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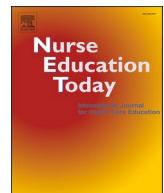
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Research article

Using LEGO® Serious Play® Methodology in supporting Nigerian nursing students' sociocultural transitions to UK higher education: A phenomenological research study



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ABSTRACT

Introduction: From an historical perspective the United Kingdom (UK) has been the first European country of choice for Nigerian students wishing to study overseas. As an international contingent, Nigerian students continue to represent the UK's third largest international student body. This paper provides an insight into research undertaken to examine students' capacity to transition into the UK Higher Education system from a sociocultural perspective. Across the UK Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) have addressed issues surrounding internationalisation and decolonisation of the portfolio of programmes available to overseas students, with strategic curriculum design and justification processes evident in the extant literature. This project uses an innovative approach for the facilitation of dialogue with international students about their experiences of transitioning into UK systems of learning and teaching using a social constructivism approach.

Aims: The aim of the research was to explore sociocultural perspectives which impacted on self-reported transitions to UK HEI's by Nigerian students. The objectives of the study were to a) provide a reflective lens of perspective on international student transitioning experiences for HEIs, educators and policymakers b) illuminate the challenges and barriers faced by Nigerian students during their transition from Nigerian to UK HE systems and infrastructures and c) to co-construct authentic and pragmatic knowledge of how best Nigerian students can be supported in their transition to UK HEI's.

Methods: Smith (2010) interpretive phenomenological analysis, integrating qualitative research methods was implemented as a means of undertaking research facilitated using LEGO® Serious Play® Methodology as an innovative method of data collection. Twenty participants were recruited purposively to the study from an annual cohort of nursing students at a satellite Higher Education Institution (HEI) campus in Metropolitan city. Quirkos was used as a software package in analysing the data and establishing the salience as well as the commonality of emergent themes.

Results: Findings reveal the extent to which sociocultural acclimation is of importance in the process of transition to UK HEIs. The perception of complex ambiguity surrounding the design and delivery of UK academic curricula was also reported as challenging by Nigerian students. Self-reported comments from Nigerian nursing students revealed the priori existence of negative learning experience, including lack of IT facilities, culturally rooted family expectations and responsibilities which then influenced perceptions and experiences of learning and teaching in the UK. Negative experiences included perceptions of racism regarding skin colour, fashion sense and UK practice focused on authentic assessment opportunities.

Conclusion: The small purposive sample of participants who engaged in this study, illuminated that students' prior experiences have the potential to influence their current pedagogical experience, in accordance with the principles of social constructivism. Most participants reported their experience of the transition period of entry to UK education varied between individuals, perhaps most significantly that perceptions of acculturation, acclimation and overall transition to the UK took between four and six months for a programme that may only have one year's duration.

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1. Introduction

The influx of overseas students to the United Kingdom (UK) reflects the increased mobility and motivation to study within Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) which have the capacity and capability to impact on the knowledge and skills of students from diverse global contexts. Iterative internationalisation (the ability of the HEI in building capacity to work with a diversity of students and be able to think globally and recognise inclusiveness) and decolonisation (recognising the background of the students on a programme and enabling the student to be reflected in the curriculum with regards to the reading list, assessments and activities. This is also about recognising and changing where whiteness is pervasive in the curriculum) of the curriculum initiatives across the UK have been framed and contextualised within the trans-national education (TNE) activities of these organisations, which had a net worth of £28.8 billion in 2018 alone, which was an exponential 54 % increase since 2006 (London Economics, 2021). Whilst the global pandemic has influenced and impacted upon the ability of international students to travel to the UK, this issue remains one of fundamental significance to the global higher education economy and the provision of optimal support for students transitioning into UK Higher Education (HE) across the nation. Inferentially it is possible to predict that the value to the UK economy from HEI provision by 2030 will be £35 billion per annum. This prediction necessitates that the HEI sector ought to be accountable for the incorporation of intercultural and global perspectives into UK perspectives, if authentic learning, teaching and assessment is to be delivered and validated by academic institutions.

In terms of a global knowledge economy higher education addresses the need for knowledge transfer and translation in the disorienting dilemmas that students will face within the workplace (Trahar, 2013). The White Paper: Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice (BIS, 2016) reiterated the Government's manifesto commitment to introduce a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) aimed at fulfilling the potential of Universities as an instrument for social mobility, drive economic growth and foundation for cultural landscape. Whilst iterative versions of policy have been brought into circulation since, the specific focus on the potential to grade institutions on the quality of their provision is still evident, with far greater emphasis on the concept of learning enhancement. Giroux's now seminal theory advocated the transformation of the institution and implementation of the 'hidden curricula' that are non-academic but impact the student's academic output; these include beliefs, values, communication, and attitudes (Giroux, 1981). Giroux further highlighted the need for HEI to develop curricula that empowered both the collective and individual needs of students and to give them a voice of involvement in the co-construction of needs led curricula. Whereas Internationalisation can be said to be an HEI's ability to build capacity to work with a diversity of students (Liverpool John Moores University, 2017). Transnational education (education delivered in another country where the awarding institution is based) plays an important part in the concept of international education (Dunn and Wallace, 2008).

The Nigerian pedagogic system involves the provision of nursing education by the state government, federal government, and mission hospitals with the establishment of 'School of nursing' to deliver basic or post-basic education. Nursing education in Nigeria was not reflected in Nigerian educational hierarchical system by the Federal Ministry of Education (Ayandiran et al., 2013) until recently when the Diploma in Nursing certificate was quantified to be equivalent to Higher National Diploma (HND) certificate for job promotion purposes. Furthermore, majority of nursing education in Nigeria occurs outside the university system. Therefore there is a need for all the nursing education to move to the universities as evident in the developed countries of the world like the United Kingdom and United States of America. Students can pursue a four year bachelor's degree in nursing science in a Nigerian University as decreed in the curriculum by the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2014). Less than 10 % of the schools of nursing in Nigeria could

meet the criteria for this move says Dolamo and Olubiyi (2013). Most of nursing education are provided outside the university system. University education is essential to ensure that nurses are prepared to provide high quality care that is evidence based to meet the increased 'need of the patients'. The latter will enable nurses to deliver and transform healthcare and health systems in the world (King's College London, 2019).

1.1. Aim

The aim of the research was to explore sociocultural perspectives which impacted on self-reported transitions to UK HEI's by Nigerian students.

1.2. Objectives

1. To provide a reflective lens of perspective on international student transitioning experiences for HEIs, educators and policymakers.
2. To illuminate the challenges and barriers faced by Nigerian students during their transition from Nigerian to UK HE systems and infrastructures.
3. To co-construct authentic and pragmatic knowledge of how best Nigerian students can be supported in their transition to UK HEI's.
4. To review the obstacles to the student's transition and analyse the length of time it takes for the students to adapt to UK Higher Education.

1.3. Research question

1. What impact does student's prior learning experience in the Nigeria context have on their perception and expectation of the UK educational system?
2. What are the identifiable socio-cultural factors that impact the transition of Nigerian students to UK higher Education and the impact on their capacity to learn?
3. What are the challenges and barriers faced by Nigerian students during their transition from Nigerian to UK HE systems?

2. Theoretical framework

The framework of the factors that affect international students HE experiences used for the literature review was based on educational social constructivism approach developed by Vygotsky, which is a belief that knowledge is constructed through an individual's interaction with others and the social world (Kurt, 2020). 'Play' is based on series of theories including, constructionism, hand-mind connection and flow, imagination, use of metaphors and complex adaptive systems (Harel and Papert's Complex Adaptive System Theory, 1991) to enable the creation of a symbolic 3-D model of things in a playful way. The theoretical framework also include the international students contribution to the UK education economy, the impact of the pandemic, policy documents, Nigerian pedagogy, internationalisation of curriculum and student's length of adjustment, Nigeria socio-cultural context, learning approaches and intercultural capacities.

3. Methods

An interpretive phenomenological (IPA) methodology by Jonathan Smith (Smith, 2010), integrating qualitative research methods (Saunders et al., 2009), was implemented to undertake research facilitated by using LEGO® Serious Play® Methodology (Kristiansen and Rasmussen, 2014) as an innovative data collection method. This is to retrieve social constructions like language, consciousness, and shared meanings (Antwi and Hamza, 2015). Tuffour (2017) in support of Smith (2010) opined that interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) involves indepth and methodical analysis of consciousness. Therefore, the researcher's

interaction with their previous conception and the current experiential encounters was considered by bracketing their prior knowledge, experiences, and own history (Finlay, 2011). Finlay (2011) contends that IPA researchers should be heedful of their own experiences and beliefs to enhance their interpretation so as not to become an impediment in making sense of the participant's experiences but be reflexive instead. This is very important because one of the researchers had been through the same experience as the participants. Finlay further iterated IPA researchers to refrain from bracketing their previous conceptions before involving themselves with the participants and the data. We recognise how those preconceptions constantly unearth themselves throughout the process of research.

IPA involves a dual interpretation process also known as double hermeneutics; therefore, the researchers tries to interpret the participant's experience by making sense of them (Smith et al., 2009) and this involves both the researched and the researcher. The researchers assumed a key role in the analysis and interpretation of the participant's experiences and intuitively attempts to explore the meanings by reading in between the lines for deeper understanding and close interpretation of the data (Finlay, 2011).

3.1. Sampling

Purposive sampling (Shorten and Moorley, 2014) was used to secure international students of Nigerian origin and nationality who were at the later stages of their study, ie) transitioning from Nigerian educational institutions to that in the UK (Gray, 2018). Twenty participants were selected at random from the thirty-two volunteers. The sample excludes British citizen of Nigerian heritage because they are not considered Nigerian and those that studied in the North East of England. The inclusion criteria considered international students' of Nigerian origin who are nearing completion (20 %) and alumni (80 %) who had completed their programme. Both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) Nigerian nursing students' who studied at the Metropolitan city are included in the study.

3.2. Contextual backdrop

The research took place in London, at a satellite Campus of the University of Sunderland. The campus had its inaugural international BSc (Hons) Nursing top-up cohort students in October 2012 and has consequently had four annual intakes. The London Campus at the time of the study had circa. 2000 students comprised of international, EU and home students.

3.3. Ethics

Alongside formal institutional ethical approval, the study adapted the BERA (2011) ethical approval guidelines. Considerations were given to those participating in the research for informed consent, openness and right to withdraw from the research at any point up until data analysis. Participants made an informed choice to participate and were informed of the security of the data and any possibly risks to anonymity by being part of the collective and individual LEGO® Serious Play® sessions, where shared storytelling was an integral part of data collection. In line with the GDPR (2018) all data sets were secured and encrypted and recommendations for data storage adhered to. Pseudonyms were used to identify participants from the point of data analysis so that responses could be anonymised during formal dissemination of the study findings.

3.4. The use of the Lego® Serious Play® (LSP) as a data collection method

The Lego® Serious Play® (LSP) sessions' process to collect the data was discussed, and the process was voice recorded following the core research questions developed. The LEGO® Serious Play® workshop was

divided into five sessions over twelve weeks, with each group containing 4–6 participants leading to 20 participants. One participant was not privileged to participate in two sessions. Another educator and B.A. facilitated each session, which lasted about 2 to 3 h. The LEGO® Serious Play® is composed of international nursing students of Nigerian origin who had completed (Alumni students) or nearing completion of the undergraduate or postgraduate top-up programme at the London campus. The workshop was held from March 2018 to May 2018 for undergraduate and postgraduate Nigerian Nursing students admitted in January 2016 and January 2017, including Master's students at the London campus in January 2017. The UG and PG students were kept in the same focus group.

3.5. LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® as dialogical facilitator

LSP enabled the removal of power imbalance in relation to the potential for co-construction of knowledge with students since it was used it to ease the transition in driving forward an initiative for improvement. Students were encouraged to actively articulate themselves in that manner, which produced a richer set of data to work than dialogic conversational approaches alone. Using the bricks to facilitate storytelling resulted in rich data collection (Kristiansen and Rasmussen, 2014) from shy or quiet participants that might have been suppressed by dominant and self-appointed expert participants who might present as having more knowledge about the topic of discussion (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The study integrated the four processes of LEGO® Serious Play® by Kristiansen and Rasmussen (2014)

1. Posing the question

The first stage of Posing the question will involve the researcher posing the overall research question. The participants will then be asked to build or create stories in response to the specific questions asked.

2. Construction

The second stage is Construction in which the participants construct his or her own 3-D model in response to the question that was posed by using the special sets of LEGO bricks/materials provided. This is to inspire the use of metaphor in story-making while developing a story symbolising the meaning of the constructed model; this enables them to construct new knowledge in their minds.

3. Sharing

The third stage involves sharing the model meaning and stories they construct among the team, which gives every participant the opportunity to discuss their thoughts free from any other participants pressure, which makes every participant have their individual voice and contribution to the data and builds commitment to shared action.

4. Reflecting

The fourth stage is the Reflection stage when the participants are encouraged to reflect on what they heard and see in the models. The facilitator and participants can ask clarification questions about the models, and the facilitator sums up surprises and connections (Kristiansen and Rasmussen, 2014).

While posing the question in a LEGO® Serious Play®, Blair and Rillo (2016) was of the opinion that the facilitator needs to consider how challenging the questions are; this is done by 'building a challenge' that could generate an intuition, reflection and debate. Specific directions used to drive the dialogue via the bricks were fivefold:

- Build what it felt like to be learning back in Nigeria before you arrived in the UK

- Use bricks to link your two models and add bricks to show the differences and or relationships between the two?
- Build the obstacles to transitioning into UK education
- Build a solution to how these obstacles can be tackled
- Build those factors that will aid a successful transition from Nigeria to the UK educational system?

The four core processes of LEGO® Serious Play® were followed for each built task. Data collection regarding the articulation of self-reported perceptions took place at the point of reflection. Each participant then shared their stories with the other participants, often using metaphors to narrate their individual stories from lived experience. By joining models together and integrating their individual stories it was also possible to capture the group dynamic and shared experience. Each workshop took approximately three hours to deliver. Data were collected via an audio recorder and data saturation was deemed to have been reached when the same data was collected repeatedly, and no new data was generated. Photographic evidence of each 'build' was taken and used alongside the audio recordings for ease of visualisations of the models, beyond the context of the delivery sessions.

3.6. Reliability and validity/trustworthiness and authenticity

Reliability and validity were ensured in this research through the use of in-depth data collection using LEGO® Serious Play® methodology, which ensures the heterogeneity of data from the qualitative data collection as posited by Denzin (1989). This is also enabled because the data was gathered from different sources especially from the undergraduate and postgraduate students that were divided into five groups and the data was collected between March to May 2018. Also, the use of LEGO® Serious Play® enables 100 % participation from the research participants, promote 100 % openness because every participant is able to discuss their ideas. Furthermore, Kristiansen and Rasmussen (2014) affirm that it enables 100 % respect because the participants are communicating through the model individually. Also, the participants cannot alter another person's model which resulted in not impacting on the story which other person eventually tells. The collected data are trustworthy and authentic because no participant can dominate the discussion, which is highly possible in alternative methods such as focus groups (Parahoo, 2014). Internal self-monitoring was considered in terms of what each participant is prepared to say. This is to ensure that people and the organisation are protected in terms of sensitive data that might be discussed during the workshop. The participants were instructed to use pseudonyms to preserve the anonymity of people they spoke of.

Reflections will be incorporated into this project during data analysis while coding at the review and refine stage as discussed by Bazeley and Jackson (2013). This will reduce misrepresentation of the themes because you will be able to modify, eliminate and merge current codes. The above reduces the researchers bias.

3.7. LEGO® Serious Play® in the removal of power imbalance

LSP enables the removal of power imbalance in conjunction with the co-construction of knowledge with students because LSP was used to ease the transition in driving forward an initiative for improvement. The researcher allowed students to articulate themselves in that manner, which gave the researcher a richer set of data to work with, which the researcher might not have had if the researcher only spoke to them or interviewed them. Therefore, it got rid of that potential power imbalance. There is the perspective that some international students may not have the confidence to speak directly to people but were able to talk through the bricks so that they can have a voice that they otherwise might not have. The approach metaphorically levels the playing field in terms of expressing themselves based on what is happening.

3.8. Data analysis

IPA six steps analysis (Smith, 2010) was used to undertake the data analysis. The steps include, read and re-reading the transcript to get to know the data, making initial notes systematically to capture observations and developing emerging (prototype) themes for each case. The fourth step is searching for connections across the emergent themes for each case, moving to the next case and the sixth step is looking for patterns across cases. Quirkos v2.4 (Turner, 2016), a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) was used to undertake establishment of salient, rather than the most common themes during thematic analysis of the data. This visual means of coding and analysing unstructured data was also a means of accounting for epistemic bias for the lead researcher, who was Nigerian and as such acknowledged that the interpretive lens he used may have been influenced by long held pre-supposition and assumption, as an 'insider' and executor of the research. The orthographic transcription of the spoken words was systematically produced (Braun and Clarke, 2013) which include all the non-semantic sounds like laughter, repetition, words spoken loudly including incomplete thoughts, 'erm', 'er', 'mm', 'mm-hm', using the notation system for orthographic transcription (Jefferson, 2004) as a key. This enabled a thorough interpretative analysis of the people experience.

4. Results

The use of Quirkos enabled the allocation of quirks into groups to contextualise the categories; sub-categories were incorporated to form the quirks and subcategories within each of the quirks. This led to the generation of themes and sub-themes from the analysed transcribed data in this section. The analysis focussed on the data concerning learning in Nigeria compared to learning in the United Kingdom. What the paper discusses are the collective experience of transitioning but the LSP gives them the opportunity to democratically share their own individual stories. These are not used as comparative experiences but rather to illuminate the individual perspectives who have transitioned from an international student perspective.

4.1. Theme one - learning in Nigeria

The factors that influence this include perceived readiness to learn, aspiration, hope and collaborative working, perceived fear instilled by Nigerian lecturers, perceived victimisation in Nigerian education, perceived ambiguity in the Nigerian nursing curricula, perceived dynamics of student-teacher relationship and support, perception of the impact of Nigeria pedagogy, and perception of the humiliating school environment and management.

A) Perceived readiness to learn, aspiration, hope and collaborative working

There is evidence from the collected data that Nigerian student nurses are ready to learn and have the aspiration and hope to perform well in their studies and enjoy collaborative working. The students are very determined to achieve their educational goals, but often meet setbacks. Olivia and Becky story are related as stated below

"back home you are ready to learn- you are out for the studies but you have so many things like you don't have the full support you need to get what you want- you are like you are on your own- you have to work hard by yourself to get everything"

(Olivia)

"I entered the profession with- you know- lot of aspiration and hope but there also- working with people"

(Becky)

B) Perceived fear instilled by lecturers in Nigeria

The perceived fear instilled by lecturers in Nigeria is the most prominent factor among the coded data in the theme. Most of the participants placed considerable emphasis on this as a hindrance to their study. This is the biggest impediment to learning in Nigeria as ventured by the Nurses that participated in the LEGO® Serious Play® activity. Nursing students in Nigeria must pass the PTS (Preliminary Training School) examination six months into the course to be able to get 'index number from NMCN (Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria) to register as a bona fide student of the college. Many of the participants discussed their learning as challenging with fear and believed that the lecturers intentionally instil fear in them. Some of the participants remarked that

"they will tell you that your name is written in pencil and erm if you didn't pass- you have to leave the school"

(Jane)

"they are trying to put fear in you. You are trying to say- well how do I survive? They will say- if you fail- you fail out"

(Vicky)

"sometimes we still have that fear from Nigeria"

(Gladys)

"I have that fear in me- I brought from Nigeria to UK that you don't talk to lecturers"

(Jane)

"if you don't pass the PTS you will be sent home and the experience is not good especially if the parents have sponsored suffered to pay for the school fees"

(Obiageli)

Some Nigerian lecturers indulged in menacing the students and 'scare' them that they came to the profession only because they intended to travel out of Nigeria to overseas countries where the pasture might be greener. This is more of a cultural issue in Nigeria where the lecturers are seen as 'God' figures and cannot be questioned.

The participants noted that

'On entering into the nursing career back home- I was optimistic and enthusiastic that I was going into what I .loved and appreciated. Erm on entering there and commencing lectures- there was this scare of within six months- if you don't succeed- you will be eliminated from the course'

(Patience)

"The experience back home was more of challenging with fear and all of a sudden got to place where you could relax and learn- you know- seek advice or counsel from your lecturers without feeling under duress or pressurised or anything- co-verbalised and say what's in your mind"

(Patience)

"you have to greet them with respect...we took them as mini-gods"

(Chinonso)

"the green represents that I entered the profession with- you know- lot of aspiration and hope"

(Becky)

C) Perceived victimisation in Nigerian nurse education system

The students go through many subjugations during the course. They are very sceptical about their mode of dressing, getting close to the lecturers to clarify study concerns and social life. The participants are referring to the colour of the LEGO bricks when making reference to

'black thing', 'black base' and 'black'. Black is seen as negative. Some of the comments are below

"The black thing between erm the person and the lecturer is...in my school- if you are found close to the lecturer for any reason- when the result comes out- you will fail"

(Juliet)

"you don't make yourself appear visible- because you will fail your exam and you will go"

(Gladys)

"That the school of nursing is meant for serious minded people and they are not here for erm other extra curricula other businesses"

(Jane)

"my experience- it started on the black note"

(Juliet)

"I started with a black base because I erm- I really didn't want to (...) I wanted to study nursing but I didn't want to do it in school of nursing- I prefer to do it in the university"

(Gladys)

"...I find my life 'black' that I thought that I can't do that"

(Alima)

D) Perceived ambiguity in the Nigerian nursing curricular

The nursing curricula in Nigeria are vague and unclear or articulated because individual nursing schools tend to follow whatever suits them without putting the students' at the centre of the Nursing education. Nurses graduate with a higher diploma degree and will spend another four years for BSc degree top up degree, resulting in repeating all they learned before (NUC, 2014).

"getting to the programme- it was really confusing- which is this red- there is no defined curriculum"

(Juliet)

"so I entered school of nursing 3 years; after that I will still go and do 4 years for my BSc- so it wasn't really a nice experience"

(Gladys)

The Nigerian assessment method is hugely saturated with examinations with molecular assessment methods like presentations, mostly for formative assessment purposes.

"...you are either given an exam exam or you do a presentation"

(Chinonso)

"Everything...most of the course work we are given are not-no es- says...Just the exam"

(Brigitta)

"we can read from that note and on the exam you can write from that note...it is not extra things but back home you don't have assessments...we don't have essays...only exams answering exams"

(Alima)

"I had a lot of things to pass through- the exams- a lot of exams experiences- that's why I represented it with different colours for me to come out and be successful"

(Val)

The students felt that the tasks given are too hard and the teachers wanted them to know more than themselves, but the intention might be to make them learn more. Students find it hard to cope, leading to a high dropout rate. Also, there is no marking criteria nor assessment brief in Nigerian nursing education, so teachers mark the scripts as they please.

"they are giving you a hard task- they want you to learn even more than they have- have knowledge even more than them- that's why I kept it on that edge there but after everything- you find out that its actually trying to help you to come up to where they are- not to be more than them or they might (...) - they even want you to come up- get experience even pass them"

(Val)

"getting to the programme- it was really confusing- which is this red- there is no defined curriculum- and like the marking criteria's- what they expect from you- you don't have the idea about it"

(Juliet)

"at the end of the day erm some of your friends whom you read with- some passed- some did not pass and it's a tearful and joyful erm experience in school of nursing in Nigeria"

(Jane)

"I passed through pain not really because I fail the exam but I see myself with all these people I worked with- we tend to lose your friends because when the results comes out- people will separate automatically"

(Becky)

"if you want to call your friends- they will not answer you because probably you've succeeded and you guys studied together and you didn't do anything to make it stop happening, after the result came out you can't even rejoice that you passed"

(Becky)

The lecturers can behave in a very treacherous way for the students to know that they are in control and create fear in the student. This can inwardly destroy the student's morale and self-esteem. This could be classed as deceit and setting the students up to fail in an exam.

"Sometimes you have exams- all you know- your exam start on Wednesday- you don't know the course you are going in for. You just have to read everything"

(Juliet)

The students are not facilitated to study more than what they learn in class, and the teachers give 'notes' written on the topic. The class representative' dictates the notes to the rest of the group.

"You go and struggle to cram that note because you are really cramming- you are not learn- once you are able to cram the note- you come over to the next level"

(Vicky)

"once you are able to cram that note they dictate to you- and give it back to them- there is nothing like plagiarism- just vomit it the way it is; you have yours"

(Vicky)

"you read- you cram- you discuss with friends"

(Juliet)

"every time exams which is not really the most important or the best method of assessment because you just cram and then give it to them- that does not mean maybe that you have understood it"

(Gladys)

E) Perceived dynamics of student-teacher relationship and support

Nigerian lecturers do not appear to be supportive; they distance themselves from the students. The lecturers are unencouraging and threatens the students that they are not here to play. There is no sign of friendliness, and the teachers create fear in them. The lack of support also has an impact on the student's confidence.

"lecturers distant themselves from the students because they don't want to see you close to a lecturer"

(Juliet)

"you don't have the full support you need to get what you want- you are like you are on your own- you have to work hard by yourself"

(Olivia)

"this is my lecturer there-I used red colour here because...they are not approachable-they are always far from us-they are always hidden"

(Chinonso)

"so there is no er support- they are not- erm there is lack of encouragement from the lecturers"

(Julie)

"They are on red. They are not friendly to be honest-all of them"

(Chinonso)

"even there was also not much support it was given but you are expected to do more and to know everything which you are suppose to do"

(Brigitta)

There is no evidence of student lecturer interaction because sometimes this could be misinterpreted as something else, so there are zero student-lecturer relationships. Students' discussion of their personal issues can lead to major issues, which could be used to victimise the student.

"so you don't relate personal things to your lecturer because you may dig a hole that will s swallow you so you just keep it to yourself"

(Becky)

F) Perception of the impact of Nigerian pedagogy

The participants in this study voiced that individual lecturer personalised their teaching methodologies because there is no standard acceptable method/s. This is generally didactic in nature and does not encourage students' participation. Studying in Nigeria can become repetitive because the students spend too long to complete the BSc degree top-up, leading to repetition of what they already know during the pre-reg nursing course. Students are exposed to many subjects at the same time, causing content overload. The teaching method in Nigeria does not expose the students to any form of mentorship; the students only have one or two clinical instructor for the whole hospital, who is a replica of Practice placement facilitator in the UK. The red and other colours referred to in this data analysis are the LEGO brick colour which are used to metaphorically denote meaning to their discussion.

"so this 'Red' is the teaching styles- it's a didactic method where you have to read- sometimes its even better you are not in the class"

(Gladys)

"the lecturer will come and teach- whether you like it or not- its your business"

(Jane)

"some of them...they that are nice- will even tell you they want you to pass where they stopped"

(Val)

"during our PTS that's erm the earlier stage in nursing... that's within 6 months of entry we have like 14 subjects to read and those subject...it might not even be taught you will be given a note...they might give you a note Yah to go and prepare for it both in PTS and even throughout the three years course...you might not be given the note before the exam self"

(Chinonso)

G) Perception of the humiliating school environment and management

The collective view of participants is that the school environment can be very humiliating. Likewise, the school management and administration can be uncomfortable for the students at times. Students are monitored, and external forces can influence the environment based on 'who' the students know and the sons or daughters of 'who' they are in society. There is evidence of exploitation in the lecturer student's relationship, and some lecturers can award 'high' unmerited marks to the students depending on their relationship with individual students. Some of the lecturers influence the marks awarded to students due to their sexual relationship with them.

"everything I read in Nigeria you know- as other people have said erm its not a very conducive atmosphere because everybody- even the lecturers- they are not in friendly terms- erm you really have to be very- very- careful in your association and in my own time- those lecturer- some of them- what they wanted is they want you to be friendly with them you know- so that they can give you mark"

(Amber)

"if you don't even understand the fear to even ask them question you can just sit down take whatever they give you then leave..."

(Chinonso)

"Those lecturers- especially when they find out that you are young and maybe attractive or beautiful- they want to befriend you and then they will tell you that don't worry about marks whether you do it or not- they are going to give you good marks"

(Amber)

The participants stated that clinical placement is not left out in the humiliation because the students are being misused in this environment as well, coupled with the unpleasant school atmosphere.

"There- you have to work to make sure the floor or the ward is covered- so you don't have that encouragement or support sometimes to make sure that you really studied but nobody is after if you fail or if you didn't pass the exam- all they know is that you have to work and then you have to get your exams passed"

(Olivia)

"back home I have unfriendly lecturers"

(Chinonso)

"this is my lecturers on one side and this is me...you can see that's a demarcation there and that was why I put the red there as the bridge but that red there is a challenge which I myself have to cross to get this and with the support from the base I have and I was able to climb to get that crown there"

(Obianuju)

One of the participants used metaphorical storytelling as they make meaning from the built LEGO models to represent a demarcation between herself and the lecturers using red brick and said the following about her experience while at the nursing school

"this is my lecturers on one side and this is me...you can see that's a demarcation there and that was why I put the red there as the bridge but that red there is a challenge which I myself have to cross to get this and with the support from the base I have and I was able to climb to get that crown there"

(Obianuju)

The students are often inappropriately used in Nigeria during the clinical placements by sending them on personal chores. Most often,

students are used to replace qualified nursing staff and make them 'take charge' of the departments and wards as the 'Nurse in charge' of the duty without any supervision by a qualified member of staff, thereby putting patients' lives at risk. All the participants conceded this to be true in their various institutions as well.

"I was trained in a mission hospital- after PTS- you are like the ward manager- you still have to do your full shift- take care of the full ward"

(Olivia)

"in the hospitals for practical- those matrons- if they send you on an errand- you refuse to go- you are in problem. During the practical period- automatically- you are going to fail the practical because anything they ask you to do- you said no"

(Ann)

The school management comes with its challenges, and the participants symbolise them with different LEGO brick colours like red, ash (gray) and light gray. Denoting the latter as danger and 'don't go there'. They also have to be cautious of fellow students because they can get into trouble. The former might have 'extensions' with the management or know the school governor or councillors and feed them information about the other students. The students often have to create a 'safe haven' to shield themselves from the school management, by not applying cosmetic 'makeup' to their face or weaving their hair. This was metaphorically represented with blue and green LEGO bricks.

"these are some of the friends that are also dangerous- you keep them alongside the administration business so that they will be there- you don't allow them here because it will threaten your territory"

(Gladys)

"they have extensions with the ((General laughs))- yeah- its true- some of them go to supply information to them- some are related to the counsellors and the governors- so you talk to them- sometimes they call you on phone- I just heard what you said now- so they are extended to this. So they have immunity (laughs)"

(Gladys)

"if you are found close to the lecturer for any reason- when the result comes out- you will fail because the principal of the school want to fail you meaning maybe the lecturer informed you of what you are expecting in the exam"

(Juliet)

"I built myself a safe haven- that's all these blue- green- ash- that's where I stood away from the dangers ((General laughs))"

(Gladys)

"if you have car- pack it in your house- use leg and be coming to school- so you have to build that safe haven- appear to be foolish in order to get what you want; that's the style"

(Gladys)

"Some of the friends you allow to your safe haven- some of them- these are some of the friends that are also dangerous- you keep them alongside the administration business"

(Gladys)

4.2. Theme two - learning in the United Kingdom

The participants discussed their learning in the UK. This was quite different from their experience in Nigeria because they find the UK learning to be more supportive than Nigeria, although this comes with its obstacles.

A) Perception of assessment in the UK

Assessment in the UK was discussed by the participants as the most prominent and salient factor that made their UK study experience preponderate over that of Nigeria and even more than all the other factors that impact UK education. The student finds essay writing and critiquing more difficult as they are more familiar with exams only.

"I broadened my knowledge with that- the type of assessment that is being given here- although that assessment was really a problem because I remember the first essay I wrote- henn- when I saw what Mr xxxx gave me in my research- I never knew that when you are writing- however- although- this person said this- this person counter the idea- I didn't know it was so" (Hannah) "when I say my mark- for three days- I never seize to cry- I was crying and crying but there is nothing I can do"

(Hannah)

The students find the UK's assessment method complicated compared to Nigeria because they need to read different resources before constructing a few sentences. The participants feel that assignment submission timelines are too close for adequate preparation, failure of the online assignment portal when deadlines are looming, some assignments being focussed only on UK practice without the students prior experience in the UK. While one participant believes that the essays are good for making the students better professionals, others believe that they do not learn from the essays and do not give them practical experience.

"their way of assessment- you can see its red- its different from what we have there- in Nigeria you read your notes and textbooks- then come for your exams- but here now- you are asked to go and write essay- do this- do that- you use 100 textbook before you can be able to write 10 words"

(Val)

"the teaching- the style because transitioning from our style of reading and writing exams to constructing an essays"

(Gladys)

"the times for the sitting exams and the submission of the erm essays are always too close"

(Peace)

Some participants condemned repeating the same assessment questions and repeating the same articles to be critiqued by several cohorts of students. This impacts the level of 'plagiarism', 'similarity', and leads to 'collusion'. Participants expressed dissatisfaction regarding the mode of dissertation second marking system. The scripts are often second marked by those who do not specialise in the topic area and not familiar with systematic review. Sometimes they are deemed to be marking the 'students supervisor' or being second marked in the main campus when there are adequate lecturers.

"...it's not organised for example one assessment we have today and the four or five assessments we have after two months...all of them come together"

(Alima)

"the exam aspect was ok based on the fact that we were doing in that in Nigeria but here because of the references we had to put into it"

(Gladys)

"most of your assignment is based on how things work here in the UK and you can see that maybe most of us don't have- have not had the opportunity to be in the NHS or to be in the health system in this country- when they are talking about the assessment like management of care- everything you are writing must base on the system here in the UK and you've not experienced it"

(Hannah)

Some participants felt that there are inconsistencies in the assessment method in the UK while some believe that they cannot challenge

the lecturers/marker. They took the lecturer as mini 'gods' and challenging their decision is like digging their graves. There is evidence of poor academic performance in the first assignment due to newness to UK university system, while some students haven't been in education system for some years coupled with the assessment method. The participants commend the support from the lecturers on the assignment and exam preparation workshop but suggested the use of didactic approach during these sessions.

"I remember the first essay I wrote- henn- when I saw what Mr xxxx gave me in my research"

(Hannah)

"you dare not fight with your god- your lecturer is your god- no matter what- when it comes to education; you can't challenge- if you do- maybe you are digging your own grave"

(Hannah)

Some participants discussed dissatisfaction towards the mode of practice of the second markers, especially for the dissertation module. They argued that the work should be marked in the same site or from another University and by lecturers who specialises in the area of the student's research. They thinks that sometimes the second markers are not marking the students work, they seem to be marking the 'students' supervisor' instead. Here are few of her comments

"let the second marker- let them be those who had being there with you- who had supervised you"

(Hannah)

"the second marker knows who your supervisor is- he is not marking your work- he is marking your supervisor because I've experienced it- by the time you read their comment- its not about your work [*] it's about your supervisor- they want to get the second marker- let...they should go to another university"

(Hannah)

"hard work that we've done on.....during the period and your mark will go down to unbelievable.....marks you did not envisage and was very demoralising and we think that- that needs to change actually"

(Peace)

"another person on top tells you it's wrong; it really really....it really affected me which am still crying for it till today"

(Hannah)

"I don't know that they are specialised either in primary research or systematic review but if you feel you are specialised in primary research or you are specialised in systematic review- DO ON YOUR OWN SPECIALTY OHH- ITS NOT WHEN YOU FINISHED DOING IN YOUR SUPERVISION- you want to supervise those that have done primary research only- you now want to come and mark systematic review but you run away from teaching it- you run away from supervising it but then tentacles come out when you want to mark it- its not right"

(Gladys)

Moderation is another major concern to the participants. They feel that this should be done at the London campus instead of the main campus because the main campus moderation is not done at the London campus. The participants feel the ability to be able to challenge an unfair moderation and dissertation second marking. A participant denote the moderation process with 'sting of a scorpion' as she felt being 'stung' by a scorpion; who is the moderator.

"at the end- the same moderator- moderating- professor- doctor; who is not at your level- who is not even looking at the level of you and your lecturer- looking above- whatever- will just smash or do anything they want to do about it. Yes its dissertation- the second marker who is not there- who doesn't know where you started"

(Hannah)

"a sting of scorpion while I school- I really put in my best- this is my radio- I gathered all my information's- during my study days I made sure I asked questions"

(Juliet)

Sometimes, both the moderator and the University misinterprets what plagiarism is. A participant felt frustrated to be asked to face an infringement panel for what is not an infringement, but the panel upheld 'no infringement claim'

"after putting all my best and everything- the information I gathered was my dissertation has being infringed with all the quotes in it; what did I do- they said its plagiarised- turnitin- 10% plagiarism"

(Juliet)

"a supervisor is trying to defend student- I know this student- this is her work but some other person from no where that don't even know the student was querying plagiarism"

(Juliet)

"but at a point, I was scared of going to face the panel"

(Juliet)

The students find the lecturers to be very approachable and ready to listen to any problem. Some lecturers go above and beyond their remit to make the best out of the students, including computer lessons, counselling and guidance, even the challenging and disengaged ones. One of the participants confessed that she could air her view in the class for the first time in her life and was opportune to discuss her educational issues. Another participant commended the support offered to students with health challenges. Despite the above, the participants believed that some lecturers are not dedicated to the job and only do it for the money.

"there is strong connection between you and the lecturers- they are supportive"

(Val)

"I was nearly crying- he said- no- don't worry- if you have any problem- come to me. Throughout the whole period- he really helped and everything went well"

(Ann)

"even if you don't want to say anything- you are trying to hide behind somebody's head- he will always pin point and want you speak up and everybody's contribution no matter how little is valuable"

(Olivia)

"also they are encouraging when you go to lecturers depending on who you go to- they are encouraging"

(Gladys)

"Some lecturers- you know- you can go to them and talk to them"

(Amber)

"The teaching method I think because they are all interactive and erm its no fear of lecturer...its what you see is what you get they are approachable"

(Emily)

"They can encourage you and tell you about their experiences- so it makes it favourable"

(Gladys)

(Hannah)

'eye' as a metaphor for 'seeing self in a new light'.

"The eye there... is me. Hennn- will I say that- I see myself in a new light because the Olivia that left Nigeria in 2015 is not the same thing now- is not the same person because I came in newly- to answer question in the class- that is- (laughs)"

(Olivia)

"I was able to- I mean get expanded in my thinking- in whatever I do- because the more you read trying to gather your fact- the more experience you have- you begin to get more things which even if when you close your eyes- you can be able to remember them and talk about them because you personally did them"

(Hannah)

"you have the note which you can read at home and you can still get them at the school, and they can be explained more when you come to a lecture which is very good because you understand more and even if you don't understand you just go home and go back to your note which is already available on your computer and you can go through them and maybe relate them to the lecture and get more understanding"

(Brigitta)

"I was able to communicate my feelings- express myself in the best possible way- talk to people- air my views- so I like that opportunity given to me"

(Gladys)

"I read to the point that when I was going for interviews in NHS hospitals- I went to five NHS hospitals and I got jobs in the five NHS hospitals"

(Juliet)

Participants felt that the programme is a bit clustered and could be spaced out. There are too much to complete within 10 months (Recommendation of one year), including two bridging modules at level 5. The students accentuated that UK education exposes them to more knowledge devoid of cramming, the initial difficulty of self-directed learning, inclusiveness during class lectures, independence to improve their confidence and self-esteem. Group work is found to be helpful although, not everyone likes it. Information technology and computer literacy is significant issues for the students, and many of them acknowledged insufficient knowledge of IT.

"-there is areas that is kind of bit clustered for instance this module we are doing now – mentorship module-like up to how many modules within few months and you know no time to even prepare yourself for the essays assignments and discuss..."

(Chinonso)

"it is more intensive being that...it is a one year course- you know everything is so intensive in this place"

(Amber)

"we do a lot of working together as student. We do a lot of group work that helped us sail through"

(Becky)

"so they said we have to do PowerPoints- when I got home- I said my husband- am not going again- this PowerPoint. Computer- I don't know anything about it- I will write everything with pen"

(Ann)

"You have to check your time table- check your time table every day- know where your class is- sometimes I was even ashamed to ask some of my classmates how to log in- I swallowed it because I was so ashamed of it- at my age- I can't really do much about it. So that was one of the first obstacle I had- the issue of doing everything in computer- it wasn't really funny for me- I remember- if I will see

B) Perception of learning experience

The participants feel that the programme has made them find their authentic 'hidden self'. A participant constructed a LEGO model using an

(name withheld)- I will say- where is the classroom- my phone is having problem- it's just that I didn't know how to log in”
 (Hannah)

The participants felt they were not supported by some lecturers during the postgraduate course and discussed that they did not benefit much from completing the MSc programme. They did not benefit from the course except criticisms and a waste of their time undertaken the programme. There is evidence of bias from the programme lead during the course. Some of the students feel that some lecturers have a pre-conceived idea about their performance and believe that they could not excel in their studies.

“The snake is- some lecturers think that some students will not pass- there are some certain levels they think a student should go- a stage and they should not er they should not pass above that without knowing that erm we are here to learn and you can also- you acquire knowledge- we are not here to galavant (galivant) and so (pause)”
 (Jane)

4.3. Theme three - sociocultural factors

The most salient sociological factors are perceived harsh weather, perceived green pastures, perceived cultural shock, impact of the university support services, accommodation and Immigration- Thick red tug of war (This is a metaphorical expression for the issues they went through concerning immigration). The weather was one of the essential factors; although this is not really a sociological factor, it significantly impacts the participant's transition.

A) Perceived harsh weather

The UK weather is very unfavourable, and same denoted with a 'red brick'. Many of the participants find the weather unbearable and hostile. This was highlighted as the next sociocultural factor that impacts the international students of Nigeria origin. Some of their comments are as follows

“erm so even the environment as well- the cold nature of the season- it was too cold- maybe affected the learning process because sometimes I have to wear my gloves in the class”
 (Gladys)

“...I entered during the winter so that is the red in fact the cold I've never experienced that type of weather”
 (Obianuju)

B) Perceived green pasture

The participants were delighted migrating to the UK for the first time, and they see it a breakthrough in their life hence a metaphorical description of 'green pasture'. Some saw it as a dream come true while some saw it as an opportunity.

“the lemon base- this is a green- I used it as a green pasture. I came moving forward ahead- ahead from Nigeria”
 (Gladys)

“the green here represent the state of art- I was so happy migrating from Nigeria to UK to study and I was really focused”
 (Juliet)

C) Perceived cultural shock

There is evidence of cultural shock among most of the participants

because it is a different system for them. The participants felt that everything was new because there was no one to guide and even just the conventional transportation system needs learning in this country, and some of them travelled around the same spot several times for hours without recognising what was happening because everywhere appears the same. Some participants feel intimidated being the only black amid many whites. The mode of dressing is one of the other factors that affect some international students, such as cultural and religious factors. Some of their commentaries are as stated below

“when I got into the country- everything was just new- there was nobody to guide”
 (Olivia)

“I went through round to London over 3 hours trying to locate the bus stop and everything- sometimes you will just stand at a place and call a friend”
 (Olivia)

“travelling for three hours to be in class every day waking up and being at the bus stop before 5.00am in the morning just to get to school on time”
 (Gladys)

“I think erm the colour of your skin represents talk more about you. Er mm (pause)”
 (Jane)

“initially when I came to this country- I don't wear tight- I don't dress like this- in fact I prefer the way we dress back home because I have to go to the GP all the time”
 (Julie)

“but there was so many things trying to pull (you) back- being a married woman- you have your children- you have to leave your family and children”
 (Olivia)

“here my marriage life just a barrier for me it prevent me to do my work on time and its just am suffering from the short of time”
 (Alima)

Lack of rapport with their lecturers back home affects their self-esteem, and they find it challenging to adapt to the new way of life they just acquired in the UK. The student's family from Nigeria do not understand the nature of life here; they expect money from them as they think they are here to work instead of study.

D) Impact of the university support services

The university support services play a significant role in the student's life in Higher Education because they are the first line staff that the students see for several issues. The participants sometimes feel that the university support services do not fulfil the students' needs due to inadequate knowledge of the information required by the students. The university management did not arrange the student's arrival in the country. The latter feel that the former should have a liaison person who has an international background and will understand them better.

“the system of the school was ok but sometimes the organisation is a bit faulty in that sometimes you don't get information like it is- maybe if you go to- some people do not have information as it is”
 (Gladys)

“so they have knowledge- adequate knowledge of what is required so that they can be source of information to the student”
 (Gladys)

“they ADMIN as well- I don't need to mention and am saying in terms of communication wise- you know- sometimes you go there- this one will say one thing- the other one will say another thing”

(Julie)

Also, participants feel that pregnant international students are maltreated. There are no risk assessments carried out for pregnant students by the University authority apart from the checklist, which is more of rules and regulation. Another participant commended the effort and the support received from the university despite her disability because she could achieve her long-term dream of an undergraduate degree.

"I saw no form of support- I even- when I gave birth I reported to school two week. Not even calls- are you alright"

(Jane)

"I saw no support- no form of support- I can remember- I came and I told my classmate- honestly this- they just read terms and condition for me- we don't want your baby in school- you cannot breastfeed in the school- you cannot come near the school premises with your baby- you can only use the lift until when"

(Jane)

"you are going to think of how you are going to live...child care... going to work and putting everything together with the education it's a its just hard"

(Brigitta)

"here there is lot support of support...people support you at school everyone and you can get to achieve anything you want no matter your disabled you are not-so the education here I think it is good I enjoyed it"

(Brigitta)

"...maybe the University can have some information on 'Youtube' the thing to send their students so that they know what to expect in London or in UK as a whole when they are coming for their education"

(Brigitta)

Some of the students struggled to get time off work to attend lectures which caused a conflict of interest. Those with children and families find it difficult to fulfil both roles because it is different from Nigeria, where one's neighbour can assist them in looking after their child.

"child care is very- is a crucial subject- its not something we- that comes by readily like back home- so I think they need support- it scares people. I can remember when my classmates were saying oh you won't get pregnant- I said in this school- I want to finish in one piece- let me come back from the one I just gone through"

(Jane)

"merging my workload and the assignment because of my job and it was very very tough for me so at some stage I have to decide which one I want to focus on and unfortunately I focused on the job than the assignment then that why am here again"

(Ola)

The students find it strange when the lecturers in the UK ask them to book an appointment before they can see the lecturers because they are not familiar with such a system. Below is a comment from one of the participants

"where I come from- we are not used to this appointment issue- that was one of my greatest challenge- when you want to meet a lecturer to get some support- when you come to the door- they say you don't have appointment ((General laughs))- that alone will bring my mind down- just disappear- so they should know that where we are coming from- we are not used to that- they should just accommodate us initially before we got used to it"

(Vicky)

E) Immigration- thick red tug of war

The participants used the metaphor of 'Thick red tug of war' to illustrate their immigration issues. The school immigration officer does not have current and enough knowledge to deal with the student's immigration issues.

"Then the university as a whole- I think my own opinion- I don't know- but I think like they should do more about immigration- things like if they are going to transit from like tier 4 to tier 2- they should put things in place"

(Gladys)

"then the problem started- with the immigration issue- the thick red- that's the immigration issue- it was a tug of war but at the end of the day- God see me through"

(Julie)

"they need to take them through that course- maybe its course or something- they should take them through- so they have knowledge- adequate knowledge of what is required so that they can be source of information to the student"

(Gladys)

F) Accommodation

Accommodation in London is very costly, and the university doesn't support the new students. Most of the participants have the notion of cultural attachment because realising that the programme manager for the undergraduate nursing programme is from Nigeria significantly impacts their choice of coming to the university in London to complete the course. There is also a feeling of belongingness due to the availability of Nigerian lecturers on the programme.

"many challenges when I came- 1 – accommodation. The house am staying is not favourable"

(Jane)

"If they don't want to provide the accommodation- they can have a link- like say some universities- they are not the one that accommodation students but they have a link with (...) whereby when you come- they have- you don't have family- they have a link- they ask you to go and check the place if it is conducive for you"

(Julie)

5. Discussions

The aim of the research was to explore sociocultural perspectives which impacted on self-reported transitions to UK HEI's by Nigerian students. Within the context of UK HEI's Nigerian students bring with them the sociocultural factor which have impacted their formative educational experiences to date. These sociocultural aspects of their learning are then transferred into their subsequent learning and teaching experiences within the UK.

The most salient of the findings from the results is the perception of fear of teaching staff experienced by the Nigerian students. This experience is further complicated by evident cross-cultural issues within Nigerian curricula, which is a direct contributor to a cultural clash between the two contexts of learning (Makama, 2013). Team building Portal (2018) reported that factors such as communication, language and expression, dominating influences, and motivators in recognising diversity in students by the lecturers all have the potential to contribute to the perception of cross-cultural issues. In turn this leads to a culture of fear in Nigerian Nurse education. The ambiguity of curricula and their articulation cause uncertainties in their interpretation and understanding (Dolamo and Olubiyi, 2013). Lack of IT facilities leading to under-

equipped classrooms impact student transitions ([Emelonye et al., 2016](#)). [Atakro et al. \(2019\)](#) assert that student nurses who should be supervised in the performance of some procedures are often left unsupervised in carrying out such activities making the Nigerian nursing students feel isolated most of the time.

[UKCISA \(2016\)](#) asserted that British weather's harshness, greyness and dampness can make international students feel uncomfortable in their new surroundings. These findings were supported by the previous research of [Sovic \(2008\)](#), which was one of the first to raise the issue that British weather is hard to adjust to. Furthermore, [Bournemouth University \(2022\)](#) asserted that British weather can make someone to be depressed and become low in mood. [Brown \(2008\); Yale \(2017\)](#) associated cultural shock with the stress of new academic demands in conjunction with other factors and independent variables such as homesickness, disorientation, social isolation and low self-esteem. [Yale \(2017\)](#) further suggested that student advisors should understand the students culture and individual characteristics that influences students cultural shocks in other to advise them appropriately. Within the [QAA \(2011\)](#) and [DfENI et al. \(2017\)](#), guides about recommended 'students contact hours' it was highlighted students needed to be responsible for their learning. Part of this entailed classifying contact hours as any form of contact with the lecturers, including lectures, seminars, tutorials, supervisions, demonstrations, practical classes, fieldwork, external visits and work-based learning. Nigerian participants perceived the contact hours in theirs HEIs to be inadequate during the time of transition. [Zenger \(2018\)](#) postulated that most women underestimate their performance and abilities compared to men, which impacts their confidence. In the perspective of some Nigerian women, most of them still fall into the 'submissive' category partly due to cultural and religious beliefs and indoctrination.

The university did not assist the students with links to reliable housing associations or groups in London or even liaise with any other Universities nearby for accommodation, even if it is for a short period until the students settle down. [Birchard \(2018\)](#) encouraged the universities to take a lead role in liaison with other stakeholders about housing issues because it has been confirmed that accommodation problems link with academic performance and mental health problems among international students. [Hong et al. \(2013\)](#) postulated that people are attracted to others from their own culture, therefore, this creates an emotional tie with the 'programme manager' who is one of the researcher. This attracted many to the programme and the University because of someone they can relate to. The later gives the student's a sense of belongingness and mental security, thereby providing a 'safe Haven' for the individual. Consequently, this lead to a strong and secure tie tagged 'attachment' ([Yap et al., 2019](#)).

The survey conducted by NUS on Race for Equality from 2009 to 2011 on the experience of black students in HE, revealed that black students feel unwelcome in the classroom. Further discussion suggested that there is a need to deal with the issues of racism that still exists on our campuses regardless of the origin of students. All Black students need to study in an inclusive environment ([NUS, 2017](#)), devoid of racism, isolation and hostility. Black students should be included in policy-making, especially equality and diversity. The [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(2019\)](#) evidenced widespread racial harassment on university campuses.

The sociocultural factors impact the student's adaption to the UK educational system in various ways, which ultimately affects the length/duration of their transition period. The length of transition to the UK higher Education varied among the individual participants from four to six month for a year programme. Therefore, [Thom \(2011\); Hassel and Ridout \(2018\)](#) argued that the students have very little time to adapt to the different demands and requirements for the transition. Finally, [Bell \(2016\)](#) postulated some factors that impact transition, include problems in accessing the lecturers and teacher-student power relationships, gap in communication, timely support, and engagement with other students if they come from different backgrounds, including age gap and previous

educational experience.

5.1. Implication for nursing education

The implication for nursing education will be discussed around the knowledge users, teachers, future international Nigerian students, and school administrators/leadership.

5.2. Nurse education

The implication could clearly be delineated into two clear strands, for action at University level.

Pre-Arrival to the country - The universities should produce videos of the international students life in the UK including accommodation, transportation, weather and students expectations.

Academic expectation- Maintain a good period of course duration depending on the programme. Space assignment/essay/exam submission dates to reduce cramping them together. The students should be given the opportunity of formative essay with one to one feedback where possible to prepare them for UK education.

Academic staff preparation – Most staff are not interculturally competent and does not have the experience of teaching multi-cultural group. Therefore, staff need support in accommodating students that critical thinking and independent learning is not part of their background back home.

Decolonisation of the curriculum – The university need to ensure that each module are decolonised and inclusive to reflect multicultural state of our society. The diverse range of our students should be reflected in our curriculum.

Programme design – International students and staff should be involved in curriculum development and assessment design for our programmes and modules to accentuate representation.

University policy – Staff that are culturally competent should be included in policy development and university policies should be subject to equality impact assessment. Black students should be included in policy-making, especially equality and diversity. . **Role models** – international students will benefit from role models among the staff and senior students who could serve as buddies.

Students buddy – Wherever possible, there should allocation of voluntary buddies for the new students at their initial days at the university.

Assessment strategies - Enveloping different but equal assessment questions for different groups/cohorts to reduce plagiarism and Turnitin similarities, with markers aligning their marking processes to the liminal level of the students' work across the programme's levels. Introduction of multiple assessment strategies to suit various learners, thereby decolonising assessments. New academic teaching personnel ought to be subject to the University dissertation training strategy to enable common ground for all lecturers, to ensure consistency in supervisory capacity across the module.

International transition framework – Each university should develop an international transition framework from sets of available data or new generated data to inform policy.

5.3. Nigerian students studying in the UK

The implication of the study to Nigerian students studying in the UK can be clearly identified.

Personalized Induction – Induction should be tailored to meet the need of international students and same should be offered at different times in the year.

Empathy - The lecturers ought to be more empathetic in terms of interpersonal relationships with students.

Lecturer guidance - Support from lecturers in guiding students' knowledge,

Peer mentorship - The introduction of mentorship, peer

observations, and one-to-one sessions for the lecturers to improve the lecturer's performance,

Student peer support – There should be peer support programme for all international students where constructive criticism are undoubtedly necessary, but this should not become a perceptibly threatening exercise for students.

Recruitment of staff with same experience – To ease international students' transitions into new contexts and settings, universities should also consider increasing recruitment of staff, who have authentically experienced similar transition themselves. Also, the universities should recruit more lecturers from a minority background who transition from other countries to the UK.

By ensuring some representation of lecturing staff from countries other than those represented by the UK, a more authentic approach can be given to the process of student transitions. This will ease the transition for students to co-construct knowledge with people they can empathise with rather than sympathise with their position and **Contact hours** - Increase the contact hours with students - student's self-directed learning hours need to be reduced. This could help Nigerian international students transition far more easily into the current infrastructures within which they are expected to adjust.

Health and wellbeing support - Improved equality among lecturers regardless of who they are, optimal support for pregnant women, multicultural/decolonised curriculum and involvement of BAME students in policy development. There should be adequate support for international students in relation to home office guidelines.

Student support services - Dedicated university student liaison officer with good multicultural and international experience should be employed by universities to ease Nigerian students' transitions from a sociocultural perspective in addition to tailored academic support.

The above will increase the knowledge contributed by this study to ensure a smooth transition and academic successes of incoming Nigerian students and probably other internationals coming from highly contrasting cultures/values and educational systems.

5.4. Implication for further research

There is a need for further research in developing International Transition Framework (ITF) for international students from different countries, including Nigerian students to ease their journey in the UK educational system. Also, there is a need for research on the inclusivity of international students and people with a disability regarding the decolonisation versus internationalisation of the curriculum.

6. Conclusion

The use of LEGO® Serious Play® enabled co-construction of knowledge with the students to ease their transition to the UK educational system. Small purposive sample was used to reveal that students previous experience have influence on their current pedagogy. Some of the perceived sociological factors that impede students learning in the UK HEIs include the transfer of the students fear from Nigeria to the UK Higher Education, weather, cultural shock and the impact of university administration services. Culture and women's self-esteem, immigration-'thick red tug of war'; which is a metaphorical statement by the participants to represent the problems faced about immigration issues, accommodation, supportive family, financial issues, cultural attachment theory are also some of the important factors that potentially impact upon their successful transition. Other factors include climbing the ladder to transition, completing assignments on the computer, family responsibilities and commitment, compressed assignment timelines as a consequence of bridging module. Also, the gap between taught and self-directed learning/independent learning, repetition of assignment questions and UK practice focused assessments, racism for being black, mode of dressing in the UK and own barriers to learning.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Benjamin O. Ajibade

CRediT roles: Data curation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Project administration; Resources; Software; Validation; Roles/Writing - original draft; Writing - review & editing.

Catherine Hayes

CRediT roles: Supervision; Conceptualization; Visualization; Validation; Review & editing.

Both authors contributed to the conception and design of the study, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data, (2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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