which the data are first analyzed at the site during the interview process and secondly away from the site following a period of data collection (Erlandson et al., 1993). Analysis is completed between each interview prior to the next interview and after data collection is completed (Erlandson et al., 1993). Data collected from this study was used to answer the research question. That data was then analyzed as a whole which begin the process of seeking themes as they emerged. Coding by the researcher was used to assist with data analysis. The researcher reviewed the interview data and made notes and

headings in the text as they read. Moreover, NI data analysis and data collection go hand in hand, resulting in rich data that generate emergent themes (Erlandson et al., 1993). Inductive analysis is used to sort data into themes that provide descriptive information about the setting of the units (Erlandson et al., 1993).

In keeping with the interactive process described by Erlandson et al. (1993), the researcher analyzed each one of the interview transcripts. Analysis in this study occurred using a line by line process in which the researcher read the transcripts verbatim and reviewed the field notes to decide which data fit into which theme as various themes emerged. The researcher carefully read each interview transcript, without personal identifiable information, to attain a sense of the whole of each interview. The researcher examined the transcripts for repeated words and phrases within the data (Armstrong, 2010). As part of data management, the researcher used another facet of member checking occurred by having the study interviews read by chosen researchers in the field of nursing who have some understanding of the phenomena. The researcher reread interview transcripts for ongoing themes using inductive analysis, in which these themes began to emerge from the data of the participants experiences through repeated examination and comparison. The data was grouped together and combined under similar themes to increase an understanding of the material. Table 3.1 displays the explanation of the themes. The themes include: 1) Nigeria vs. America- experiences discussed by the Nigerian immigrant nursing students; 2) Navigating the rough waters- challenges and obstacles; 3) Unexpected changes; 4) Searching for consistency; 5) Hopes of finding clarity.

Table 3.1 Explanation of the themes

Theme	Related item
1. Stepping into America	<i>Experiences in nursing program; education in Nigeria vs U.S., explanation of educational system in Nigeria</i>
2. Navigating the Rough Waters	<i>Challenges and obstacles faced by Nigerian immigrant nursing students</i>
3. Unexpected Changes	<i>Effects of work and family expectations on school</i>
4. Searching for Consistency	<i>Thoughts and ideas participants shared with nursing faculty</i>
5. Hopes of Finding Clarity	<i>Strategies used to successfully complete nursing school</i>

Trustworthiness of Data

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is derived from the thick, rich data collected within the study (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2018). Furthermore, trustworthiness helps establish the rigor of the research findings and demonstrates the credibility and integrity of the research process (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2018). Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that trustworthiness of a research study is important to evaluate the worth of the study. Lincoln & Guba (1985) state the trustworthiness of the study is recommended, “to guide the field activities and impose checks to be certain the proposed procedures are in fact being followed”. Trustworthiness involves demonstration of the truth, a foundation for applying it, and allowance to use it if external judgments are made related to the consistency of the procedures used (Erlandson et al., 1993). Trustworthiness involves credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln & Guba’s (1985) trustworthiness criteria were used in the current study as a guide to navigate the understanding of the Nigerian immigrant nursing student population and ensure the study’s quality.

CREDIBILITY

A qualitative study is considered credible when the descriptions and interpretations of human experience are identifiable by the person who has experienced the situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The technique used to check credibility for this study was member-checking. Member-checking is a process in which specific descriptions or themes are taken back to the participants and then used to establish validity, providing direct access to the narrative results (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Lincoln & Guba (1985) state this is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. Member checking allowed for the study results to be reviewed by the Nigerian immigrant nursing students allowing them to offer their viewpoints on how clear and adequate the results are as a representation of their experiences. Additionally, peer debriefing was used to help refine the inquiry process (Erlandson et al., 1993). The current study utilized Nigerian associates, other nursing PhD students, established faculty members and the dissertation chair as peer de-briefers throughout all aspects of the study. The peer de-briefers were asked to critically analyze the findings based on their own involvements with Nigerian nursing students and asked if they agreed with the researchers' explanations regarding the perceptions of Nigerian nursing students studying in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs. The peer de-briefers gave their own reflection of their experiences with Nigerian nursing students and they unanimously agreed with the summarization of the study findings. They stated the findings aligned with their involvements with the population. They also offered potential strategies on how to help the Nigerian nursing students be successful in U.S. nursing programs.

TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability in a qualitative study is described as the study results having applicability in other contexts with other participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The naturalistic researcher has an obligation to demonstrate transferability to those who would

apply it to the nursing discipline and other similar disciplines (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thick description was used as a technique in the current study to assist the researcher in describing the phenomena being studied and provide sufficient data for analysis, including field notes and transcribed interviews. A guiding question and subsequent probing questions were used during the interview to collect detailed descriptions of the data. The guiding question was “Would you please tell me about your experience as a Nigerian-born nursing student studying in the U.S.?” and the probing questions are included on the interview guide presented in Appendix E. Purposive sampling was used to seek both typical and divergent data that emerging insights of the study suggest to enact an adequate description of the situation (Erlandson et al., 1993). The sampling technique lead to a sample size of ten Nigerian immigrant nursing students whose interviews elicited rich data that enlightened the researcher on the perceptions of the population.

DEPENDABILITY

Dependability is essential to consistency of the current study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consistency is accomplished with the assumption that the current study can be repeated with the same strategies involving the same subjects under the same conditions and produce the same results (Erlandson et al., 1993). An audit trail was developed to provide documentation through field notes, reflective journals, and an interview guide, which allows for evaluation of the process and results. This process assists with trustworthiness of the current study.

CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability focuses on tracking data to its sources and explicit and implicit logic, which is used to strengthen the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability is communicated through an audit trail that determines if the conclusions, interpretations, and

recommendations can be traced to its sources (Erlandson et al., 1993). The audit trail for the current study consisted of the interview guides, transcripts, field notes, and the researchers' reflective journals. Confirmability will provide nothing greater than the value of what it confirms (Erlandson et al., 1993). Moreover, confirmability and dependability work together to establish credibility and trustworthiness.

Ethical considerations

The risks related to the current study are minimal. The primary risks to participants include the potential for loss of confidentiality and participant fatigue. Participants' confidentiality was protected and all data obtained in the study was kept confidential and only available to the research team. All digital recordings, field notes, reflective journals and back-up data was maintained behind a lock and key secured filing cabinet in the researcher's home office. Each participant was assigned an alphanumeric code to maintain anonymity. A log was kept of the participant's name and the alphanumeric code, which was secured during the study and destroyed at the completion of the study. The code was the only identifier applied to the data associated with the participant. However, there remains potential risks to confidentiality in the study, which was explained to each participant before data collection began.

Verbal consent for participation in the study was retrieved from each participant before any data collection occurred. Participation was voluntary and participants were notified they may refuse to participate or stop their participation at any time during the study. Additionally, the potential for participant interview fatigue was minimal since each interview did not exceed ninety minutes. The average number of interview minutes was twenty. Any subsequent interviews did not exceed thirty minutes. A description of the study procedure along with consent forms was submitted, and approved, to the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review to assure

that the study procedures adhere to Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects (Appendix A).

Chapter Four: Results and Findings

INTRODUCTION

Chapter four will detail the findings of the NI (Erlandson, et al., 1993) study exploring the perceptions and experiences of Nigerian immigrants who are students in U.S. baccalaureate nursing schools. The research question, “How do Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to U.S. baccalaureate nursing schools?” guided this study. Demographic data related to the population will be discussed in detail. The chapter will then present the findings that emerged from the study and discuss each theme and subtheme.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

A total of ten Nigerian nursing students were interviewed between April and August of 2019. All consented to participate in the study. A summary of the demographic data can be found in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Demographic Data

Participant Code	Age	Gender	No. of Years in U.S.	Semester in U.S. nursing school	Previous experience in U.S. schools
P014255	29	M	5	2 nd	No
P025145	36	F	5	4 th	Yes
P035144	33	F	4	3 rd	Yes
P0451513	35	F	13	2 nd	Yes
P055154	35	F	4	2 nd	No
P065203	37	F	3	2 nd	Yes
P078713	23	F	13	4 th	No
P08873	40	M	3	2 nd	Yes
P09885	22	F	5	4 th	No
P101036	36	M	6	4 th	Yes

All Nigerian immigrant nursing student participants were enrolled in various baccalaureate nursing programs in Houston, Texas. None of the participants were enrolled in the school where the researcher is a faculty member. Seven of the Nigerian participants

were female and three were male. The participants ranged in age from 20- to 40-years-old; three participants were in their 20s, six participants were in their 30s, and one participant was in their 40s. The average age of the participants was 33-years-old. The participants' years living in the U.S. ranged from three years to thirteen years with a mean of 6 years. The semester in a U.S. nursing program ranged from the 2nd semester to the 4th semester. Five of the participants were in their second semester, one in the third semester and four in the fourth semester. The participants were asked why they came to the U.S. Nine out of ten participants state they migrated to the U.S due to marriage, family being here already or to pursue a higher education. One participant did not wish to disclose why they migrated to the U.S.

INTRODUCTION TO FINDINGS

Nigerian immigrant nursing students who participated in this study conveyed that there is a difference in the educational system in Nigeria compared to the educational system in the U.S. Many of the participants expressed they were not expecting the U.S. nursing curriculum to be more difficult, and they assumed they would be able to manage without challenges. Participant interviews generated rich data exploring how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the teaching-learning environment in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs, the purpose of this NI study.

Inductive analysis of data focused on the emergence of the overarching theme, *Stepping into America* with the subsequent themes of *Navigating the Rough Waters*, *Unexpected Changes*, *Searching for Consistency*, and *Hopes of Finding Clarity*. The first theme, *Stepping into America*, elaborates on the Nigerian immigrant nursing student experiences in nursing programs and consisted of two subthemes: *Education in Nigeria Compared to the US* and *Out of My Comfort Zone*. The second theme, *Navigating the Rough Waters*, delves into the challenges and obstacles faced by Nigerian immigrant nursing students and contains four subthemes: *Obstacles with My Accent*, *Challenges with*

Classmates and Instructors, Vocabulary and Terminology, and Keeping My Head Above Water. The third theme, *Unexpected Changes*, focuses on the effects that work and family expectations can have on nursing school and consists of a subtheme, *A Whirlwind Life*. The fourth theme, *Searching for Consistency*, discuss the thoughts and ideas participants would share with nursing faculty and contains a subtheme, *Wanting to be Heard*. The fifth theme, *Hopes of Finding Clarity*, provides strategies useful for the Nigerian immigrant nursing student to successfully complete nursing school and consists on a subtheme, *Coming into View*.

The quotes from the interview transcripts will be represented by the alphanumeric code assigned to each participant (e.g. P014255). The following sections will describe the study findings related to each theme and subtheme respectively. The descriptions will lead to a discussion on what nursing faculty may be able to accomplish to be better prepared for Nigerian immigrant nursing students.

I: STEPPING INTO AMERICA

Stepping into America is the overarching theme as it explores the participants experiences in U.S nursing programs, education in Nigeria compared to the US, and an explanation of the educational system in Nigeria. Participants were asked to discuss their experiences since being in nursing school. One of the initial thoughts the Nigerian students voiced was they thought going to school in the U.S. would be easy due to the perception that school in Nigeria is much harder. The misconception that “...it’s easier for Nigerian students to come to the U.S. and succeed because it’s tougher back home” [P014255] was proven to be misleading because nursing school “is really challenging...hectic” [P055154]; “not that fun” [P014255]. The aspects of nursing are “complex and sometimes complicated” [P078713], “very intense with so many rules” [P032144]; making the road to success not as easy as was expected. The participants’ perceptions related to their U.S.

nursing school experience was strengthened during member checking as the participants agreed nursing school was not what they expected and if they had not changed their mindset toward nursing school they could have failed. A participant who had been in the U.S. for six years stated,

You know, coming from the background that I studied biochemistry in Nigeria and moving over here I thought I was going to go into medicine and later on I changed my mind. I said, “Okay, let me just do nursing.” So, getting into the nursing program, I then found out that the program was not that easy and that it was really hard. It was really tough for me too. [P101036]

Education in Nigeria Compared to the U.S.

The participants thought nursing school was “different” [P09885, P02514]; meaning “the educational system [in Nigeria] is quite different from here [U.S.]” [P014255]. Within U.S. nursing programs there is not just theory and didactic content, but also clinical requirements. The Nigerian students called them “practicals” [P0451513, P055154]. Participants discussed the structure of exams and curriculum throughout the interviews. The Nigerian participants commonly spoke about theory-based exams in Nigeria stating “back home in Nigeria we did more of theory, narrative kind of work, but here in the US it's more of multiple choice-based questions” [P025145]. A participant stated,

...it's been a lot of hands on, like a lot of practicals. It is then just like looking back to when I went to school in Nigeria in my country we did more of the theoretical aspects like we read a lot. [P055154]

A second participant stated,

...here when you study you also do the practical part of your study and it's not just theoretical. Back home we knew all the theory of whatever subject it was, but because of no infrastructure as well as the schools not being able to provide what we needed. We really didn't immerse ourselves into the practical aspect of whatever we were being taught. [P0451513]

The majority of exams in U.S. nursing programs consist of objective questions using multiple-choice testing and the NCLEX-RN is a multiple-choice exam. The structure of Nigerian exams is “majority of them, there is some form of essay” [P032144]. This led to the participants need to “learn how to take test in America” [P065203]. One participant explained the difference when exams are given in Nigeria vs in the U.S,

...back home I think you have two tests before you have the exam. We always have a set week designated for tests, a week designated for your exam. But here when you finish a test the class still has a class to carry and -- that hasn't been my experience back home [P014255]

A second participant discussed how they had an “ah-ha” moment and realized they couldn't study in America the same way they studied in Nigeria:

And I didn't even realize...until I started going to school in America, I thought all those times were just about you reading, if possible you just cram the material and then just go to the examination and just like vomit everything like that. They ask you what you just written in your exam and you're not even able to rememberBecause [here in America] like those things, you're seeing them you can feel them, you can touch them, it makes you like really learn it and you know like in a different way. Like you're experiencing it and for me it's something that I really like, I really enjoy the nursing program. [P055154]

A third participant discussed what they were accustomed to in Nigeria compared to here in the U.S.:

But there are like content information that you have to know it and then write it down. The only thing was, it was kind of like verbatim because you read, they ask you what this is, unlike here in nursing school, it's more like application questions. So that's a lot of critical thinking. [P032144]

In Nigerian courses, all instruction is done upfront then exams are given. A participant stated:

We have a three-month class [and] after three months you have about three weeks maybe [or] a month [and] the first week of the [next] month is designated for all your tests. So, once you're done with your test you go home. So -- once the exam is had we'd set aside a week for the exams. So unlike in nursing school.... after your exam you still have to take class. It wasn't so...back home. [P014255]

If a Nigerian student encountered multiple-choice questions prior to studying in the U.S. it was “when you are like maybe you are moving from high school into college ...-- the standard of [the] exam then all questions ... comes in multiple choice question” [P014255]. All the participants discussed the West African Examination (WAEC) that is “a multiple choice-exam that decides which school you would attend. So, everybody in Nigeria that is qualified to write the exam that just ready to go to the university will write the exam.” [P025145]

Out of My Comfort Zone

To better understand, the participants were asked to explain the educational system in Nigeria. All the participants discussed the educational system giving similar descriptions. There are similarities that exist between the Nigerian and U.S. systems in which “nursery, primary, secondary school” [P025145] are the foundation of education. The difference is in Nigeria you “can be one years old, two, three, four, five, six. But you start like, whenever the parent is ready, you can go to school, it's not about age. And over there, you know, as soon as you're born, you're basically in school, you don't wait till you're five or six years old” [P078713]. Here in the U.S you have to be at least five years old before starting kindergarten. The start of primary school in Nigeria is equal to the start of elementary school in the US. The start of secondary school is equal to the start of middle school and/or high school.

Post-secondary school is equal to college and is when the Nigerian students take the WAEC exam, which determined if one went to college or not. One participant stated, “-- let's call it SAT but it wasn't really SAT, it was WAEC, W-A-E-C, West African Examination Council” [P0451513]. A second participant stated, “you have to pay. Yeah it was really expensive you have to pay. That's like the exam before you get into college in Nigeria to like seek admission to get into college. So, my father would not even -- he said I'm not going pay for that exam if I'm not sure you won't pass.” [P055154]. Numerous

other participants also stated how if they were not able to pass the exam they would have to go to technical school or sit out until passing the exam. One participant stated,

Those tests were intense because it's like, let's just say there's a certain level you're supposed to get, if you don't get it, it's not like, another school will accept you, it's like you're not in school for a year. So, like, it was intense, it was intense. It's like if you don't get a certain level, you got -- basically like I forgot what the name is called, you take a test and the lowest you get, they chose what you do. So, it's not like you'd like I'd say I want to be a nurse, but if I don't pass the test, they'll be like, you're not ready for nursing, you need to go to business school. So, I have to apply for business school but if that doesn't work out, I just take a year off and stay at home or until I pass the test. I feel like, I don't like that about it and I have a lot of friends that they're doing stuff they don't want to do just because they're not getting the scores to be a doctor or to be a lawyer. [P078713]

Summary: Stepping into America

The Nigerian immigrant nursing students discussed their experiences in nursing school in the U.S. The majority spoke to the U.S. nursing programs being challenging and difficult, leading to a fork in the road, in which they had to devise a plan or not be successful. One of the primary issues discussed was the Nigerian educational system being different from the U.S. system. One main variation is the method of examination, suggesting the Nigerians are accustomed to theory based, essay type questions, which call for memorization and releasing the information onto an essay exam. Multiple-choice questions were not seen very often except when moving from high school to college and taking the WAEC exam. When used, the multiple-choice questions were more knowledge-based than application. Another difference is students can start school at any age in Nigeria, which is a variation from the U.S. educational system and can lead to inconsistencies in educational experiences. The participants discussed the exam taken to enter college, and if not passed, could stop a student from achieving their educational goals, which could encompass relocating to the U.S. to attend nursing school.

II. NAVIGATING THE ROUGH WATERS

Obstacles with My Accent

The participants were questioned about positive and negative experiences encountered during nursing school. A commonality amongst the participants was the experiences they endure with having a heavy accent. One of the similarities was having to repeat what they say so that others could understand them clearly. One participant stated, "I have to repeat myself several times just so they will understand what I am saying" [P032144], while another stated; "Like it took me a while to like, you know, talk in a way that people won't get confused on my accent. And it was hard making friends because in my head, I was like, "Oh, I don't want to be judged." [P078713]. The participants felt it was harder to communicate with people because they were Nigerian immigrants and this premise was validated during member checking. The accent was also a deterrent from the participants asking questions as one participant stated,

Yeah, I would say my tongue, probably I have a deep accent, there are times when you -- when something is bothering you, so you want to ask a question. When you ask, they keep telling you, "What did you say? I don't understand you." So, it pushes me off focus so I just leave it within so I don't want to deal with it inside because it's like I felt I know how to speak English but when I'm speaking to you you're telling me you don't understand what I'm saying. [P014255]

Other participants discussed what classmates and/or staff thought of them because of their accent. One stated, "Seeing you with accent, seeing you with a different color, they believe that you don't know anything, that your voice doesn't count. I have experienced that a lot [P101036]; while another participant stated,

Well a lot of times I know my accent has changed over the years but a lot of times you are looked down upon just because you have an accent and people don't think you're smart or they don't think you understand English...if you knew the history you would know that where I come from we actually speak English..... so, they automatically look at you like not knowing anything and ...judging. [P0451513]

Even though the heavy accent was taken as a negative connotation by many, one participant was complimented and stated,

I used to be very shy with my accent and I still think I am too, like when it comes to like speaking if I'm not comfortable. And so, someone said, "I really like your accent," and I was like surprised because I was like, I thought my accent wasn't good.... but like listen you might do a presentation in class. A classmate will be like, "Oh, you're doing really well." And I'll make a statement like, "Oh, my accent was probably messing everything up." And the girl said, "No, your accent, it's really nice. We actually like your accent." The accent gives like a personality and I was really surprised about that. [P078713]

Challenges with Classmates and Instructors

The participants discussed how they wanted to get to know people and interact on another level but at times it was difficult. One participant stated,

I found it a bit shocking at first was like when we had labs. And I felt like the majority, like the Caucasians would rather just have Caucasians in their lab groups. That was unsettling initially because it makes it like, okay, like you just notice like you're always not being picked like you just have to find your own like, you have to find someone of your own race to pair up in lab and that was odd. [P065203]

Other participants spoke about making friends and stated,

I have not been able to really make friends. Yeah how do I know that because since we finished on Friday, nobody has called me from school... and I realize like maybe I haven't really been able to really make friends." [P055154]; while another stated, "I have a lot of good white friends and I have some that they don't even want to come your way, I think that's negative. [P09885]

The participants did not specifically state discrimination but eluded to it in the interviews. One participant discussed what they would say to classmates by stating,

...there was quite a few, there was some kind of divide you could tell. So, it was some, sometimes it was, it was surprising that you had Africans that were still in the class. Some people were expecting that you would have dropped. Yeah. I mean there were comments and stuff like that. So those are the things that we saw but you're just pushed through and move on. [P025145]

On the same perception, another participant stated,

I don't want to like attach it to, you know to racism or anything, but we are studying with people with different color, they feel like you don't know anything... seeing you with different color, they believe that you don't know anything, that your voice doesn't count. I have experienced that a lot. [P101036]

That same participant gave an example that really brought out the feelings some Nigerians experience with people around them:

I can remember there was a day I made a comment. I was talking out of experience of you know, this is the kind of job I did back home, I worked as a laboratory scientist and we were talking about urine sample. I gave a very straight answer about that, and you know, one of the white girls said that is a dumb thing. And later when I asked the clinical instructor, the clinical instructor said that was the best observation I did. And later she was like, "Whoa, okay." Everybody was like, "Whoa, okay he knows what he's doing." Had it [been] that someone with a different color said something like that, they would have recorded it. I think they don't believe that we know anything, but you know, as God may have it, some of us are still surviving. [P101036]

A third participant gave an example of a challenge when speaking with an instructor

to try and receive guidance:

Usually in my country, the teachers there are really not open to you asking your instructors stuff. So, here I noticed that they did want you to ask them questions, but because of my upbringing, I am still not used to asking them. So, in a small group, I was like okay, I wasn't clear about something. So, after the instructor finished telling us what she expected of us, because it was clinical, so I have to write down something. So, when she was done telling us, I went to meet her and I was like, if she could explain something more to me, and the next thing she raised her voice like she was practically screaming at me. And I am just like, Okay, thank you. And I walked out of that place, like my other classmates had to come up to me like I don't know how you handled it but if it was me, I would just start shivering but you just stood there and then you walked out. That was very good and mature of me. [P032144]

A fourth participant gave an example of a challenge when attempting to understand

a concept and the instructor was not providing the guidance the student needed:

You don't have the option of trying to get someone else that will understand you. So that has really been a challenging situation because you meet a lecturer once she will be telling you that you have to be studying hard, I'm telling you, "I do not

understand your concept,” how do you help me to understand your concept? She would tell me, “Go and study hard” I have been studying but I'm not understanding, why do you ask me to go study again? So, it's like I'm stuck with you, that's it. [P014255]

During member checking, this concern was confirmed as the participants discussed feeling as if faculty put students of color in a box and needed to show more interest in them.

Vocabulary and Terminology

The participants' experiences with vocabulary and terminology were more aligned with the pronunciation of words and the meaning of words. The participants discussed the “pronunciation was pretty challenging.” [P014255]. They discussed “for every discipline, there are terminologies that are unique.” [P025145]. One participant explained the difference and stated, “So it's kind of their grammar, the way they pronounce it to me, because of the way I was brought up, the way I learnt my English is kind of different from the way they say it here.” [P014255]. Nigeria uses British English, which is different from American English, making it easy for someone to misunderstand what is being said. A second participant explained,

...as much as you want to say race is not an issue, I feel like, it may not be race, but like just cultural backgrounds, the way we assimilate English, because in Nigeria, we use the British way, we were colonized by the British. So, the English spelling is even different too, I just feel like, not to give us a break, but to understand like our demographics. [P078713]

A third participant stated, “there are so many words you don't know...it's nursing for crying out loud.” [P025145]. On that same issue, a fourth participant stated, “They kept on saying diaphoresis, I am like, what are they talking about. So, I think at the end of the class I googled it... they just assumed that, yeah, in nursing school you are expected to know all of these big words.” [P032144].

The participants understood there would be a plethora of words they knew, but may have a different meaning and there were words that were different but meant the same thing. This perception was affirmed during the member checking interviews in which the participants explain it's not that Nigerian students don't understand words but they may have a different word that means the same thing such as the word practicals, which is clinicals in American English. For example, one participant clarified, "I'm like what exactly is she referring to...what exactly are you saying. I know the word but like the context in which it's being used sometimes threw me off." [P065203]. The participants also felt American English words seen on exams had different meanings than British English words, leading to a possible disadvantage for foreign students due to the way they may interrupt the meanings of words. One participant gave a detailed example:

...like there's like afebrile, right? Which means without -- no fever, or the word febrile. In my head, I know fever, I know temperature, like increased temperature...In class, the teacher says, "Okay, the patient has increased temperature or temperature is 103 Fahrenheit, okay." And I said, let's say -- okay, that it occurred in the hospital.... I will understand that. But then on the test, it's like they will say a patient comes in, there's a pediatric or a newborn febrile, blood pressure this, heart rate this, and I don't see temperature, I don't see 103 Fahrenheit. But if you see febrile, you know, that means the patient has fever, a different aspect and then when like the teacher goes over to come in see like one of the professors, they were like, I gave you like, I basically helped you out, I gave you febrile. And in my head, I'm like, "What is febrile?" [P078713]

Keeping My Head Above the Water

Not all perspectives were negative, and the participants discussed many positive aspects of their experience. The majority of the participants expressed their gratitude for having helpful faculty and available resources that would facilitate their success and *keep their head above water*. The participants expressed that they had faculty who "were helpful in guiding them" [P065203] and "go out of the way to really help you" [P032144], "very effective with instructions" [P025145] and they "had great professors that gave

recommendations” [P025145]. Another participant stated, “I think the teachers they want you to understand, here I’ve noticed you are pushed to know the material not to get a good grade.” [P0451513].

The participants discussed some of the privileges of studying in America, inclusive of the many resources. One participant stated, “I think the privilege alone and you know to be doing this going to school at this time of my life it's something I cannot even trade anything for.” [P055154]. Another participant stated, “So going to school here has given me the opportunity to know things, to understand how things work. And I think it’s a privilege.” [P04551513]. Others discussed the resources in America that they weren’t privy to in Nigeria. One participated stated,

...then we didn't have all this material so yeah, that's very different. Like back home, you know, just the lecturer comes in, he delivers a lecture and then you have to figure it out yourself. Here, there are so many resources, there are textbooks, you can go online, you have like you have so many things like it's almost like an overload of information. Back home, we didn't have that. [P065203]

A second participant stated,

Back home in Nigeria we didn't have as much resources. Personally, I didn't have, I come from a middle-income family, so we didn't have as much resources, textbooks and all that. Here in the US things are readily available. [P025145]

A third participant states,

...you can succeed here, like based on the education method. So like cause you're like they have the resources for you. Like they have the online and like they give like lecture notes, like the PowerPoints. [P09885]

Summary: Navigating the Rough Waters

The Nigerian immigrant nursing students explained their perspective on the positive and negative experiences that have encountered during their study in nursing school in the U.S. The participants discussed interpreting many things differently from their U.S. counterparts, feeling they weren’t always welcomed and the impact their accents

had on their educational experience. Many of the students sensed because of their heavy accents they were made to feel like outsiders by their faculty and classmates at times and they found themselves constantly having to repeat themselves. Fellow classmates doubted the abilities of the Nigerian students and thought they would fail, but were surprised the Nigerian students made it. Failure for the Nigerian students to follow the outlined protocols and procedures in U.S. nursing programs lead them to a feeling of having to sink or swim. The participants often felt a separation from their nursing classmates because they were of a different race, based on their classmates' words and actions.

Challenges with language came from the pronunciation and meaning of words, not the vocabulary itself. However, nursing terms were new and unfamiliar, and the participants were forced to use resources to achieve a better understanding of vocabulary. On a positive note, the students felt most of the faculty were helpful and shared many resources to help them be successful. Even though the resources weren't specifically for the Nigerian students, they believed having the resources was a privilege because they had limited resources in Nigeria.

III. UNEXPECTED CHANGES

The participants discussed work and family expectations during nursing school in the U.S. The male participants explained that they worked during nursing school. One male participant stated, "I work full time of which I'm trying to switch into part time because of the work load and nursing school is getting somewhat challenging." [P014255]. The female participants stated they did not work during nursing school. The females had more family related obligations that could not be ignored. One participant stated, "in nursing school, I couldn't, I had to stop working, January of 2018 because I just couldn't – I was struggling in my academics." [P025145]. Many of the participants had a spouse and children at home. One participant discussed having to pay family to help with the children stating, "I had to bring my mother in law from New York to come stay with me, I have two kids...I had to

pay her because I don't want her to think I'm taking advantage of her, I know she's their grandmother but at the same time she's human, I don't want to use anyone." [P0451513].

A Whirlwind Life

One participant discussed school and family by stating, "think I've just come to terms with the fact that okay, my kids come first, and I'll figure it out." [P065203]. That same participant felt overwhelmed:

I have cousins here and that has been like super helpful. Because when I first started I really thought I was going to give up. I almost -- I was going to come, talk to the professor because it seemed like there was just too much to do with my kids but my family really stepped up like they were super helpful. [P065203]

A second participant discouraged working and going to school:

I don't think anybody's ever to combine working and going to nursing school. I don't know if they're doing it, I don't know but for me I can't because I already have enough work in my hand. My kids, my two kids are like enough work and their dad is enough work for me. [P055154]

A third participant who did not have kids but family responsibilities stated,

I'm the first girl which in our culture is kind of like, you're the first daughter, because the boys, they get like a leeway. So, I come home and like I'm supposed to cook for my sibling, help my siblings do their homework. When mom come back from work and she will tell me, you know, then I have to cook for her too, and also, I'll get what she's going to wear to work the next day, clean up her room. And then I, after all of that I start to study and on top of this like maybe two hours to study because, you know, you still have to wake up the next morning early to catch the bus. But in our culture, there's no complaining, like, you're used to it, you're going to work and you're going to school, and you're taking care of your family and that's the requirement. And my mom, used to make this statement like, you're complaining about nursing school, but once you're done with school, and you get married, like you still have to take care of your kids and your, your, like mother-in-law and everything. So, you might as well learn how to multitask for everything now. [P078713].

That same participant found a solution to studying by staying at a friend's house during exam time and only coming home for church services, to appease her mother.

Summary of Unexpected Changes

The participants discussed family obligations they experienced during nursing school. The family expectations the Nigerian immigrant students discussed in the study were different than what many U.S. nursing students have. The participants collectively believed family obligations were unavoidable and the bills had to be paid, but school also was a priority they could not ignore. Working during nursing school appeared to interfere with academics and could cause them to have lower grades. One attribute that assisted them the most was support from their family, whether that was parents, spouse, or other family members. The Nigerian students continued to study and excel no matter what it took to be successful.

IV. SEARCHING FOR CONSISTENCY

Nursing school can become challenging for any student, but the Nigerian population perceived many barriers they had to overcome to find their way through a program, in a *search for consistency*. The participants were searching for consistency in faculty support related to their needs, feedback to clarify concepts and having an opportunity to voice their concerns. Overall, the participants discussed diversity amongst the faculty, asking for faculty and classmates to be more patient and wishing faculty and staff would accommodate them in times of need. The Nigerian immigrant students' perceptions related to sharing with the faculty to "keep all the diligence" [P08873], because they are having "a great experience" [P09885]. The statement suggests many nursing faculty are attentive to the participants' needs and the Nigerian students hoped the actions would not change. They wanted to share with the faculty also that "it's good to tell the students that it's going to be tough, but always tell them that it's going to be do-able." [P101036]. One participant suggested "diversifying the faculty because when...the

lecturer is trying to understand your point of view, it's like you are stuck with that lecturer for good. [P014255].

A second participant stated,

...nursing is more diverse. And a lot of people come from other places; they really don't know some of these things that they say. If only they could just like take out little time to maybe like break it up a bit, and if possible not talk as fast, because they illustrate like so fast, you are barely getting it. [P035144]

This participant was explaining how the instructors lecture but don't take time out to acknowledge if everyone has a clear understanding. It maybe they are not adequately prepared for these types of students, but as the participants stated nursing is diverse and the classroom must be also. A third participant explained:

...you have to be open.... to new cultures because as a nurse you have to deal with people from all cultures. So, you might have [thought] that as an awesome student like so even though you don't want to walk with a black girl or the Asian guy or this person you have to walk with them and get to realize that we have a whole lot more in common than we have that is different. [P065203]

A fourth participant recommends:

I think they should also encourage us too, knowing that we're coming from a different background and try to seek out what is going on with us. "How are you guys studying? How are you understanding the concept? Are you guys having any challenges with taking tests?" Because we're not used to all this test taking. [P101036]

Wanting to be Heard

Being heard was an aspect many of the participants believed was missing from their experience. In their opinion, the instructors did not take the time to thoroughly listen to their needs. One participant wanted to share with the faculty that they don't have to feel uncomfortable when other cultures travel together in groups as this is their comfort zone.

The participant explained:

We had an exam in pharmacology one time my friends didn't do well, I did well ...so we all went to go see the faculty, I went with them for support and it was the five of us in a group. So now I don't understand if it was because we all came into the office at once, we could tell the professor was uncomfortable. Now I am trying my best to sound all lady like and passionate and not be as loud as I typically am, one of my friends she is very passionate she just does as she talks so it's like our professor got uncomfortable. So now we saw another professor prior to that, that professor wasn't uncomfortable because we all had something in common, so it's important to understand that so many cultures gesture when we talk, we're not trying to do anything we're just – it's just a cultural thing so don't think we're trying to bite your head off. We're not. We're loud, we gesture, we just want to be heard. [P0451513]

This was also confirmed again during member checking as the participant brought up a similar experience that occurred during their nursing program. A second participant was open about what she observed from the faculty:

Sometimes like our voices are not heard especially people of color like I don't know, Nigerians. I don't know if it's about the accent. Like I'm trying to say something and I know what may be unless I'm trying to ask a question. I notice like I'm not given much audience like they will give to the other people. Yeah, it was so obvious that sometimes I'm trying to ask a question and then I'm holding back because of the reaction I'm going to get like, they try to hurry you. Like with other people they're like so patient [0:20:00], they have all the time in the world to explain stuff to you, talk to you but when you are like, "Excuse me professor" you just get that switch on their faces. [P055154]

The same participant stated,

I believe if you don't listen to me how are you able to know my concerns? I might not be using the right words but just be a little patient and just listen to me. You're going to be able to understand my concerns. But when they don't, it is difficult for you to even communicate with them. [P055154]

A third participant asserted,

...when you see a student, that's a foreigner immigrant, like, I thought maybe help but try to understand that it's kind of harder for them to understand what we learned in school plus in nursing school compared to students that, our teacher is talking and the teacher [is] like, "Everybody understand?" And everybody's like, "Yes." And I feel like sometimes we immigrants we're afraid to say we don't understand,

and we don't know why we don't understand, but it's probably the language. [P078713]

Another suggestion the participants gave was to help students of all cultures feel comfortable. One participant implies,

...maybe it'll be better if a faculty kind of like paired off the students. That will help minorities feel more comfortable because they really don't have to struggle with like trying to find group placements in lab. So, I know we are adults and yes we can pair ourselves up but then it now leaves the minorities in like this bind where you're like, you feel like you don't belong and having that experience at the beginning come it can be daunting, some are able to overcome it and some never do. Some are fully mistrustful of the system after that because you feel like okay, I'm not being considered; no one is thinking of how I feel like you are just being left to figure it out on your own." [P065203]

Summary: Searching for Consistency

The Nigerian immigrant nursing students are looking for guidance from the nursing faculty. They are searching for encouragement and accommodation to their specific needs. They don't wish to be judged or shunned, but to be embraced and given a fair chance at success. They want faculty to take the time to get to know them and make sure they understand the concept of nursing so they too can be an important part of nursing practice.

V. HOPES OF FINDING CLARITY- REACHING THE FINISH LINE

The participants were questioned about what strategies they used or were available to assist them with nursing content, in *hopes of finding clarity*. There were many different methods the participants suggested such as reading the material repeatedly, listening in class and using online resources. The majority of the participants used the same strategies for success. All participants discussed "doing a lot of reading" [P08873] because that is what helped them study in Nigeria. One participant stated, "You have to like keep reading and studying and studying like every other week is an exam [in the U.S.]" [P055154].

A second participant discussed their reading method:

When I read, I prepare for the content they teach in class and for the exit exam at the end of each semester. So, I don't only read or study while we worked hard in school; I get a little bit more reading in preparation for end of semester. [P08873]

As many of the participants discussed the vocabulary that was specific to nursing, they also discussed how they learned the material. One participant stated, “active reading, I have to study and study them over and over again more than two times.” [P08873]. A second participant expressed “...whatever I didn't understand, whatever I didn't see and the instructor had already assumed that I knew the textbook was there to explain or the Internet was there to explain.” [P025145]. Other participants discussed using “other books and not just the ones that are required” [P014255]; “sticking to the syllabus, going to tutorials and sessions with academic advisors” [P025145]; “studying the PowerPoints” [P032144]; and “attending the whole lecture....and taking notes” [P055154]. One participant specifically gave their strategy:

I listen in class, I may be on my phone but I listen in class, I listen and for some reason the things that are said in class, they get more than just reading my text books. And a lot of times I do a lot of Pinterest you'll be surprised, Pinterest has a whole lot of things academically that can help you. I do a lot of YouTube and I'm not really a textbook reader, when things are explained with pictures or visually, that that's how I learn [P0451513]

Another participant was enthusiastic about using YouTube and Pinterest:

And I do a lot of YouTube's, RN.com and the ATI I get [from] my school. God bless that woman, those videos, she just makes them for me. I listen to those videos and then maybe introduces me to Pinterest. Yeah, I do that and yeah, the videos though, the videos oh my God. Oh my god, I think everybody in nursing school should try the videos, those YouTube videos. You were just like the way they just make them they just think that you understand like, they just bring it so simple that everybody can understand and you know I think that has really helped me a lot. [P055154]

Coming into View

All the participants discussed the individuals that supported them during nursing school. They acknowledged family members, spouses and friends. A participant stated, "My wife has been very helpful because she's a nurse." [P08873]; while another stated, "when I find things challenging, I ask nurses that have been there how to go about it, so they give me some advice." [P014255].

One participant talked about having friends that are supportive and of the same culture:

You have to have friends, you just have to have [a] friend, they're modern friends, they're like sisters because we lift each other up. I have cried, I have been depressed and I am able to [talk to] them, I am able share my feelings and they understand me. I mean my husband is there, but he's not in nursing school so he really doesn't get it, they understand that I need to study and just having those friends I don't know what I would have done if I didn't have friends in nursing school...friends with me from the same culture but my main group of friends, I have someone from Congo, I have someone from Jamaica and I have two from Nigeria because they understand me better and with them I am myself. [P0451513]

Another participant discussed the use of study groups and the dynamics:

...we just study together, and people always be like, she, even in front of her like, "She's not Nigerian." And I'm like, "Okay, but she's African and she's an immigrant too." It's not just because she's Nigerian like, we understand the struggle, and we just study together and stuff...Nursing school, I mean, you can do it by yourself but it better when you have people together. Because it's like, there's so much material but if somebody studies this section and another person this section, and we teach each other, or we help each other do blueprint. So instead of me spending three days on the blueprint, I can do it in one night, with multiple people so I felt like she really helped. [P078713]

On the same notion a participant stated,

I think in the group studying, especially studying with your kind of people, like the same way you guys have the same similar culture, you know, something in common. You tend to adapt better and learn better without any prejudice. Someone trying to like judge you or not. So, I think the study group has also helped a lot for me. [P101036]

Summary: Hopes of Finding Clarity

The Nigerian immigrant students were seeking ways to reach the finish line in nursing school. The use of varied strategies would allow them to reach a level of contentment within nursing school that would hopefully lead them to success. Studying the material from the textbooks, online resources, having supportive friends and finding the right study group helped with the initiative. A common belief amongst the participants was staying positive and going after what you wanted no matter the hurdles and barriers they faced.

SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS

Chapter 4 revealed the perceptions of the Nigerian immigrant nursing students who were enrolled in U.S. nursing programs. The Nigerian nursing students' experiences entailed positive and negative encounters with faculty and classmates, challenges and obstacles related to the American English language, their heavy accent, family expectations, and work obligations. The participants discussed the educational system in Nigeria being different than the U.S, leaving them to seek out effective strategies for success. The Nigerian nursing students discussed attempting to make friends, but realizing they were constantly having to prove themselves to other cultures. Although their family obligations were perceived to be overwhelming, the Nigerian nursing students continued to excel in the U.S. nursing programs. The Nigerian nursing students expressed a need for guidance from faculty as they navigated through U.S. nursing programs. The Nigerian nursing students discussed how they used the many available resources in U.S. nursing programs as a means for achieving their ultimate goal of becoming a Registered Nurse.

In Chapter 5, this study will be briefly summarized, followed by conclusions based on the findings, limitations, implications for practice, and education, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

This research study used NI (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al., 1993) to explore how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs. Chapter Five presents a summary of this NI study, conclusions based on the study findings, limitations to the study, and implications for nursing practice and education. The recommendations for further research are also provided at the end of the chapter.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

International students have been shown to struggle with the initial transition into a nursing program while also enduring challenges involving acculturation to American life and adapting to American language and a new educational system. International students also have difficulty passing the NCLEX-RN (NCSBN, 2018). Learning styles and learning needs of the international student can be a contributing factor for less than an acceptable performance on nursing school exams and on the NCLEX-RN. Substantial numbers of international students study in the U.S. Among those numbers are Nigerian immigrant students studying and working in nursing. Although the previous research has focused on challenges of international students, the research is limited on the perceptions of Nigerian immigrant nursing students. Nigerians have reported interpreting language differently due to the influence of the British language and educational system, which is different from the American use and language and the educational system. Due to the differences and challenges international students face, nursing educators are charged with discovering innovative strategies to ensure international students, including Nigerian students, are provided the essential nursing content and apply that knowledge learned in practice (AACN, 2019).

REVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

The researcher selected Naturalistic inquiry (NI) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al., 1993) as the research method for this study because it focused on how people behave when absorbed in genuine life experiences in natural settings. NI was utilized to answer the following research question: “How do Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs? The perceptions of Nigerian immigrant nursing students were explored in this study, which lead to identification of the overarching theme *Stepping into America*, elaborating on the Nigerian immigrant nursing student experiences. Thus far, a limited number of studies have been conducted to uncover the perceptions of international nursing students enrolled in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs, and even fewer studies have focused on Nigerian immigrant nursing students. One of the participants described their experience as follows: “Nursing school is [not about] just getting the degree, but it’s taught me about different people, and it taught me about the American culture” [P078713].

Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling and interviewed using semi structured interviews by phone and in person. This study permitted ten participants to express how they felt as Nigerian immigrant nursing students enrolled in baccalaureate nursing programs. In one-on-one interviews these participants told their stories of how they came to the U.S., the experiences they encountered as Nigerian immigrants, their Nigerian educational background, the level of support they have received or lack thereof, and what strategies they used to guide them through nursing school. Study data consisted of demographic data, interview data, researchers’ field notes and reflective journals. According to the process described by Erlandson et al. (1993), data analysis occurred in a two-step approach in which data were analyzed during data collection at the site and away from the site during interviews, after interviews and at the completion of data

collection. That data was then analyzed as a whole, during an inductive analysis, which allowed the researcher to obtain five themes that emerged from the data.

INTERPRETATION OF STUDY FINDINGS

Data analysis revealed five themes related to the perceptions of the Nigerian immigrant nursing students: *Stepping into America*, *Navigating the Rough Waters*, *Unexpected Changes*, *Searching for Consistency* and *Hopes of Finding Clarity*. The themes included subthemes that further elaborated on the data. Throughout the study, the Nigerian immigrant nursing students shared their desire to be successful while studying in U.S. nursing programs. There was a consensus about coming to the U.S. and having a better future for themselves. The participants expressed that life in the U.S. was a struggle but compared to Nigeria, where one struggled to eat, there was a difference that could be managed.

The participants in the study thought nursing school would be easy since they had the notion that if they could complete *education in Nigeria*, going to school in the U.S. would not be a challenge. The participants discovered quickly that their preconceived notions were inaccurate when *stepping into America*, and that nursing school was much harder than they expected. The participants struggled in nursing school because they were *out of their comfort zone* and thought the level of education they were exposed to in Nigeria was higher than that in the U.S. In actuality, the Nigerian students were not prepared to be critical thinkers in Nigeria and apply knowledge learned. Memorization of theoretical content was a concept learned in the Nigerian culture, which the participants relied on heavily. They also struggled with the American language and interpreting the meanings of words. Many of the participants discussed the difficulties they experienced on exams because they were unfamiliar with *vocabulary and terminology*. The participants were compelled to find methods to achieve success in nursing school as they were given no alternate choice.

The participants discussed *obstacles with their accent* as a negative experience in which they felt forced to either continuously repeat themselves to classmates or faculty or not speak at all. This led to participants not asking relevant questions relative to nursing content to support their learning process. Communication is important when learning new, unfamiliar material, and if the Nigerian students were unable to effectively communicate by asking clarifying questions to faculty and classmates, it could lead faculty and classmates to assume they were less educated than their counterparts. Such situations could force students to shut down their communication affecting their ability to learn.

The participants discussed positive experiences with supportive faculty and available resources that could have facilitated their success and *keep their head above water*. The participants felt coming from a low resource country such as Nigeria, there was limited access to books you could take home or useful online resources such as YouTube and Pinterest. The participants also spoke to being unaccustomed with speaking to faculty directly as they were not allowed to approach faculty in their home country. Having access to a plethora of available resources provided the students with multiple methods of studying. The Nigerian students appeared very appreciative for the opportunities to approach the faculty, who were willing to help because faculties felt that was a way for the students to excel. Several of the participants noted nursing offered them stability and a means for them to avoid poverty, something they were familiar with in their home country of Nigeria.

The participants described their struggles with work obligations and family expectations as *unexpected changes*. In their home country, they are expected to work to provide for their families. The Nigerian students found out very early on they were either unable to work at all or only work part-time during nursing school, leading to a *whirlwind life* of trying to find balance. Nursing school required sacrifice and prioritizing what was most important. The responsibility of caring for the family was a significant part of their cultural obligations and the participants had to find ways to accomplish this task along with

studying for nursing school. Many participants had to elicit help from family members and friends to achieve the goal of family expectations.

Several of the participants described the barriers they encountered while *searching for consistency* in U.S. nursing programs. The participants voiced their concerns of eliciting faculty support and asking classmates and faculty to be more patient with them. The Nigerian students wished to share that they are used to working hard and wanted the chance to show their skills, without prejudice and judgement. The participants *wanted to be heard* and accepted, as they felt this was missing from their experience. When asking questions, the participants described how some faculty told them to study harder if they didn't understand the content. Repeating to the student to study harder is not getting to the root of the problem, which may lead to the student being unwilling to ask further questions and potentially failing. Instructors are a guide for students and must be prepared to explore the needs of the international student, inclusive of the Nigerian immigrant student.

Overall, the challenges the participants faced could hinder them from achieving their goals, but they continued to press on no matter what path they had to take. The participants were dedicated to surviving nursing school. The participants discussed strategies they used to assist them with nursing content, in *hopes of finding clarity*. The participants used methods such as reading material multiple times, online resources such as YouTube and Pinterest, forming study groups and going to tutorials. Several participants were appreciative of having support during nursing school and felt the road to success was *coming into view*. Many of the participants reported they relied on other nursing students from their own culture as a source of comfort. The participants believed if one were given an opportunity to study in the U.S., one had to take advantage of all the resources and support to assist with completing the nursing program successfully.

COMPARISON OF THE FINDINGS TO EXTANT LITERATURE

International nursing students encounter many challenges as they enter their nursing educational program, including using English as a second language (ESL), having to work and care for a family while in school and making the overall transition into a nursing program (Cunningham et al., 2004; Sanner et al.; Xu & Davidhizar, 2005). The findings from this study of Nigerian immigrant nursing students experiences in their U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs supported findings from extant literature. Sanner et al. (2002) suggested a variety of educational practices in the U.S., which may not include components related to cultural diversity or previous learning experiences outside of nursing. The participants in the present study described feeling as though faculty didn't consider they were from a different background and unfamiliar with the Western method of education. Additionally, the participants discussed the struggle they endured with acculturation to Western culture while still trying to hold on to their Nigerian cultural values. The present study aligns with the results of previous literature (Sanner et al., 2002; Alzahrani, 2017) related to lack of English proficiency including vocabulary and terminology and feelings of social challenges. The differences are that the participants in this study provided the researcher with applicable strategies on how to acclimate to the learning environment while enrolled in U.S. nursing programs.

The Nigerian immigrant nursing students who participated in the study had a preconceived view that they would be able to transition into U.S. schools with limited challenges. The Nigerian participants in this study quickly recognized they would have to work harder to devise a plan to learn the American educational system, which is different from the British educational system they are accustomed to in Nigeria (Szilagyi, 2014). The Nigerian participants in this study were affected by American English language barriers and experienced a culture shock. The study findings aligned with Alzahrani (2017) and Mitchell et al. (2017), who indicated that American English language can be difficult

to learn and may lead to misunderstandings related to common terms, which in turn can hinder the students' educational experience. The participants experienced obstacles with their heavy accents, which was a difference in the characteristic local accents of the American people. The participants expressed during the interviews they were disturbed with having to repeat what they said so that others could understand them clearly. In addition, the Nigerian immigrant nursing students were not accustomed to academic settings where approaching a faculty member was acceptable, which mirrored Hopkins (2012) and Okoro (2011) findings. Okoro (2011) additionally stated critical thinking, questioning logic and analyzing meanings was discouraged in the African culture, which was confirmed by the participants. This discouragement leads the researcher to believe this is one of the main reasons why the Nigerian nursing students have a harder time acclimating in U.S. nursing programs than U.S. nursing students.

Cunningham et al. (2004) suggested even though international students speak English, and may do so very well, they may disregard the specifics of English grammar and structure. The Nigerian participants in this study concurred as they discussed their base language is English, but British English, which has different words with similar meanings. The interpretation of words, or lack thereof, can limit the time international students have on exams. For example, the Nigerian participants used the word "practicals" throughout the interviews, which in American English is "clinical". Additional literature from Malecha et al. (2012) suggested international students experience barriers with how exam questions were asked, how the exams were written, particularly when unfamiliar terms or phrases were used. The difference in meanings of words may limit the Nigerian student in obtaining knowledgeable success in the completion of coursework.

Xu & Davidhizar (2005) suggested English proficiency can be a monumental predictor of educational outcomes and nursing success, but the Nigerian participants in this study disagreed and recommended if faculty took the time to ask students if they had a clear understanding the students would perform better in nursing programs. The Nigerian

participants perception is aligned with Salamonson et al. (2008) findings that educators should not assume non-native speakers who have been exposed to everyday spoken English have a corresponding academic language proficiency. Educators have to take the time to learn about the cultural differences of the international student (NCSBN, 2017); integrate culturally competent teaching into nursing curricula (Pross, 2003; Shattell, 2013) and set aside time from their busy workloads to acknowledge the challenges international students face (Xu & Davidhizar, 2005).

Study findings revealed that Nigerian nursing students are familiar with theory-based exams. Research indicates that U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs utilize objective questions using multiple choice testing to test the knowledge of students (Nelson, 2015; Smith, 2018) and the Nigerian nursing students had to adjust to the multiple-choice type exams. The Nigerian students had to learn how to take tests and found it was a difficult process. The traditional educational model of memorization and storytelling may have an effect on why the Nigerian nursing students struggle with objective questions (Szilagyi, 2014).

The Nigerian nursing students discussed the difficulties of social interaction, which was supported by Sanner et al. (2002), Hopkins (2012) and Gardner (2005). Sanner et al. (2002) noted that participants intentionally and non-intentionally isolated themselves from their American peers. The Nigerian participants in this study described how they preferred studying with other Nigerian students and chose not to ask questions due to resentment of the American peers of the heavy Nigerian accents. The Nigerian participants also expressed feeling unaccepted by their faculty and peers and wished they had been given a chance to explain their culture and history. Hopkins (2012) mentioned that social isolation can be an obstacle for international students because they are waiting for the American students to approach them, while Gardner (2005) suggested the participants were treated differently by their White peers. The Nigerian participants in this study agreed by stating in lab settings or study groups they were never picked to be in a group, and they were forced to find their

own way. The participants in this study also realized if they did interact with their American peers it was only in the classroom and not in a social setting, which made them feel excluded.

The Nigerian participants discussed their study groups and how they shared information because it was easier to study when each group member completed a required section. Additionally, the Nigerian participants stated the makeup of the groups were normally students from Nigeria or other African cultures because they have similar cultures, learn better together and adapt without prejudice. The Nigerian participants further indicated they would rather work together to get work completed than working alone. The Nigerian participants rely on their traditional Nigerian values of community orientation, which was supported by George (2014). George (2014) suggested Nigerian students place a greater value on group membership than on individual accomplishments. The Nigerian participants in this study felt the workload should be a collective responsibility, which could lead to unintentional plagiarism or decreased grades if the portion of work other members completed is not accurate.

Several of the Nigerian participants discussed their family expectations and obligations that were a challenge during nursing school, stating they felt overwhelmed. The participants thoughts were in congruence with other study findings that discussed financial obligations as overwhelming (Richardson & Dawson, 2017; Nelson, 2017). The research studies suggest the added responsibilities international students may face can cause stress and anxiety while in nursing school (Tagher, 2017). The Nigerian participants admitted they attempted to avoid working during nursing school because it could cause a decline in their grades.

STUDY STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Several strengths and limitations were identified in this NI study. Study strengths include utilization of NI methodology, as well as using purposive, snowball sampling. NI

allowed the researcher to explore perceptions of the Nigerian immigrant nursing students enrolled in U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs and resulted in rich data. The study gave the Nigerian nursing students a voice and allowed them to describe their own experiences in U.S. nursing programs. This study is one of a few studies related to Nigerian nursing students, but the first that explored their experiences and how they acclimate to U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs. The researcher's experiences conducting the study conformed with the Erlandson et al. (1993) statement, "Naturalistic inquiry empowers the various people who are involved in it, using thick descriptions to allow the reader an active role".

The goal of the study was to offer insight into how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. nursing programs. The first participant was interviewed in April 2019. Over a four-month time frame, ten Nigerian nursing students who met the study criteria participated in the study. The ten participants shared in-depth experiences that were adequate in providing awareness into how they survive nursing school in the U.S. A few additional strengths of the study lie in the insights revealed, such as the Nigerians students preconceived notions nursing school in the U.S. would be an easy transition from their Nigerian primary education and the Nigerian students' appreciation for the available resources in America, a concept they were not accustomed to in Nigeria.

Limitations consist of the restriction of the study to students from only the country of Nigeria as the base for the study, only BSN programs in Texas were used, and only current nursing students were utilized in the study. Qualitative research is not generalizable, which can limit the applicability of the study findings and the experiences to larger populations. Another limitation correlated with the gender of the participants as only three were male, which could lead to skewed findings as they may not be applicable to the perceptions of other male Nigerian immigrant nursing students. However, the

relative composition of the sample is representative of male nursing students in the U.S. (Minority Nurse, 2017).

STUDY IMPLICATIONS

The present study has significance for nursing practice as it provides an increased cognizance of the physiological, psychological, and social dimensions of Nigerian immigrant nursing students. Additionally, there are noted variances among thoughts of Nigerian immigrant nursing students and American nursing students. Nigerian immigrant nursing students are culturally different and have different values from their American peers. It is imperative for the nursing profession to diversify and be inclusive of cultural differences. Studies have shown that nursing in the U.S. is diverse and it is important that schools of nursing educate students from diverse backgrounds (Cunningham et al., 2004). Abu-Arab & Parry (2015) discussed the value of students from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background using culturally acceptable and effective strategies for communicating with patients. Integration of cultural competence is valuable at the nursing education level as well as in nursing practice. Intercultural communication in nursing is also deficient and nurse managers and directors are obligated to commit to improving the intercultural relationship (Malecha et al., 2012). This finding, in accordance with the perspectives of the Nigerian immigrant nursing students in the present study, offers a strong indication for consideration of current nursing practices.

The study can further nursing education by adapting curriculum to identify struggles experienced by international nursing students, initiate strategies to improve overall nursing program success related to vocabulary and terminology used in nursing curricula and meet the needs of international nursing students, including Nigerian immigrants. Nursing is diverse in nature, which suggests nursing faculty also should be diverse. Research suggests nurse educators have difficulty with respect for cultural differences and international students have difficulty with language barriers, English

language acculturation and lack of support services available from the nursing program (Elder et al., 2015; Hunter-Scheele et al., 2011; Olson, 2012; Salamonson et al., 2008; Sanner et al., 2002). One important aspect the Nigerian participants shared was the opportunity to have a diverse nursing faculty who takes out time to understand cultural differences of their students, which may help students achieve their goals. There are over 10,000 Nigerian students studying in the U.S., with Texas being one of the largest states receiving these students (U.S. Mission Nigeria, 2016). Nursing faculty must advocate for international students and provide support in a culturally competent manner that leads to a safe learning place for international students to thrive (Mitchell et al., 2017).

Thematic findings, in accordance with perspectives of the Nigerian immigrant nursing students in the present study, point toward the possibility of reexamining nursing curriculum and considering developing culturally competent nursing curricula as well as appropriate teaching strategies. NSCBN (2017) discusses incorporating cultural competence in prelicensure nursing programs and the resources available from NCSBN are a starting point for nurse educators to learn strategies to accomplish this task. Nursing educators should advocate to their college and program directors throughout the U.S. to operate a culturally competent curriculum as the U.S. Boards of Nursing have already integrated cultural competence into the NCLEX-RN exams (NCSBN, 2017).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study revealed findings related to the perceptions of Nigerian immigrant nursing students. In a naturalistic inquiry, a small sample size is acceptable, as generalization is not the goal of this methodology. Erlandson et al. (1993) states, “the goal of NI is to maximize discovery of heterogenous patterns and problems that occur in the particular context of the study”. Hence, future studies may include additional participants using a purposive sampling technique. Additional participants may offer methods of acclimation in the U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs that were not encountered in this

study. Future studies could focus on a grounded theory study approach to uncover social relationships and behaviors of Nigerian immigrant nursing students, in hopes of developing a theory.

Future recommendations include development of a preorientation course to nursing to explain what nursing content entails, the basis for nursing exams and a strategy on how to successfully pass nursing exams and NCLEX. The research shows there are pre-nursing courses, which include science and math preparation but not a nursing preparation course (Institute of Medicine, 2011). The course would include culturally competent components that will assist international students with familiarity with nursing specific terms and vocabulary. Future research can include a more global approach, e.g. India, Asia, and/or Saudi Arabia; use of current graduates within 24 months after graduation in a similar study with U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs, include associate degree level nursing students or graduate students; Nigerian immigrant nursing students in other states with a large number of Nigerian immigrants, and Nigerian students who have had a combination of the Nigerian educational system and the American system to note differences. Results of studies such as those suggested could improve the worldview of international immigrant perceptions and strategies to acclimate to U.S. nursing programs.

CONCLUSIONS

This study revealed a view of Nigerian immigrant nursing students that had not been researched in the current literature. The study gave a voice to the perceptions of the Nigerian immigrant nursing students in regard to how they acclimate to U.S. baccalaureate nursing programs. Before this study, there was a paucity of studies on the perceptions of Nigerian immigrant nursing students and strategies they use to acclimate while enrolled in U.S. nursing programs. Study data consisted of demographic data, one-on-one interviews, the researchers' field notes and reflective journals. Data analyzed in this study uncovered challenges these students faced, along with suggestions they would provide to nursing

faculty and classmates and strategies they used to successfully complete their nursing coursework. The study provided a greater appreciation for the path the Nigerian immigrant nursing students' encounter and how to support their journey through nursing school by lessening the difficulty of understanding the Western culture vocabulary and terminology and promoting the needed strategies to assist the students in positive outcomes. These contributions will be significant because the expectation is to provide a knowledge base for nurse educators to assist Nigerian immigrant nursing students with effective learning strategies. Furthermore, these learning strategies serve to support the Nigerian students in successfully progressing through a U.S. baccalaureate nursing program. Moreover, discovery of effective learning strategies for Nigerian immigrant nursing students will guide further research in other groups who may experience similar difficulties.

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



Working together to work wonders.™

Institutional Review Board
301 University Blvd.
Galveston, TX 77555-0158
[Submission Page](#)

08-Apr-2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shatoi King
Grad School Biomedical Science GSBS9999

Handwritten signature: Jacqueline Stout-Aguilar, CIP

FROM: Jacqueline Stout-Aguilar, PhD
Vice-Chairman, IRB #1

RE: Exempt from IRB Review

IRB #: IRB # 19-0076

TITLE: A Naturalistic Inquiry of Nigerian Immigrant Nursing Students' Experiences in U.S. Baccalaureate Nursing Programs

The UTMB Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the above-referenced research project and determined this request met the criteria for exemption from review by the IRB in accordance with the 45 CFR 46.104. This determination was made on **05-Apr-2019**.

Further review of this project by the IRB is not required unless the protocol changes in the use of human subjects. In that case, the project must be resubmitted to the IRB for review. Please inform the IRB when this research project is completed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the IRB office via email at IRB@utmb.edu]

Exemption Category

Exempt Category 2

Appendix B: Consent Form – Page 1 of 2

The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston Minimal Risk Consent Form

Protocol Title: A Naturalistic Inquiry of Nigerian Immigrant Nursing Students' Experiences in U.S.
Baccalaureate Nursing Programs

IRB Number: 19-0076

Principal Investigator: Shatoi T King, MSN-Ed, BSN, RN, PhD nursing student at UTMB-Galveston
Phone Number: 832-645-5549
Email address:sthodge@utmb.edu

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

You are being asked to participate as a subject in a research project that will explore Nigerian immigrant nursing students' experiences and how they acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. nursing programs.

Study Summary

The following are things you should know about this research study:

- The purpose of the study is to explore how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. nursing programs. If you chose to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent form and be interviewed a minimum of one time for no more than ninety minutes.
- There are no identified risks to participation in this research project.
- You will not directly benefit from your participation in this research project.
- Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You do not have to participate and you can stop at any time.

Please take your time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding if you want to take part in this research project.

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of the study is to explore how Nigerian immigrant nursing students acclimate to the learning environment in U.S. nursing programs. You are being asked to participate because you are a Nigerian immigrant nursing student who is currently enrolled in a U.S. baccalaureate nursing program.

How many people will take part in this study?

About 15-20 people will take part in this study at UTMB.

What procedures are involved as part of this research study?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign this consent form and complete the following procedures. You will be interviewed a minimum of one time; which is expected to take forty-five to sixty minutes, but will not exceed ninety minutes. The researcher may need to contact you again if questions should arise during data analysis, but you will not be contacted for follow-up interviews more than twice and no follow-up interview will exceed thirty minutes.

Appendix B: Consent Form – Page 2 of 2

What are the possible risks for choosing to participate in this research study?

Any time information is collected; there is a potential risk for loss of confidentiality. Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential; however, this cannot be guaranteed. There are no identified risks to participation in this research project.

What are the potential benefits for participating in this research study?

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this research project. The direct benefits to society include an increased understanding of how Nigerian immigrant nursing students adapt to the learning environment in U.S. nursing programs.

Will I be reimbursed for participating in this research study?

There will be no reimbursement for participation in this study.

Is there an alternative treatment/procedure?

The alternative is not to participate in the study.

If I agree to take part in this research study, can I be removed from the study without my consent?

Yes. All participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or discontinue participation in this study at any time including prior to the interview, during the interview, and at the end of the interview. You may withdraw from the study at any time by notifying the researcher by email. You may refuse to be contacted by the researcher. You may refuse to participate in any future interviews.

How will my information be protected?

All results obtained in this study will be kept confidential and only available to the research study team. Your individual information will not be reported, only the results of all participants as a group. All recordings and field notes will be maintained in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office.

How will my privacy be protected?

Each participant will be assigned an alphanumeric code to maintain anonymity. The researcher will know your identity. Other researchers familiar with the study or are members of the research team will access to the data including demographics.

We cannot do this study without your authorization to use and give out your information. You do not have to give us this authorization. If you do not, then you may not join this study.

The use and disclosure of your information has no time limit. You may revoke (cancel) your permission to use and disclose your information at any time by notifying the Principal Investigator of this study by phone or in writing. If you contact the Principal Investigator by phone, you must follow-up with a written request that includes the study number and your contact information. The Principal Investigator's name, address, phone and information are on page one of this consent form.

If you do cancel your authorization to use and disclose your information, your part in this study will end and no further information about you will be collected. Your revocation (cancellation) would not affect information already collected in the study, or information we disclosed before you wrote to the Principal Investigator to cancel your authorization.

Who can I contact with questions about this research study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints before, during or after the research study, or if you need to report a research related injury or bad side effect, you should immediately contact Shatoi King at 281-866-5550, or sthodge@utmb.edu.

This study has been approved by the UTMB Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any complaints, concerns, input or questions regarding your rights as a subject participating in this research study or you would like more information about the protection of human subjects in research, you may contact the IRB Office, at (409) 266-9400 or irb@utmb.edu.

Do I have to participate?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop your participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Appendix C- Study Flyer



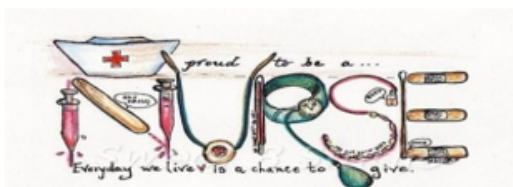
Were you born in Nigeria?

Are you a Nigerian-born individual and currently studying in a formal pre-licensure baccalaureate nursing program?

Would you be willing to participate in a research study related to your classroom environment while in a United States nursing program?

Other criteria: Resided in the U.S. for at least one year, successfully completed one semester of nursing school, able to speak, read and write English

If interested, please contact:
Shatoi King, MSN-Ed, BSN, RN-BC
sthodge@utmb.edu or 713-487-6866



Appendix D- Demographic Data

Nigerian Immigrant Nursing Students in U.S. Nursing Programs Demographic Information

Code: _____

If you have agreed to participate in this study, please take a few minutes to tell me about yourself.

1. Age _____
2. Gender _____
3. Ethnicity: African (born in Africa)
 - a. _____ Yes
 - b. _____ No
4. Place of birth _____
5. Tribe _____
6. Language (s) spoken _____
7. Years in the U.S. _____
8. Currently enrolled in a nursing program
 - a. _____ Yes
 - b. _____ No
9. Current enrollment (Select all that apply)
 - a. BSN
 - b. Community college
 - c. University
 - d. Private institution
 - e. Public institution
10. What semester of nursing school are you in? _____
11. Completed any other coursework in the U.S. other than nursing courses?
 - a. _____ Yes
 - b. _____ No

Appendix E- Interview Guide

Interview Questions (Semi-Structured Topic Guides)

Introduction by the interviewer: The purpose of my research and my interest have been discussed with you. I would like to focus on your experiences as a Nigerian immigrant nursing student.

Grand Tour Question:

1. Would you please tell me about your experience as a Nigerian-born nursing student studying in the U.S.?

Probing Questions:

2. How many years have you been in the U.S.?
3. What brought you to the U.S.?
4. Tell me about things you do to help you successfully complete your nursing courses?
5. Can you tell me about any experiences, positive or negative, you encountered in your nursing program?
6. Tell me about your experience with the vocabulary/terminology used in your nursing program?
7. What individuals and/or situations helped you successfully complete your nursing courses?
8. What would you share with nursing faculty about your experience in nursing school?
9. Would you briefly explain your educational background in your home country?
10. How do work and family expectations affect your success in nursing school?
11. Is there anything else that you would like me to tell me related to your experience?
12. If I have any further questions, would it be ok to contact you?

If you think of anything else about this topic that you'd like to share with me, please

contact me at sthodge@utmb.edu or **713-487-6866**

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Vita

Shatoi King was born January 24, 1981 in Houston, TX to Regina Hodge. She received her high school diploma from Forest Brook Senior High School in 1999. She pursued a career in nursing and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from UTMB in 2006. Shatoi began her nursing career at The Methodist hospital where she worked on a rehab/ medical-surgical unit. She then pursued her passion of woman's health working in labor and delivery, antepartum, postpartum and woman's surgery. In 2010, Shatoi obtained a Master of Science in Nursing- Education specialization from Walden University. She holds a certification in Medical-Surgical nursing. She has experience in medical-surgical nursing, pediatric nursing, woman health nursing and management. She has experience in vocational nursing education, transitional LVN/Paramedic to RN education, and bachelor's level education.

In 2016, Shatoi was accepted into the UTMB Graduate School of Biomedical Science Nursing PhD program. While in the doctoral program she received numerous awards including the UTMB SON Doctoral Academic Achievement Award, Healthcare and Nursing Education Foundation Scholarship Award, the Gale Foundation Academic Achievement Award, and the Marie and Talbert Aulds Scholarship, just to name a few. Shatoi was 1 out of 8 nursing faculty members nationwide to win the National League of Nursing Education Scholarship in 2019. She is also a member of Chi Eta Phi, Inc. Nursing Sorority, Sigma Theta Tau International, National League of Nursing and Texas Nurse Association. Currently, Shatoi works at University of Houston-Clearlake as a Nursing lecturer in the RN-BSN program. She is the wife of Eauri L. King, Jr and has four amazing children.

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This dissertation was typed by Shatoi King.