

Erasmus
Mundus

**Experiences of living abroad: A study of Ugandan, Kenyan and Tanzanian
international students in Stavanger- Norway.**

Focus on Feelings, Challenges, and Coping mechanisms.

By: Akoth Agnes.

Erasmus Mundus Master's Program in Social Work with Families and Children.

Supervisor: Richard Piech.

University of Stavanger, 15th June 2020.

Number of words: 21,313.



ABSTRACT

Title. Experiences of living abroad: A study of Ugandan, Kenyan, and Tanzanian international students in Stavanger- Norway. Focus on Feelings, Challenges, and Coping mechanisms.

Author: Akoth Agnes.

Supervisor: Richard Piech.

Keywords: International students, feelings, difficulties, coping mechanisms, Stavanger.

With the increasing inflow of student migrants worldwide, there is a need for continuous documentation of students' experiences as they live in the new environments. Therefore, this study explored the experiences of seven international students from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania living in Stavanger. The Focus was on how they felt living abroad, challenges they faced, and how they coped with the difficulties in Stavanger. Constructivist grounded theory, in-depth interview, purposive and snowball sampling, and thematic analysis were employed to actualize the study.

Findings showed that participants felt a sense of achievement and excitement before traveling abroad. However, upon arrival and living in Stavanger, they encountered social, cultural, financial, and emotional challenges that negatively transformed some of them into incompetent, unsocial, and unconfident persons. They felt socially excluded from activities, which made them not to realize full integration into Stavanger. Regardless, participants employed coping mechanisms that positively transformed them into independent and self-controlled individuals. Individual openness and optimism, engagement in games and sports, supportive friends, host institutions, host and home families, and Stavanger international community were reported as coping mechanisms for emotional, financial, and social support.

In conclusion, the study developed a two-phased process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants. The first phase involved encountering difficulties and seeking familiar support systems, and the second phase involved adaptation and independence. In recommendation, there is a need to provide accessible statistics about international students in Stavanger. Ugandan, Kenyan, and Tanzanian policymakers need to facilitate the development of Information, Communication, and technology to enable effective communication between international students and their families. Host institutions and social workers have to play a lead role in ensuring the integration of international students through education and advocacy. Also, international students have to take an active role in integrating themselves into the host communities.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

PASU: Pan African Student's Association.

ICT: Information, Communication and Technology.

Ibid: In the same place as previous reference or citation.

UK: United Kingdom.

DIKU: Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education.

COVID 19: Corona Virus 2019.

US: United States.

LIST OF TABLES.

Table 1: Showing demographics of the international students that participated in the study.

Table 2: Showing the five themes that were developed from the collected data.

LIST OF FIGURES.

Figure 1: Diagram showing the theme: positive feelings before travelling.

Figure 2: Diagram showing the visual impression for the theme: communication with people at home.

Figure 3: Diagram showing the development of the theme: Vulnerability and social exclusion.

Figure 4: Diagram showing the development of the theme: Adaptation.

Figure 5: Diagram showing the development of the theme: individual transformation.

Figure 6: Diagram presenting a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	3
1.3 Research topic, Aims, and Research Questions.....	4
1.4 Significance of the study.....	4
1.5 Connection to the study program.....	4
1.6 Scope of the study.....	4
1.7 Contextual background information.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.0 Introduction.....	7
2.1 Understanding the key concepts.....	7
2.1.1 Who are International students?.....	7
2.1.2 What is a Feeling?.....	8
2.1.3 What is a coping mechanism?.....	8
2.2 Current trends and motivation of education migration.....	8
2.2.1 Trends and policies.....	8
2.2.2 General Motivation for student mobility.....	9
2.3 Experiences of living abroad.....	9
2.3.1 Feelings associated with living abroad.....	9
2.3.2 Understanding the general difficulties faced by international students.....	10
2.3.3 Coping strategies used by international students in the host countries.....	12
2.4 Summary of the gaps in the literature and justification for the current study.....	13
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	15
3.0 Introduction.....	15
3.1 Philosophical Assumptions.....	15
3.2 Research Design.....	15
3.3 Interpretive framework.....	16
3.4 Sampling size and procedure.....	16
3.5 Methods of data collection.....	17
3.6 Data Analysis Method.....	18

3.7 Principles used for study validity.....	20
3.8 Ethical considerations.	20
3.9 Limitations to the study.	21
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	22
4.0 Introduction.....	22
4.1 Presentation of the themes.	22
4.1.1 Positive feelings before traveling abroad.....	22
4.1.2 Communication with people at home in their different countries of origin.....	23
4.1.3 Vulnerability and social exclusion.....	25
4.1.4 Adaptation.....	29
4.1.5 Individual transformation.....	35
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF A PROCESS MODEL.....	37
5.0 Introduction.....	37
5.1 Discussion of the findings.....	37
5.1.1 How have participants experienced communicating with people at home while living in Stavanger?.....	37
5.1.2 What difficulties have participants faced while living in Stavanger?.....	38
5.1.3 How have participants transformed after experiencing difficulties discussed above?.....	40
5.1.4 How did participants cope with difficulties while living in Stavanger?	40
5.2 Presentation of a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants.....	42
5.2.1 The flow of a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants.....	44
5.2.2 Coping and adaptation following the presented model.....	45
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCHER’S POSITION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	47
6.1 Conclusion.	47
6.2 Reflection on the position of the researcher within the study.....	48
6.3 Policy and practical recommendations.	48
6.4 Areas for further research.	49
REFERENCE LIST	50
APPENDICES	57
Appendix 1: Participant Consent Form.....	57
Appendix 2: Interview Guide.....	60
Appendix 3: Non-plagiarism Declaration.....	61
Appendix 4: Ethical approval from NSD.....	62

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

I thank God for the beautiful and special life He blessed me with. He has brought me his far, guided, protected, and favoured me among the very many people in this world. He lit my path and here I am enjoying the fruits of my labour.

I appreciate University of Stavanger for accepting me to conduct my research and providing me an opportunity to interact with the diverse Norwegian community. I thank my supervisor, Mr. Richard Piech for the support and guidance toward accomplishment of my dissertation. I thank all the programme co-ordinators; Prof. Elisabeth Enoksen, Dr. Justus Twesigye, Prof. Evelyn Khoo and Prof. Dr. Maria das Dores Guerreiro for all your support during the master's Program. I thank the European Union for facilitating my master's study in Europe.

I thank all the study participants for your time and participation in my study. Your support is surely very appreciated.

I also appreciate my family members; my father Mr. Ochwo John Martin; my mother Mrs. Awora Josephine Ochwo; my Sisters: Adikini Jane Frances, Auma Hellen, Akech Ritah and my brother Othieno Emmanuel for the endless support you all provided me during the difficult times of my thesis writing. Lastly, I appreciate my fiancé Mr. Omolo Francis for your endless emotional support, love and kindness during my whole master's studies. Thank you for always looking out for me.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.0 Introduction.

Student migration cannot be isolated from the global migration trends because of its unique contribution to host countries' academic, economic, cultural, and social aspects. This is why the current study focused on exploring international students' experiences while they lived abroad. This study presented experiences of Ugandan, Kenyan, and Tanzanian international students living in Stavanger. It focused on their feelings, challenges, and coping mechanisms, to contribute more information in these areas and develop a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustments among the participants.

The whole report is presented in chapters including; chapter one: introduction and problem statement; chapter two: literature review; chapter three: methodology; chapter four: study results; chapter five: discussion and presentation of a process model, and chapter six: conclusions, reflection on researchers position and recommendations.

1.1 Background.

Human movement across national borders has been a centre for attention and has witnessed increased growth in recent years. This is because of the continued globalization and improved technology that has eased access to information about opportunities beyond national borders. Globally, it is estimated that about two hundred seventy-two million people are international migrants residing in a country other than their birth countries as of 2019 compared to one hundred fifty-three million in 1990. It shows an increase of one hundred nineteen million international migrants residing in other nations (International Organization for Migration, 2019).

Work is the main reason for international migration, and therefore, migrant workers constitute the highest number of international migrants. This is represented by one hundred sixty-four million worldwide, most of whom live in high income nations (ibid). As of 2018, there were about fifty-two thousand immigrants in Norway compared to a total of eighteen thousand in 2017, showing a significant increase in the number of people entering Norway. Most of these immigrants are from Poland, Syria, Lithuania, India, Sweden, Philippines, Germany, Denmark, United Kingdom, Spain, and Romania (Statistics Norway, 2019).

Migration and education are related as many people move abroad for study purposes, while others use schooling overseas to become migrants in specific host countries. Therefore, education is recently a contributing factor to the increase in the number of people moving across national borders globally (Tani, 2017). Though students are a small group of foreign migrants, they make significant contributions to the host countries. International students contribute to economic growth, scientific research, carry cultural views to lecture rooms, and build bridges for international relationships. For example, in the United States, international students contributed forty-five billion dollars in 2018, according to the United States Department of Commerce (Institute of International Education, 2020).

Evidence shows that students have increased their movement to study abroad (International Organization for Migration, 2018). As of 2017, international students were estimated to be around five million worldwide compared to two million in 2000. This difference indicated an increase of three million students that crossed their national borders for studies abroad. Among these, more than half were enrolled for education in Australia, France, the United States of

America, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Countries that are prominent for sending international students included; South Korea, China, Saudi Arabia, India, Nigeria, central Asian countries, France, and Germany (UNESCO, 2019). The increase in international students' migration can be explained by the rise in the populations taking higher education and cross border mobility. In addition, technological advancements have eased access to information about opportunities abroad and higher education has become a global product for institutions around the World (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019).

Europe in 2017 hosted around nine hundred seventy-eight thousand international students compared to nine hundred nineteen thousand students in 2015, which shows an increase of fifty-nine thousand international students that moved to Europe for study purposes. Together, North America and Western Europe hosted about seven hundred forty-six thousand international students in 2017 compared to six hundred ninety-three thousand in 2015. This difference indicated an increase of fifty-three thousand students that moved to study in North America and western Europe (UNESCO, 2019).

Institutional proximity plays a vital role in student mobility in Europe. It is evidenced by the high rates of mobility among European Union countries. The high mobility among European Union countries is facilitated by policies of free movements, the existence of exchange programs, and support for student mobility through scholarships. For example, the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students facilitates international studies in higher education (Tremblay, 2002; Wiers-Jenssen, 2019).

The East African Community Treaty 1999 under chapter seventeen allows free movement of persons, labor, services, right of establishment and residence among its citizens across the national borders (East African Community, 1999). Independent East African countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania have diplomatic relationships with the different countries their students move for studies. For example, Uganda has diplomatic relations with China, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the United States (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). These further increase the movement of students beyond the East African Community borders.

Worldwide, Norway is ranked among the most expensive countries to live in and the first northern European country with a very high cost of living (NUMBEO, 2020a). Despite its expensive nature, Norway attracts more international students every year. Its attraction to students is attributed to the conducive national higher education policies, English-taught programs, and active partnership with higher education institutions abroad. Also, tuition fees are not charged on state-owned universities and colleges in Norway, which becomes a comparative advantage to most international students entering Norway (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019).

Norway hosted around seventeen thousand international students in 2017 compared to other Nordic countries; Sweden that hosted about sixteen thousand students, Finland hosted ten thousand, Denmark hosted five thousand students, and Iceland hosted two thousand students in 2017 (UNESCO, 2019). Compared to the total national population, Iceland leads among the Nordic countries that host international students, followed by Norway, then Finland, Sweden, and Denmark (World Population Review, 2020b). Therefore, it shows that Norway hosted more international students than the other Nordic countries apart from Iceland in 2017.

Life abroad presents a natural learning process, involving interaction between individuals and the new environment. An identity of strangers and "otherness" are shared among all kinds of migrants within the host country. This puts individuals in a situation where they have to adapt and adjust to maximize life opportunities in the new communities (Murphy-Lejeune, 2003; Ruddock & Turner, 2007). Living in another country attracts both positive and negative feelings among students. As some international students expressed feelings of fear, unsafety,

and loneliness, others experienced feelings of fulfilment, cultural adjustment, and happiness in their engagement with the new environment (Almurideef, 2016; Sawir et al. 2008).

Living in another country presented international students with both positive and negative consequences. For example, in one comparative study, while some international students suffered psychological distress, homesickness and their general wellbeing remained low at the time of living abroad. In contrast, others succeeded in attaining cross-cultural adjustments abroad (Bryram & Feng, 2006). The study revealed that international students use the purpose of studying to live abroad and most studies have not entirely focused on the aspect of living abroad among international students (ibid.). This calls for further studies that focus on the issues of living abroad among international students.

1.2 Problem Statement.

According to existing research, language barrier ranks highly among the difficulties that international students face in their host countries. In supplement to cultural differences, perceived discrimination, social isolation, and homesickness that may challenge their adaptation in the host countries (Kuo, 2011; Lee & Opio, 2011; Ma, 2017; Russell, Rosenthal, & Thomson, 2010; Trice, 2003).

International students are prone to feel isolated in the host country because of cultural differences and language difficulties, which makes assimilation into the host community difficult, mostly when out of their study institutions (Sato & Hodge, 2009). As a result, there is limited integration and socialization between the students and the host community. A study about international students from Africa, Europe, Asia in Norway reported that both bachelor's and master's international students felt lonely and homesick while they lived in Norway (Diku, 2019).

International students must adjust to the practices, cultures, pressures, and demands of the host country on arrival. These adjustments determine how they build social networks and support systems during their stay abroad (Chen & Chen, 2009). International students at Usak University reported that feeling safe and communicating with counselling services are ways that social adjustments can be facilitated among them (Gündüz & Alakbarov, 2019).

According to Sanchez (2007), participants studied reported that teachers, schools, and peers had limited knowledge about their experiences as students that moved across borders for studies. Therefore, calling for more studies about international students. Brooks and Waters (2010) reported that there is still relatively insufficient research on the experiences of students who move abroad for their higher education. Global Migration Data Portal (2020) further notes that studies on international students have focused more on the push and pull factors that motivate students to move abroad. Therefore, calling for broader research on other aspects affecting international student's life other than the push and pull factors.

Diku (2019) focused its study on international students from different continents, thereby, creating space for research on a smaller group of international students from different specific countries within Africa living in Norway. Additionally, most of the studies about international students have been conducted in the United States because of the higher intake of immigrant students and the English language spoken, which students find easy to learn (Global Migration Data Portal, 2020). This further calls for more studies about international students living in other countries other than the United States.

Therefore, this background and problem statement provided motivation for further research on international students' experiences, which is the focus of this study.

1.3 Research topic, Aims, and Research Questions.

Study Topic. Experiences of living abroad: A study of Ugandan, Kenyan, and Tanzanian international students in Stavanger- Norway.

The study aimed at:

1. Contributing additional information about the feelings associated with living abroad, challenges faced, and mechanisms used to cope.
2. Developing a process model on socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among international students from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania living in Stavanger.

Overall study goal: To contribute to the wellbeing of international students living in Stavanger. By providing the necessary information about their experiences to policymakers, responsible institutions, and international students themselves.

Research Questions

1. What are the feelings associated with living abroad among international students?
2. What challenges are faced by international students while living abroad?
3. How do international students cope with the challenges faced while living abroad?

1.4 Significance of the study.

This study contributes additional information about international students' experiences while living in Stavanger. Policymakers and academic institutions may benefit from this information since it articulates the challenges international students face that can be used to improve their wellbeing. Additionally, this study articulates practical ways to support international students during their transnational experiences abroad through the coping mechanisms documented in chapter four; policymakers can strengthen these coping mechanisms to improve international student's wellbeing in Stavanger. In return, international student's wellbeing can be enhanced, academic performance improved, and international relations of the host institutions and international students' countries of origin boosted.

1.5 Connection to the study program.

This study is related to transnational social work practice dealing with transnational experiences, social connections across national borders, migration, immigration, and intercultural adjustments that affect both families and children (Boccagni, Righard & Bolzman, 2015). Secondly, it is related to social cohesion and integration within families and communities in a cultural humility way in the host and origin communities (Ortega & Faller, 2011). These contribute directly to both social work as a multi-disciplinary profession and social work with families and children since international students are part of a family. Therefore, by documenting their experiences, this report provides more information about international students' voices to the policymakers, which can be used to improve family functioning among international students' families.

1.6 Scope of the study.

This study is limited to international students from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania living in Stavanger during their study time. In terms of content, this study is limited to exploring international student's experiences in living abroad in terms of their feelings, challenges, and coping strategies. The study was conducted within five months from February to June 2020 within Stavanger.

International students have been selected for the study because they are a small number among immigrants worldwide (International Organization for Migration, 2018). Stavanger is chosen for the study because of its unique and expensive nature. It is ranked first within northern Europe as a city with the highest cost of living (NUMBEO, 2020b), yet students still find their way to the country for studies. Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania have been selected because they hold the least numbers of international students in Norway. In 2017, fifty-nine students studied in Norway from Uganda, sixty-eight from Kenya, and sixty-one from Tanzania (UNESCO, 2020). Therefore, this made it captivating to study and gather their unique experiences of living abroad.

1.7 Contextual background information.

Norway

Norway is in Northern Europe on the northern and western parts of the Scandinavian Peninsula, with a total population of around five million people. Oslo is its capital city. Norway is bordered by Sweden, Russia, Finland, among others. Bokmal Norwegian and Nynorsk Norwegian are the official languages in Norway, and some people use Sami and Finnish language (Statistics Norway, 2020; Christensen et al. 2020; NUMBEO, 2020). Norway ranks highest among the countries with high education systems (The New Jersey Minority Educational Development organization, 2019) that makes it attractive to several people.

Stavanger is the fourth largest city in Norway, with about one hundred twenty-one thousand inhabitants under Rogaland county. Well known for oil production and industry, Stavanger is located on the Stavanger Peninsula in southwest Norway. It ranks first among the most expensive cities in northern Europe (Statistics Norway, 2020; World Population Review, 2019).

Tanzania

The Republic of Tanzania is in the Eastern part of Africa, and it is the largest country in East Africa. It is bordered by Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo in the west; Uganda and Kenya in the north; Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique in the south and the Indian Ocean in the east. Dodoma is the capital city of the country with Dar es Salaam as a leading commercial city. The Tanzanian shilling is the official currency and Kiswahili as the national language though English is as well extensively practiced. As of 2018, Tanzania has a total population of fifty-four million people (Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The country consists of more than 120 ethnic groups, meaning that there are more than 120 languages spoken (African facts, 2020).

Uganda

The Republic of Uganda gained its independence from the British in 1962 but maintained its Commonwealth membership. It is located in East Africa with a population of about forty-five million people as of 2019 (World Population Review, 2020c). Kampala is its capital city with other big cities like Mbarara, Mbale, Jinja, among others. Its currency is Uganda shillings. The country is bordered by Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, South Sudan. It is a home of different ethnic groups, all exhibiting beautiful ways of life, and English is the official language of Uganda. However, Kiswahili and Luganda are widely used as well (Uganda Tourism Board, 2020).

Uganda, 'The pearl of Africa' has a tropical climate. The temperature range 16°C in the south-west highland to 25°C in the north-west and the northern and eastern part of Uganda, the temperature exceeds 30°C. The greater part of Uganda is a plateau, in the western parts settles

the Rwenzori mountains and the rift valley, the eastern part is blessed with mount Elgon and the country is home to a variety of wildlife like Gorillas, elephants, and birds, among others (ibid).

The Republic of Kenya.

It is located in East Africa bordered by the Indian Ocean, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. As of 2020, it has a total population of fifty-three million people. Nairobi is its capital city, and Mombasa follows as the largest city in the country. The country is blessed with a diversity of ethnic groups, embracing different beautiful cultures. Kiswahili is the official language though English is also widely used. Kenyan shillings is the official currency for the country (World Population Review, 2020a). Tea is the main export for the country in addition to other horticultural products. Kenya is well known for its well-preserved game reserves and Mount Kenya that is a source of attraction to many people because of its beautiful scenery (Afrikanza, 2020).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction.

The chapter aims to bring together previous studies about the current topic of research, identifying gaps and justifying the current research. Therefore, this chapter is organized through sections; the first section presents the definitions of key concepts in the study; the second section presented the current trends and motivations for student migration including a) current trends and policies b) motivating factors for studying and living abroad; the third section details the experiences of living abroad including a) feelings associated with living abroad by students, b) difficulties students face while living abroad, c) the coping strategies that other students have used and lastly, the fourth section summarised the gaps from the literature presented that acted as a justification for the current study.

A literature review is an essential aspect of every study as it forms the basis for any study. It provides the historical background to the study, justification for research through identification of the gaps, it enables the researcher to identify writers that are relevant for the study, theories that have been used previously, and topics that have been studied previously (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The use of a variety of sources is recommended compared to using a single source during literature review. These sources enable the researcher to draw a comprehensive review and conclusion about what the previous authors have written about a specific topic of study (McGinn et al. 2016). Several databases were used in this study, ranging from Oria, Scopus, Springer, google scholar, and Eric, among others.

2.1 Understanding the key concepts.

2.1.1 Who are International students?

According to Diku (2019), two Norwegian institutions provide their definitions of an international student. First, the Norwegian HEIs defines international students as all “foreign students, which includes all students of non-Norwegian citizenship” (p.14). Secondly, Statistics Norway provides statistics of foreign degree-seeking students that have enrolled in the Norwegian higher education. They must have moved to Norway within the last five years and completed their secondary training elsewhere (ibid). Therefore, international students are people that have moved from their country of origin to another country for study purposes.

Some communities view international students as an economic investment in the current global world, and they can expand their learning spaces to the local students in the host nations (Li & Bray, 2007). International students’ support the enhancement of the quality of education in Norway. First, the international cooperation that brings about the mobility of international students can be used as a basis for assessing of the quality of education in the Norwegian institutions of higher education. Secondly, international students support the actualization of the internationalization within Norway (Diku, 2019).

International students’ migration is a much broader social phenomenon in the twenty-first century compared to the past (Olwig & Valentin, 2015). These young people hope that investment in the study capital abroad (Munk, Poutvaara & Foged, 2012) can help them stand out in the labor market when they return home or even make way into the labor market abroad (Wilken & Dahlberg, 2017). International students should not be considered merely as students but rather positioned as migrants as well (Brooks, Fuller & Waters, 2012).

2.1.2 What is a Feeling?

A feeling is a personal certainty in the reality of the world, including individual moods, desires, pains, and happiness. It can be passive, or active, positive, or negative (Ruddock & Turner, 2007). A feeling is an individual perception of one's lived experiences in the world. It is what is used to understand, analyse, interpret, and create meaning into the realities around them (Shouse, 2005). It involves the integration of the personal emotions and cognitive experiences that are encountered differently to create a sense of the events around people (Seel, 2011).

Feelings are vital in understanding international students' experiences while living abroad because it is a central determinant of how positively or negatively these students live abroad. Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model 1984 explains how feelings affect how different people react to stressful situations through appraisal and reappraisal by use of either problem or emotional focused approach (Joko, 2017; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Borrowing from this model, when international students experience any difficulty abroad, there is an evaluation within self to whether the situation is worth worrying or not. This inner evaluation of the circumstance is what determines the level of coping among international students living abroad. Therefore, a self-appraisal of difficulties and resources available determine international students' transformation to deal with the challenges they face abroad.

2.1.3 What is a coping mechanism?

Coping is the ability of any individual to deal with a stressful situation (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2020). Lazarus and Folkman 1989 define coping as a process of continuous changes in behavioural and cognitive endeavours to handle both the inner and outer pressures evaluated as greater than individual capabilities. Therefore, a coping mechanism is a skill or character exhibited by a person to facilitate their adaptation to a difficult situation. Individuals can either employ a problem or emotional-focused approach to deal with the difficulties (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Therefore, this study used coping mechanisms to refer to all the measures that international students used to deal with the different difficult situations they faced ranging from individual behavioural changes, economic adjustments, and social adaptation, as seen in chapter four and five of this study.

2.2 Current trends and motivation of education migration.

2.2.1 Trends and policies.

The total number of migrations globally is about two hundred seventy-two million people as of 2019, yet, international students account for nearly twenty-one percent of this total number of people migrating out of their countries (International Organization for Migration, 2019). This shows a proximate of around fifty-seven million students that migrated globally in 2019.

The European Union has encountered an increase in the number of international students previously. In 2017, about four hundred sixty thousand student permits were issued for study purposes within the European Union. The majority of the owners of these student permits found their destinations in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The highest numbers of international students to the European Union are from the United States, China, and India (European Migration Network, 2019). This may be explained by the high population of all these countries. China, India, and the United States are ranked first, second, and third respectively among the world's most populated countries represented by 1 trillion people, 1 trillion and three hundred thirty-one million people respectively (World Population Review 2020). Other international students within the European Union are from South Korea, Morocco, Brazil, and Turkey (European Migration Network, 2019).

Most international students in Norway originate from Europe and Asia with most of them coming from Sweden, Germany, China, and Nepal (Wiers-Jensen, 2003). This as well shows

few international students from East Africa moving to Norway for study purposes. Norway developed a deliberate policy on the internationalization of higher education, which is an essential factor in attracting international students (Diku, 2019).

Norway has policies like public funding for both Norwegians and international students to secure education; therefore, tuition fees are not charged in public institutions. Additionally, there is equal treatment for both international and Norwegian students in the country. Norway offers students loans and scholarships to international students, which attracts international students (Diku, 2020). All these attract international students to want to study in Norway.

2.2.2 General Motivation for student mobility.

The push-pull factors and motivations for studying abroad are crucial in understanding student mobility. Most of the writings about students' motivations to study overseas have used the push-pull model by Altbach (1998) to know why students choose to move to other countries. According to this model, students are pushed by the undesirable circumstances in their home countries and are pulled by incentives like scholarships to host countries (Gbollie & Gong, 2020).

International student mobility is socially embedded, grounded in the networks of both families and friends with some incidences of individualized decisions. Family and kinship relations are important sources of motivation for mobility (Brooks & Waters, 2010), and emotional, social, financial and psychological support for students abroad. Therefore, they are a source of strength and resilience in a foreign country to the students. About sixty-two percent of international students in the United States receive financial assistance from outside the US (Institute of International Education, 2020). This shows that international students continually connect with families at home for support during their studies abroad, which explains the transnational connection and relationship that they must maintain at home.

International students are motivated by the push to maintain their privileged social status in society and the improvement of the position in the community from low class to upper or middle class. This was evident in a study conducted in China, where parents and students viewed studying abroad as a channel for achieving both the academic and economic superiority that is important for social class mobility. Parents and students from Hong Kong and Macau encouraged themselves to move out of China for study purposes. They anticipated that this would result in occupational advantage abroad and quality higher education standards that would enable the students to compete favourably on the job market. Families play a crucial role in motivating students to live abroad as they support their affordability of life abroad and contribute to their psychological stability while living abroad (Li & Bray, 2007).

A study conducted in Thai University reported that the availability of scholarships, word-of-mouth, referrals, and geographical and cultural proximity to a home country are some of the pull factors for student mobility (Snodin, 2019). Electronic-based university websites and human resources influence international students' decisions to study abroad (Huang & Bilal, 2019). For example, information gathered from university websites and social references from parents, friends and professors influenced the decisions of East Asian students to study in Canada. However, the social references were more useful for Indian students while making decisions to study abroad (Chen, 2007; Sahasrabudhe, 2007).

2.3 Experiences of living abroad.

2.3.1 Feelings associated with living abroad.

Some international students experience feelings of vulnerability upon contact with a new environment. This is common among international students living in a country for the first

time. A study among the American Associate degree nursing students studying abroad revealed that international students are faced with the fear of personal safety and language difficulties that caused frustration to the students during their stay abroad. International students expressed that this affects them more because of the inability to communicate appropriately to the native people in the host country (Foronda & Belknap, 2012). Such situations increase students' vulnerability in host countries. A study conducted among students from the USA studying in Mexico reported students' vulnerability pointing out that female students were more vulnerable than male students. They frequently felt helpless, scared, misunderstood, and stereotyped by the local people in the host countries (Marx & Pray, 2011).

International students felt a psychological distance between themselves, their parents, and the rest of the family members during the stay abroad. They may face difficulties in explaining to their parents about their regular life activities through phone calls. International students feel that parents may not understand their situation since they are far away from each other. This made the students to withhold some information and even start to irregularly communicate with family members, that further invoked feelings of guilt among them (Kim & Okazaki, 2014).

International students experience feelings of isolation, loneliness, and homesickness at a personal level (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Sümer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008). A combination of the disconnect with families in their home countries and failure to make appropriate friends in the host contribute to the loneliness. In a study of South Korean students living abroad, several students reported an inability to connect with American born students, being treated as 'strangers' and discriminated within the American community (Kim & Okazaki, 2014).

In another study conducted in Japan, international students reported that they are faced with individual psychological difficulties in the process of living abroad. First-time international students in Japan are prone to feeling lonely and homesick. The homesickness worsened when students failed to learn the language for communication with others in Japan. This group of students expressed missing their home countries and families (Lee, 2017). An Australian study concluded that its studied students had experienced both personal and social loneliness; and isolation during their early months of stay in Australia (Sawir et al. 2008). The lack of familiar friends, family, and language causing difficulty in interaction in the host community may have caused this loneliness (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010).

Because international students come from different cultures, cultural shock is unavoidable to them. These students hold different belief systems and values from the host countries. When they enter into a specific country, they are faced with different ethics, values, communication patterns, ways of life that make them feel uncomfortable (Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2015). For example, international students at the University of Toledo reported feeling that the American community misunderstood their culture in terms of behaviour, dress code, and religious values, therefore, calling for more cultural awareness at the University (Sherry et al. 2010).

2.3.2 Understanding the general difficulties faced by international students.

Language barriers rank highly among international students' challenges (Iwara, Kativhu, & Obadire, 2017; Domville-Roach, 2007). International students face difficulties with language mastery in host countries mostly if they do not speak their native language. This adds both academic and social challenges to international students (Kaya, 2020; Banjong, 2015). Sherry et al. (2010) emphasised that students are more challenged with the spoken language than the written ones in their host communities. Most of the host study institutions teach international students the native language, yet language speech requires more than being in class. International students in America reported that American English was a problem for them even

though they had already learned English from their home countries. These language-related challenges are explained by differences in accent, speed of speech and pronunciation of a specific language (Wu et al. 2015).

By implication, there is a sense of non-socialization among international students because they cannot speak appropriately to friends in their community where they live. Some of the students reported feeling the sense of not belonging in the host community in a study conducted in the US (Kaya, 2020). In addition, a study conducted in Japan reported that international students faced difficulties in interacting and socializing in both English and Japanese with their friends and the rest of the community due to the lack of language competence. This created a sense of “disappointments, embarrassment, and boredom” in the process of interaction with other people in Japan (Lee, 2017).

International students express their frustration with the pressure from professors to fulfil the academic requirements. Student’s quoted in one of the studies that in a single assignment, professors expected them to produce 20 pages of researched work. In addition to this, they had continuous group assignments, individual presentations, and discussions every week. Furthermore, there was a list of reading literature that they found difficult to read every single day. By implication, these students reported frustration, “physical, emotional, mental and psychological exhaustion” P. 133 from all the workload from school. This affected students’ social life as many of them failed to create time to socialize out of the university settings, making living abroad more difficult and complicated (Kaya, 2020).

Private or self-funding international students face financial difficulties explained by unstable financial support. This makes some students to search for part-time jobs to be able to support themselves. As a result, the time for immersion into the community culture and interaction with friends is reduced, making some students lonely (Lee, 2017). This financial difficulty can be explained by the fact that international students are expected to pay higher tuition fees than domestic students. The school fees are affected by the exchange rates, which may end up increasing the amount of money students have to pay (Gao, 2008). About fifty-eight percent of the international students at the University of Toledo in the US reported facing financial challenges because their assistance was not enough to meet all their needs. For example, health insurance is very costly for the students in the US, which made them recommend that universities should have more scholarships for students (Sherry et al. 2010).

Scholars have highlighted challenges concerning racial discrimination and stereotyping of international students mostly in the United States of America, Japan, and South Africa (Lee, 2017; Iwara et al. 2017). A study of international students in Japan reported racial discrimination and stereotyping from the host community, mostly in employment where there was a preference for the western people to work in Japanese companies (Lee, 2017). Another study conducted among international students from Europe, Africa, and Asia studying in the University of Venda and Zululand in South Africa reported some percentage of discrimination of international students living in South Africa. International students in these universities were maltreated based on their language and lifestyle of their countries of origin (Iwara et al. 2017). Furthermore, international students studied in the US noted prejudice and discrimination throughout their school and social life while in the country. This group of students felt marginalized and left out in most of the social activities involving students. They felt that the American peers misunderstood their originality and, therefore, developed a meaningless conclusion about them (Wu et al. 2015).

All these difficulties posed challenges on international students' integration into the host societies. These make their socialization very minimal, hindering their realization of their potential in the host countries.

2.3.3 Coping strategies used by international students in the host countries.

International students coping strategies are individual, and most of them are inbuilt. A student teaches him/herself how to deal with the challenge before they can resort to a group of friends and families to solve the difficulties they are facing (Lee, 2017).

Institution resources like university or school resources are essential in supporting international students in adjusting and coping with living abroad. These services may include orientation from the school, school associations services, counselling services, writers' clubs, and recreational services. Students report that these services assist them in overcoming the stress and problems of living and studying abroad. A study conducted in the US, reported that most international students noted that they had used the school library, counsellors, and recreation centres to help them both with academic work but also with the social life activities. These students participated in school activities related to understanding American culture and joined student associations to improve their language proficiency. Through these, students improved their socialization with native American English speakers and their understanding of the country's culture. They shared their background and culture with others such that they are understood as well (Wu et al. 2015).

Some studies expressed that openness and optimism are crucial in overcoming the psychological difficulties students face in host countries (Ellwood, 2011; Lee, 2017). Students are able to express their feelings to their close friends, have conversations, and lunch together. Students reported being positive amidst every stressful situation. They continuously reminded themselves about the benefits of living abroad, which made them not to give up on their studies (Lee, 2017).

Regarding language difficulties, students reported having home conversation groups, supportive speaking partners, and language teaching apps as ways of how they dealt with the language problems. Technological use improved international students' language skills as well (Lee, 2017; Wu et al. 2015). Sherry et al. (2010) reemphasised the use of both the formal teaching methods through formal language training and the informal methods of interaction like universities holding language seminars and get-together for the students to practice their language skills. Banjong (2015) reported that international students that participated in language teaching in their universities improved their language skills.

Having a supportive group in the host country can help international students cope with socio-cultural difficulties. For example, living with a supportive host family is important since it can facilitate the understanding of the culture and way of life in the new country. In addition, engaging in activities with native language speakers and joining exchange programs with a variety of students for interaction and socialization is helpful in coping (Lee, 2017). Sherry et al. (2010) reemphasized the importance of "social support and social connectedness" P.34 in assisting students in coping and adjusting living in a foreign country (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Mesidor & Sly, 2016).

A study conducted in Norway revealed that religion and informal support were important in coping while living abroad. Participants maintained regular contact with people in the Philippines through video calls that enabled them to retain the relationship with relatives and friends at home. This helped them a lot to deal with homesickness and loneliness abroad. This group of participants reported that families in the Philippines were a source of emotional support while living abroad. In addition, creating a close network of the Filipinos in Norway

was an essential factor both in coping and adjusting with living abroad. This community of Filipinos made it easy for them to create friends due to similar experiences. The community facilitated easy interaction because of common language; they cooked and ate collectively, thereby creating a sense of belonging and familiarity that would otherwise be missing (Straiton, Ledesma & Donnelly, 2017). Furthermore, religion was mentioned as key in adjusting to living abroad. Participants reported considering church as a space for creating new friends, holding discussions and getting unconditional assistance when challenged in their families in the Philippines (Straiton et al. 2017; Mesidor & Sly, 2016).

International students in the United States reported receiving less assistance from native US people compared to the significant social, emotional, and practical support received from the other international students living in US, together with families and friends at home. This was explained by the fact that international students look at fellow students as sharing similar experiences. Therefore, these students find it easy to interact with each other compared to the other population. Every country has its style of interacting, some are interdependent on one another like the non-western countries while others are individualistic like western countries like United States (Chavajay, 2013).

In regard to the expensive nature of host countries, some students embarrassed cooking and making food by themselves to avoid unnecessary spending in restaurants for food. Students found this to be very effective and cheaper (Lee, 2017).

2.4 Summary of the gaps in the literature and justification for the current study.

First, Statistically, there are a few international students from the East African countries living in Norway. In 2017, 59 students studied in Norway from Uganda, 68 from Kenya, and 61 from Tanzania. The numbers became smaller when the researcher looked for Ugandan, Kenyan and Tanzanian students (UNESCO, 2020) living in Stavanger city. Due to the insignificant numbers of these students, many researchers that have studied international students in Stavanger have focused on all students in Africa (Diku, 2019) which does not provide an in depth understanding of specific experiences of international students from different countries within Africa. Therefore, studying a small population of international students provides an opportunity to gather detailed information about a few Tanzanian, Kenyan, and Ugandan students living in Stavanger rather than considering them as a whole from Africa.

Secondly, most of the studies about international students have been conducted in the United States (Kaya, 2020; Gebhard, 2013; Almurideef, 2016). This is evidenced by the number of international students entering the United States compared to the other Western Countries (Migration Data Portal, 2020). This may result in less attention given to international students living in other countries, yet these students also have their own stories to tell. Therefore, this calls for extensive and inclusive studies about international students living in different countries other than the United States. With these studies, future researchers, institutions, and policymakers can have inclusive yet comprehensive data and information about international students' experiences abroad that can aid an objective decision making on both welfare and academic programs targeted toward international students.

Thirdly, much of the information about international students' experiences are focused on the academic aspects concerning schools, their professors, and the content of their study (Kaya, 2020; Global Migration Data Portal, 2020; Brooks & Waters, 2010). This leaves out the rest of the time that students spend out of the University settings. Therefore, this calls for a study focused on the social, cultural, and emotional experiences of international students living abroad.

Therefore, the gaps mentioned above motivated the current study that focused on the experiences of international students living in Stavanger. These gaps were filled through documenting international students' perspectives on their feelings, challenges, and coping mechanisms while living in Stavanger and developing a process model for the socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents the methods that were used for the study. It describes the research design, interpretive framework, data collection methods, sampling methods, data analysis methods, principles used, ethical considerations, and study limitations.

The research employed an inductive qualitative study because of its richness in gathering information from participants. It highlights comprehension through carefully exploring/ examining/ assessing what people say and do. It draws patterns of interpretation from the collected set of data, which are demonstrated by respondents' viewpoints (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008).

3.1 Philosophical Assumptions.

The study employed both ontological constructivism and epistemological interpretivism positions. These positions supported the researcher in understanding and exploring how participants created meanings, revised their experiences, and drew conclusions about their social reality (Bryman, 2012; Neuman, 2006).

According to Bryman (2012), Constructionism position considers people as social actors that construct their reality through social interaction. These realities are in continuous revision since contexts and situations keep on changing from time to time. The subject of feelings, challenges, and coping mechanisms are subjective and different from individual to individual, making it worth documenting. Therefore, participants were considered as active social actors within their reality of living in Stavanger, that motivated the use of this position.

Epistemology Interpretivism emphasizes an empathetic understanding of human actions and the socially constructed meanings around it (Neuman, 2006). The researchers' interest in understanding the interpretations and meanings that participants attached to their feelings, challenges, and coping mechanisms during their everyday life in Stavanger motivated the use of this position.

3.2 Research Design.

Generally, grounded theory was used as a research design for this study. It is used to generate theory inductively from the collected data and was first written by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A theory refers to a piece of collective knowledge and description a researcher develops from the collected data that draws meaning from what participants have said (ibid). Concepts, categories, and propositions are the three elements of grounded theory (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). See chapter five for the developed process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants.

Specifically, constructivist grounded theory by Charmz was used to understand participants' experiences using the above methodological choices. It emphasizes the studied phenomenon rather than the methods of studying it. It involves the researcher positioning themselves in the realities during the research, and therefore, there is reflexivity. Under the constructivist grounded theory, it is believed that what researchers see, and hear depends on their earlier interpretive frameworks, biographies, and interests together with study context, researchers' relationships with the studied participants and mode of generating or recording empirical materials (Bryman, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Precisely, the researcher shares in the construction of what is defined as data, and conceptual categories arose through the

researcher's interpretations of data. Therefore, the theoretical analyses are interpretive renderings of reality (Charmaz, 2008).

According to grounded theory, a theory is developed through conducting open coding, axial coding, and finally, selective coding. Open coding involved the researcher reviewing the collected data carefully and developing concepts from them. After this, concepts were gathered into subcategories and categories. Finally, relationships between categories were drawn (Kim & Okazaki, 2014). Axial coding happened when the researcher assembled the categories formed from the open coding into a diagram. Here, the researcher identified the central theme from the data, established causal conditions that influenced the situation, the actions that result from it, and its consequences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Results of open and axial coding are presented in chapter four of this study. And lastly, selective coding was done. This is a level of theoretical integration where all the concepts, categories are revised, comparisons drawn, and finally, a model developed for understanding the data collected (Kim & Okazaki, 2014), as presented in chapter five of this study.

This design was selected because of its appropriateness in assisting the researcher in analysing participants' viewpoints. Its reflexivity is another important point for its selection. The researcher was able to clearly show how her position within the study affected the whole research in chapter six. This design allowed participants viewpoints to be represented and interpreted through the development of a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants in chapter five. Though the model may not be generalized, it can provide some explanations for understanding the participants' experiences in terms of difficulties, feelings, coping mechanisms, and individual transformation.

3.3 Interpretive framework.

Social constructivism was used as an interpretive framework for the study. The researcher looked out for the meaning, understanding, and interpretations of the social realities held by the participants. Therefore, the participants were social actors that provided their views and meanings on how they experienced living in Stavanger. Since participants do not live in isolation, their personal views and interpretations are socially, culturally, historically negotiated and constructed through interaction with their environment. Additionally, the researcher positioned herself within the study, gathered, and analysed the meanings that participants provided for their experiences while living in Stavanger (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was fulfilled through a) the open-ended questions and in-depth interviews with participants b) the development of a process model for understanding the data provided by the participants.

3.4 Sampling size and procedure.

Purposive sampling, a non-probability method was used to select participants (Neuman, 2006). This method enabled the researcher to deliberately choose participants because of the characteristics they have and their relevancy to the study. Participants were selected because of the knowledge and experience they possessed because of living abroad. Additionally, participants' availability and willingness to participate and express their feelings, challenges, and coping mechanisms were of an advantage for the selected method (Bryman, 2012; Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014; Etikan et al. 2016).

A snowball sampling was used to support purposive sampling to locate hard to reach international students living in Stavanger. Considering that there are a few international students from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania living in Stavanger, it was challenging to find these international students to participate in the study. Therefore, three participants were

located through a network of Tanzanians and Kenyans, who had participated in the study interviews (Neuman, 2006).

The study engaged seven participants, including four male and three female international students, to discuss their experiences of living in Stavanger. These participants were masters international students from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, the Eastern part of Africa. They were between 25 to 45 years of age. Five of these students had lived in Stavanger for less than one year and the remaining two students had lived in Stavanger for more than one year, as presented on table one below. These enabled them to provide well-grounded information about their experiences of living in Stavanger, justifying the purposive sampling method used.

Table 1: Showing demographics of the international students that participated in the study.

Participants	Age	Gender	Current education abroad	Country of origin	City of current residence	Period of stay in Stavanger
Participant 1	26	Male	Masters	Uganda	Stavanger	7 months
Participant 2	31	Female	Masters	Kenya	Stavanger	7 months
Participant 3	26	Male	Masters	Tanzania	Stavanger	1 year & 7 months
Participant 4	25	Female	Masters	Uganda	Stavanger	5 months
Participant 5	31	Male	Masters	Tanzania	Stavanger	8 months
Participant 6	26	Male	Masters	Uganda	Stavanger	5 months
Participant 7	25	Female	Masters	Kenya	Stavanger	1 year

3.5 Methods of data collection.

An individual in-depth semi-structured interview was used to gather information from participants. The most important aspect of this method is concerned with conveying the attitude that participants' views are valuable and useful (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). This method is effective in providing a deeper understanding of participants' opinions due to its flexibility in asking and answering the research questions, and information anonymity. This ensured a high response rate from participants compared to focused group discussions where group dynamics may compromise anonymity. An interview guide with open-ended questions supported this method (Bryman, 2012).

Interviews took place in English within one month. Two sessions per week lasting for one hour per participant were used. Participants had the liberty to choose a convenient meeting place for the interviews. The researcher recorded and took notes during the interview sessions with consent from the participants. This ensured that no information was missed during the interviews and transcriptions. The four interview probes by Rubin and Rubin's, including elaboration and continuation, attention, clarification, and evidence (Rubin & Rubin, 2011) were used by the researcher, to encourage participants to stay meaningfully engaged during interviews.

The transcriptions of the finalized interviews were done immediately after the physical interview with each participant to avoid work overload. The transcribed data was then edited, cleaned, and presented for analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis Method.

Braun and Clarke's thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data collected. It involved the identification of themes from the raw data collected. This method was motivated by its flexibility and easiness in identifying patterns within the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as a method involving the identification, examination, and presentation of patterns from participants collected perspectives. Bryman (2012) described a theme as a category identified by the researcher through their data that relates to his or her research aim, builds on the research codes, and provides a theoretical understanding of the data, which makes a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), below are the steps the researcher followed in conducting a thematic analysis from the collected data,

- Step 1: Familiarity with the collected data, this involved the researcher's immersion into the depth and breadth of the data's content. The researcher read and re-read the data repeatedly, identifying meanings and patterns. This step was crucial because it provided the researcher with a deeper understanding of participants' data and set the pace for the initial analysis (p.87).
- Step 2: generating initial codes; at this stage, the researcher identified codes from the initial reading from step 1 above. Codes here referred to the most basic element of the raw data that was assessed in a meaningful way regarding the topic of study (p.88).
- Step 3: Searching for themes: this step involved gathering the different codes into potential themes. At this level, the researcher used visual assistance in terms of diagrams and tables to help organize the various themes and sub-themes that were created from the identified codes (p.89-90).
- Step 4: Reviewing the themes: the researcher revised and redefined the created themes. It was vital to review both coded extracts and the validity of the themes in relation to the data set (p.91).
- Step 5: Defining and naming of themes: the researcher defined and refined the themes used for the analysis and defined or presented the data beneath them for analysis. The researcher wrote a storyline that each theme represented for clarity (p.92).
- Step 6: Presentation of the results, with all the above steps followed, the researcher produced a report with vivid and data extract samples for discussion. The researcher reflected and connected the analysis to the research questions and literature reviewed to produce a scholarly report (p.93).

Following the above steps, the data set was transcribed, coded, categorized, sub-themed, themed, and results established in chapter four with support of NVivo (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2012). While identifying themes, Ryan and Bernard (2003) recommended looking out for repetitions, indigenous expressions, metaphors and analogies, transitions, similarities and differences, and linguistic connectors in the data (Bryman, 2012).

Table 2: Showing the five themes that were developed (check chapter four for details).

Categories	Sub-themes	Themes
Mode of communication	Communication dynamics between participants and their families at home.	Communication with people at home in participants' different home countries.
Frequency of communication		
High costs on direct calls	Challenges encountered while communicating home.	
Network problems		
Time differences between Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Norway.		
Inconsistent calling of parents	Relationship with people at home.	
Frequent communication with friends		
Unmet emotional and physical needs for participants		
Expensive food	Limited affordability of the Norwegian lifestyle.	Vulnerability and social exclusion
Expensive house rent		
Failure to access part-time jobs		
Language barrier	Limited social interaction among participants.	
Social distancing due to preference for personal space		
Cultural shock		
Bad weather	Withdrawal from the host community.	
Loneliness		
Depression		
Homesickness		
Individual openness and optimism	Self-adaptation.	Adaptation
Engaging in hobby activities like singings, face painting, jogging, and dancing		
Engaging in games and sports.		
Self-language teaching		
Self-cooking than eating in restaurants		
Engagement with supportive friends' network.	Social adaptation.	
Institutional Support		
Supportive host and home families		
General Stavanger international community		
Friends both within and out of Stavanger	Useful resources.	
Host institutions		
Host and home families		
Internet and WIFI		
Participants became independent and self-controlled.	Positive transformation.	Individual transformation
Participants became unsocial, felt incompetent, and less confident.	Negative transformation.	
Participants expressed a sense of achievement, feelings of excitement, and joy.		The positive feelings before traveling abroad.

3.7 Principles used for study validity.

In this study, trustworthiness, which is an alternative criterion in qualitative research for validity, reliability, and authenticity was applied. It has four aspects; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability that were followed (Morrow, 2005; Bryman, 2012).

Credibility in qualitative research corresponds to internal validity. It is concerned with how believable study findings are (Charmaz, 2008; Bryman, 2012). To achieve this, the researcher followed the ethical and academic standards for the current study, utilized the approved methodology, minimized interference into participants' interpretation of their experiences and quoted participants words as evidence for the study. The researcher already established familiarity with the study participants, which provided a platform for open engagement between the researcher and the participants. This openness facilitated the gathering of quality and rich findings presented in chapter four of this report. The English language also provided language familiarity between the researcher and the participants, thereby increasing credibility since international students shared their information confidently in a language they understood.

Transferability corresponds to external validity (Morrow, 2005). This is concerned with the study findings applicability to other contexts (Bryman, 2012). To ensure the transferability of the study findings, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with seven participants. This provided enough time to exhaust all the necessary information about the research questions. This rich information collected can provide appropriate guidance to the different readers to make a meaningful decision on whether to relate and use the presented findings in their situations.

Dependability corresponds to reliability. It is concerned with the consistency of the study; that is, the process of conducting research should be explicit and repeatable as much as possible (Morrow, 2005). This was achieved through following the proposed methodological design and reflection on the researchers' position within the study. An audit team consisting of one supervisor and three interviewees reviewed the study findings to ensure that participants' opinions were well-represented in the study to avoid misinterpretation or missing data (ibid).

Confirmability is concerned with whether the study findings are free from the researcher's interests and values (Bryman, 2012). The researcher fulfilled this through respecting participants' views during and after the interviews. Participants were allowed to hold their interpretations of their reality; the researcher continuously reflected on her position within the research process and constantly reminded herself that the study is not about her (Morrow, 2005).

3.8 Ethical considerations.

As an international student, the researcher has experienced living out of her birth country from her own perspective. Therefore, she conducted the study as both an insider as an international student and an outsider as a researcher (Kanuha, 2000). During the study, the researcher limited her role as an insider and maximized on the outsider role by applying principles of respect to all the participants' opinions, probing to understand the participants' views, and non-interference in participants' interpretation of their experiences (ibid).

Principles of respect, equal participation, and self-determination were used to minimize the insider role (International Federation of Social Workers, 2019). The researcher engaged in constant reflection on her roles and how it affected the overall outcome of the study.

Clearance from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data in Norway was sought to ensure that the study followed the Norwegian research ethical rules and standards. Additionally, through the department of social work, University of Stavanger approved my study proposal before embarking on the research study.

The research's introduction, aim, and purpose were explained to each participant before the interview to avoid deception (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Bryman, 2012). This transparency encouraged participants to engage meaningfully in the study.

Participants' informed consent were sought before and during the study. Participants had an option to opt-out in case they felt uncomfortable participating in the study (Bryman, 2012; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Roth, 1962). A written consent form with an introductory letter was shared with participants before the interviews. Therefore, participants signed a consent form, which showed their acceptance to participate in the study and agreement on the usage of the provided information.

Participants were assured of the anonymity of their data and privacy of all the information provided during and after the process of research (Bryman, 2012). Participants' names were not recorded during the interviews, nor did they appear on the transcriptions coded and findings.

3.9 Limitations to the study.

Due to COVID19, there was a challenge with the accessibility of participants. As a result, three participants were interviewed through WhatsApp video calling. Though this did not affect the quality of the information provided, most of the participants expressed a preference for physical face to face interviews.

The insider role of an international student created a challenge of participants assuming that I knew and understood what they had experienced. Most of them used phrases like "you know this", "you understand this", and "you have experienced this, so you understand, not so". Initially, I told myself that the study is not about me, so this protected me from validating my experiences, hence the realization of the study aims. I did this by assuring participants that the study was about them, respecting their views, and seeking clarity on issues that were not clear. See chapter six for further reflection on the researcher's position within the study.

In conclusion, the study was inductively done using grounded theory as design and social constructionist as an interpretative framework. Participants were selected purposively with support of the snowball method, and in-depth interviews were used to collect information. Trustworthiness was used to ensure study validity. All collected data were analysed with help from thematic data analysis method. Following these methodological choices, data was gathered, analysed, and a process model developed for understanding participants' experiences while living in Stavanger.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents the results of the data collected from International students living in Stavanger. These participants shared their experiences of living abroad in terms of their feelings, challenges, and coping mechanisms. The data was analysed using the six steps of thematic analysis and the three processes of constructivist grounded theory (see chapter three for details). Five themes were derived from the collected data, including 1) positive feelings before traveling abroad, 2) communication with people at home in their different countries of origin, 3) vulnerability and social exclusion, 4) adaptation, and 5) individual transformation.

4.1 Presentation of the themes.

Themes were developed through reviewing the raw data from participants, concepts developed, followed by categories, and then sub-themes. Therefore, the five themes are presented below together with their diagrams showing their development.

4.1.1 Positive feelings before traveling abroad.

This theme explains how participants felt after receiving news that they would be traveling abroad for their studies. Most of them expressed feelings of excitement and sense of achievement, as seen below.

Diagram showing how the theme: positive feelings before travelling abroad was developed from the collected data.

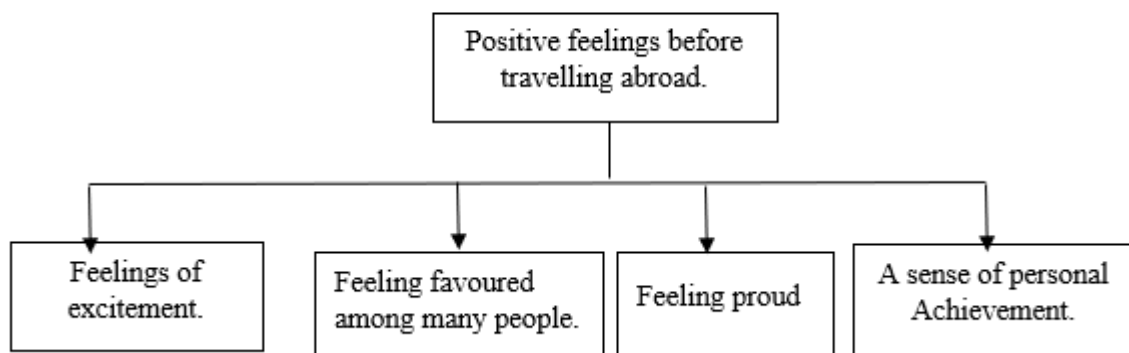


Figure 1: showing positive feelings before travelling abroad derived from the different expressions of happiness excitement, being proud and sense of achievement by participants.

“Before coming here, I was very excited to reach this place...you know when you’re in Africa, you know being in Europe is like being in a prestigious World” (Participant 5).

“Feeling like you’re favoured even if you haven’t landed into the country, but once you receive the news that you’re chosen among many applicants...there you feel very favoured” (Participant 3).

“I felt like it was really exciting to be out of my home country to see how other countries are...” (Participant 4).

“I felt a sense of achievement” (Participant 2).

Amidst all these beautiful feelings, one student expressed uncertainty before traveling for studies because of fear of the unknown.

“I felt sad because I was leaving my comfort zone, and I was going to a place unknown, so I wasn't sure about what I was anticipating ahead of me” (Participant 1).

These clearly showed that most of the international students were happy to receive the news about their travel abroad.

4.1.2 Communication with people at home in participants’ different home countries.

As participants lived in Stavanger, they always found the need to keep their relationships with families and friends at home. Therefore, this theme presents participants’ experiences of maintaining relationships with family and friends in their home countries. It has three sub-themes, including a) Communication dynamics between participants and their families at home, b) Challenges students face while communicating with people at home, and c) Relationship with people at home. All these are related to research questions of challenges and coping mechanisms, as presented below.

Diagram showing how the theme: communication with people at home in their different countries of origin was developed.

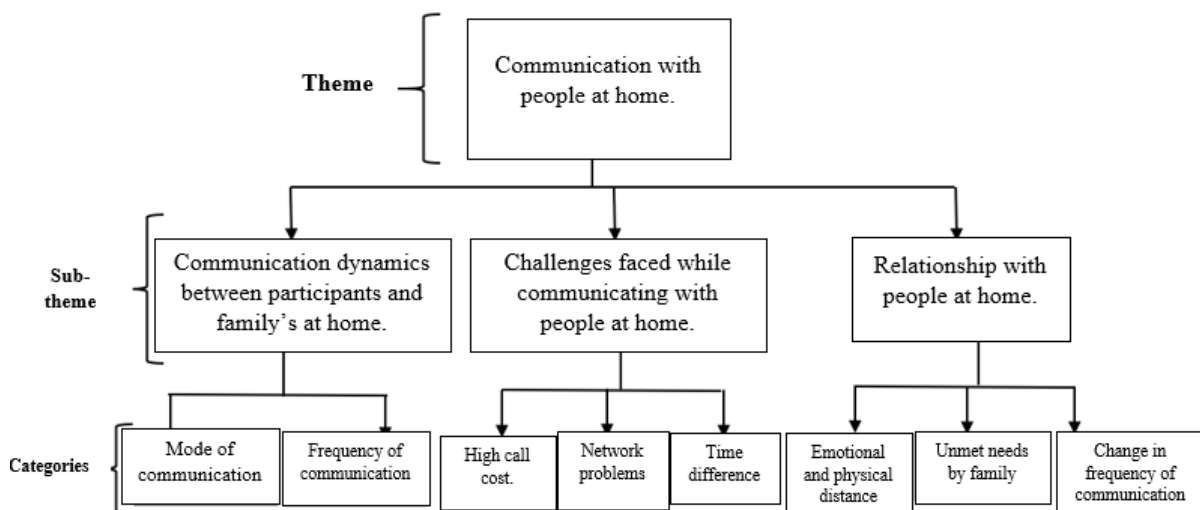


Figure 2: showing the theme; communication with people at home, which incorporates the participants experiences of maintaining their relationships with families and friends in their home countries. It shows the communication mode used and frequency of contact, challenges faced, and relationship developed with family and friends at home.

4.1.2a Communication dynamics between international students and their families at home.

This sub-theme covers both the mode and frequency of communication with people at home. Participants used social media platforms, especially Facebook and WhatsApp for calling and holding conversations with people at home. This is because direct phone calls from Europe to their respective countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania were expensive. Below are what participants said about the mode of communication.

“I use WhatsApp and Facebook to call...” (Participant 1).

“We communicate with WhatsApp; we have family WhatsApp groups where we interact with all my family members” (Participant 4).

In terms of frequency of communication, participants revealed that their contact with their home friends have not changed since they can easily use technology. When it came to family, participants reported irregularities in communication with their parents because of network challenges and data inaccessibility, as seen below.

“...Sometimes I take two to three days within a week without communicating with my family. And with my friends, I communicate with them daily. For example, I hardly communicate with Dad because he’s not on WhatsApp...” (Participant 1).

“I communicate twice per week with my family...compared to my friends, I communicate with them daily on Facebook” (Participant 3).

4.1.2b Challenges international students face while communicating home.

Some of the outstanding challenges mentioned by participants included high costs on direct calls, network problems, and the time difference between Norway and their home countries, as seen below.

“The biggest challenge is how to put credit and call my parents every day because it is very costly to call them using direct calls. The charges for people to call me are high” (Participant 3).

“Last time when we had a difference of two hours, sometimes when you want to call them then it is evening here...sometimes they call me in the morning and for me, it was very early” (Participant 5).

“But the problem is the network, I have Wi-Fi here and they don’t” (Participant 2).

“Network challenges at home, sometimes you can be communicating, and you break off” (Participant 1).

4.1.2c Relationship with people at home.

This sub-theme presents participants’ views on how their living abroad has changed their relationship with family members and friends at home. Some participants observed an improved relationship with their friends and family members as their bond has grown stronger, as seen below.

“For me, even with my one friend back home, we have gotten closer because I feel the need to call her more now that I am far away...” (Participant 7).

As some participants experienced this positive change, some expressed emotional distance between them and their parents. They felt their needs were not met by their families at home since there was no physical contact as they were living abroad.

“Yes, the frequency of communication with my family has changed...so, the distance and the boundary are created so that emotional feelings towards family goes on fading away” (Participant 1).

“It used to be like if you miss your parents, you visit them, which is not possible now. I do not feel like my needs are met when I call home. I feel like I don’t know them, or they don’t know me anymore...” (Participant 3).

Participants’ views in this section show that although students are living abroad, they still maintain contact and bond with their families and friends at home. However, the frequency of their communication with family at home reduces with time, making them distant from their

family members. Because of social media accessibility, participants developed a closer relationship with their friends at home

4.1.3 Vulnerability and social exclusion.

This theme relates to both the participants feeling and challenges experienced while living in Stavanger. It presents the economic, social, cultural, and emotional difficulties that participants have faced while living in Stavanger, which made them vulnerable and socially excluded in most activities. It has three sub-themes including, a) Limited affordability of the Norwegian lifestyle b) Limited social interaction among participants and c) withdrawal from the host community as presented below.

Diagram showing the flow of the theme: Vulnerability and social exclusion and its sub-themes and categories.

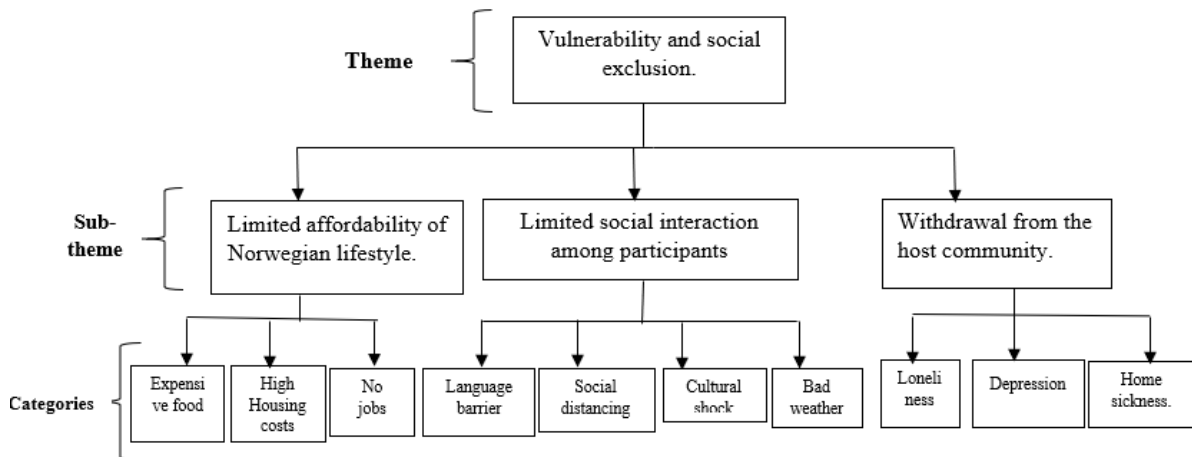


Figure 3: The theme vulnerability and social exclusion presents all the challenges that participants faced that limited affordability of Norwegian lifestyle, social interaction and facilitated their withdrawal from the host community.

4.1.3a Limited affordability of the Norwegian lifestyle.

This sub-theme presents economic difficulties faced by participants that limited their affordability of the Norwegian lifestyle in Stavanger. The challenges ranged from expensive food, high accommodation costs to failure in getting a part-time job. Self-funding participants faced more economic difficulties compared to scholarship participants as expressed below,

“Norway being a very expensive country and I’m not on scholarship, things are really costly. The food buying has been completely limited because of the high prices...” (Participant 2).

Participant below narrated how expensive student cafeteria food is,

“I went to the student’s cafeteria and I ate there once, and it was overwhelming because it costed me eleven euros for a meal that didn’t even satisfy me” (Participant 1).

The lack of part-time jobs for the self-funding students complicated their challenges the more. When these students moved to Stavanger, they hoped to find some part-time work that would support them to pay their bills, but as expressed below, this was not realized because of the language barrier and lack of networks for references.

“My biggest challenge so far has been getting a job because, with the prices of food and everything else here, I need a part-time job. I pay accommodation and 700 Kroner per semester... so imagine not having a part-time job” (Participant 7).

“So, I just thought that I would get a job and then make through tough financial times, but I have not been able to get a part-time job. This is because I lack the networks, language, and also there is a very low trust of strangers. So, it is not easy to get a job” (Participant 2).

Accommodation in Stavanger is equally highly priced, as seen below:

“Here in Stavanger, it is a different story; you do not even get money to do other personal things. Students housing here is three hundred twenty-five euros which is expensive” (Participant 1).

An expensive society limited participants lifestyle and choice of food to only cheaper and affordable food as seen below,

“So, coming out with friends, going out for a meal is impossible unless you really have a lot of money, so the society is limiting things to do because of prices” (Participant 2).

“...When I go to the supermarket fridge and am picking milk, I do not know which one is good or bad I want the cheapest, so I pick out the cheapest package” (Participant 3).

4.1.3b Limited social interaction among participants.

This sub-theme represents social and cultural difficulties that participants faced that resulted in limited social interaction among participants in Stavanger. One of the issues raised was the language barrier. One participant observed that language requirement in Stavanger is used as an instrument for exclusion from work and social activities. Participants also experienced social distancing in form of preference for personal spaces among people and cultural shock because of cultural differences, as presented below.

“You should be familiar with the language of the people...before I came here, I wasn’t aware of the Norwegian and how to speak to the Norwegians...” (Participant 3).

“Being unable to speak Norwegian is a put off and an underscore for me” (Participant 1).

“If I go out to a restaurant and I’m trying to talk to somebody to make friends, I realize they don’t speak English. Even if they speak English, they feel shy and they just do not make further attempts” (Participant 2).

Participant 3 admitted to the need for familiarity with the language where one is living because not knowing Norwegian while in Stavanger is major put off for participants, as seen above. The language barrier had implications on the accessibility of services, getting jobs, and exclusion from social activities for the participants, as seen below.

“...I haven’t got a hospital that I can go to because I had to first call and fix an appointment. I would call the landline and it was speaking Norwegian, which I was not understanding...” (Participant 3).

“I think it would have been easier to get a job if I spoke Norwegian. We have been looking a lot into service jobs... and the first thing is, do you speak Norwegian? ...” (Participant 7).

“I am socially excluded in the things I like to do because of language. Because if you cannot speak the language, then you cannot understand the culture. If you cannot understand the culture, then you are not invited. If I knew what they like, how they like to do it, I would be able to fit into the social groups, but I do not know because I do not speak the language...” (Participant 2).

Therefore, the language barrier posed critical integration challenges to participants while in Stavanger and limited social interaction with the broader Norwegian community in Stavanger.

Social distancing.

Another issue that was raised was social distancing, as most people in Stavanger preferred their personal spaces. Social distancing resulted in limited social interaction between participants, fellow students, and with the broader Norwegian community since participants kept to their spaces, as seen below.

“People in the house separate themselves from you. There is a lot of exclusion, physical exclusion, and emotional exclusion... it was more of like people kept their distance a lot, so it was difficult to integrate with them because they were keeping distance” (Participant 2).

“Even if you move out, people ignore you. Even if you begin a conversation, it won't last minutes. People are like, what do you want? if there's nothing you want, then you go away...” (Participant 1).

Participant 4 below narrated how she learned to manage her small space and observed how people in Stavanger maintained their personal spaces.

“I even cook my food and come and eat in the room... So, sometimes I am also caught up in this small space... yet the house is big [---]People here in Stavanger they don't talk too much honestly, they are trying to maintain their personal space, they don't want you to reach out and create a conversation” (Participant 4).

Cultural shock.

Participants described how cultural shock limited their social interaction with the broader Norwegian community in Stavanger. They reported cultural shock in relation to silence among people, public intimacy, self-service in supermarkets, and not greeting, as seen below.

Participants reported that cultural shock is unavoidable because of the cultural differences between Norway and their home countries. Many participants reflected on the communal culture in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, as seen below.

“Cultural shock is inescapable, For example... Its more communal kind of culture in my country compared to here” (Participant 3).

“I'm used to our communal way of doing things compared to individuality here. So, cultural shock was inevitable” (Participant 1).

Participants 7 and 4 below also narrated about the culture of not greeting people on the streets and silence in Stavanger.

“It has not been easy to relate to the culture of being silent and ignoring everyone around” (Participant 7).

“It is still weird that even when I meet someone on the street, I would want to say hello, but then they would just put that weird smile and not respond” (Participant 4).

Participant 2 below observed that Norwegians do not invite a lot, and people have to serve themselves in a supermarket.

“Here people don’t give you services in the supermarkets; you have to do your own service [---] Norwegians don’t invite a lot” (Participant 2).

One participant expressed her shock with public intimacy among people in Stavanger below,

“People show affection in public. Every time you are walking... people are kissing and showing affection to each other” (Participant 4).

Bad Weather.

Another aspect that participants pointed out as affecting their social interaction included bad weather. They narrated how winter, coldness, and strong winds complicated their life’s in Stavanger. As a result of bad weather, their daily routines were interfered with, and they kept indoors, as seen below.

“Weather is a challenge because people don’t move as much as they would want to. When you plan to go out for a hike, people look out through their windows, and they say they are not going because of the bad weather” (Participant 2).

“When the winter period comes, you just meet a few people on the streets, walking independently, and the way we have dressed does not favour having a long conversation...” (Participant 3).

“...I remember there was a time the wind was so blowing along my window, I couldn’t sleep... so, I had to leave my bed and go to the living room and slept there” (Participant 4).

4.1.3c Withdrawal from the host community.

This sub-theme corresponds to the research question on feelings that international students have faced during their stay abroad. Participants expressed feelings of loneliness, depression, and homesickness while living in Stavanger, as presented below.

“I felt so lonely, and yet people thought I was enjoying Europe because I tried to go out, take pictures, go to these beautiful rivers...” (Participant 4).

“In December 2019, I left very lonely spending Christmas away from my family. I spent my Christmas at my Boss’ place, and their practices were different for me...” (Participant 2).

The above students also show that even if students undergo through loneliness, they still try to enjoy in the host community.

One of the students drew light on how the coronavirus current situation has facilitated further loneliness since schools, churches, and other places are locked down. Below is what he said,

“Because of COVID 19, now we don’t have classes and church services so, you have a lot of time alone, and when you are alone there are a lot of negative feelings around you...” (Participant 5).

Participant 3 below spoke about feelings of homesickness.

“A person’s dignity is determined in his or her own home country 100%, even if you are happy to stay abroad...Home is home. You meet some aspects that make you miss your country” (Participant 3).

Participants expressed feelings of depression while living in Stavanger, as seen below.

“Yes, I get depressed. There are low moments when you feel down. The depression come because of a couple of situations; one is being overwhelmed by work at school, and secondly, you come home and realize you are alone, and you do not have people to talk to” (Participant 1).

“I was annoyed all the time, I lost interest in everything, and I wasn’t talking to everyone because I was depressed” (Participant 4).

Therefore, all the experiences shared above show participants vulnerability to non-integration into the Stavanger community and social exclusion from the different activities. These participants face difficulties ranging from social, economic, cultural to emotional aspects, as presented above. These have implications on what many professionals and host institutions can do to ensure that international students can integrate into Norwegian society effectively.

4.1.4 Adaptation.

This theme of adaptation corresponds to the third research question that asked about the coping mechanisms participants used. Participants narrated how their internal and external resources helped them to cope. Three sub-themes were developed including, a) self-adaptation, b) social adaptation with support from different social networks, and c) Useful resources as presented below.

Diagram below shows the flow of the theme: Adaptation, its sub-themes, categories, sub-categories, and concepts.

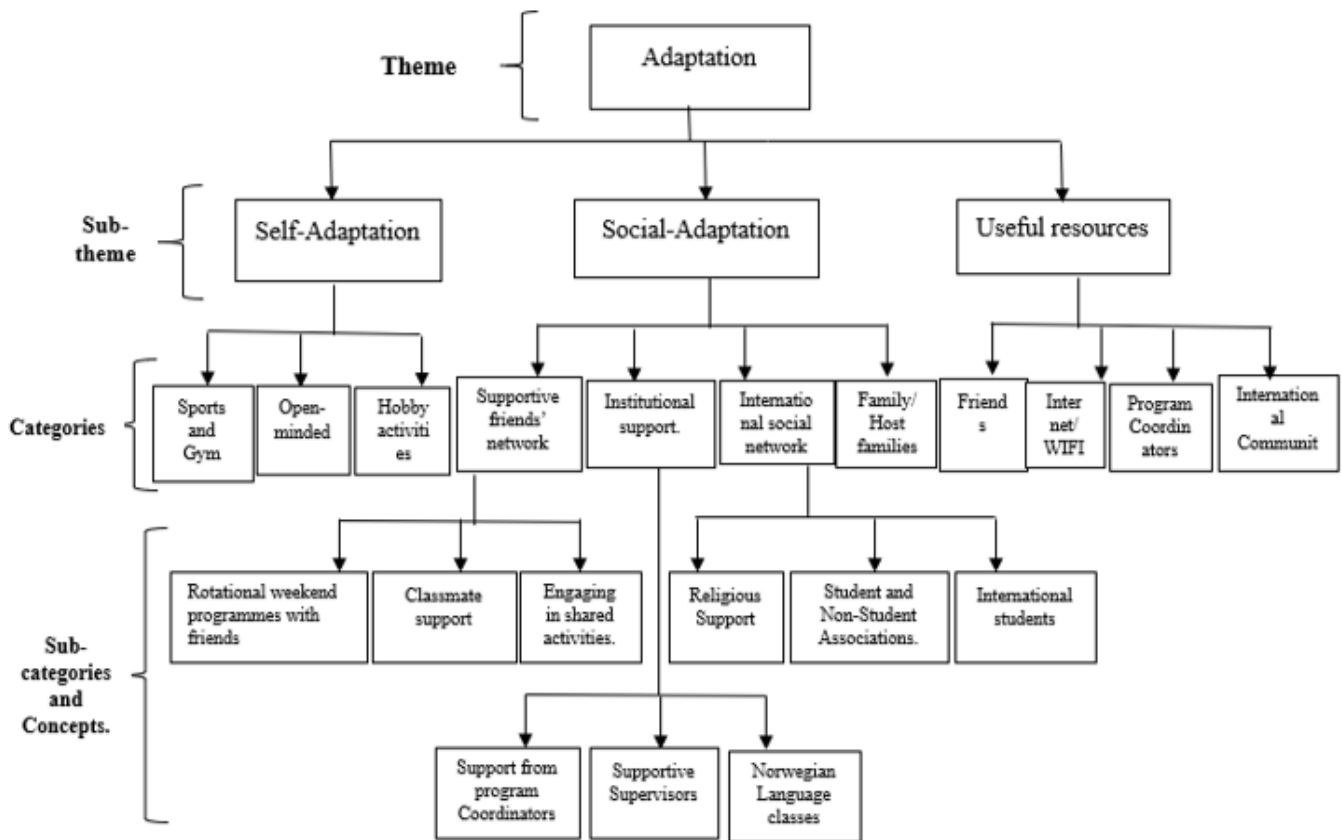


Figure 4: showing the theme; Adaptation. The diagram shows that participants used both individual and social resources to cope with the difficulties. Self-adaptation represents all the individual resources that were used, and social adaptation represents all the host community resources that were utilized to cope by the participants.

4.1.4a Self-adaptation.

This sub-theme presents the individual efforts of the participants towards coping and adaptation while living in Stavanger. Participants mentioned engaging in sports and gym sessions, being open-minded, avoiding overspending, cooking own food, enjoying music and dancing, and engaging in hobby activities like face painting as essential for coping with emotional, economic, and cultural difficulties, as seen below.

“I have involved myself in many activities that keep me busy for example, I do face painting classes” (Participant 2).

“I love singing...so when I am here in my room, I sing and dance while recording myself” (Participant 4).

This showed that participants kept a busy schedule to avoid feeling the challenges faced while living in Stavanger.

Participants 1 and 4 below expressed using sports and gym sessions to deal with the negative feelings like depression and stress while living in Stavanger.

“I love sports; I play football, volleyball and I love going to the gym. So, these activities have helped me to do away with the negative feelings that would trigger stress and depression” (Participant 4).

“The Gym is very important as it helps to burn out negative feelings and depression. When I go to the gym, I give in my 3 hours... am going to feel energized and refreshed by the time I leave the gym” (Participant 1).

Some students expressed using their openness to others as a way of coping since they would easily approach other people for interaction and support, as seen below.

“But it depends on personal mind... If you’re open-minded, then it is easy to cope” (Participant 3).

“Even if I don’t trust someone, if I feel like they can understand me, then I just tell them my story...” (Participant 4).

One of the participants expressed how he has taught himself basic Norwegian at least to start a conversation with a native Norwegian person. He argues that this has worked for him to sustain and attract Norwegians to speak to him, as seen below.

“I tried to teach myself just a few things in Norwegian using google translator... just to invite a Norwegian to have a short conversation with me. Maybe I want to ask the person their name, then I can ask in Norwegian like Hva heter du? When I am asked for my name, then I reply, Jeg heter Jimmy (not real names) and from that point I could manage to have a longer conversation...” (Participant 3).

In relation to the financial difficulties, participants spoke about avoiding unnecessary spending and cooking for themselves rather than eating from the restaurants, as seen below.

“I really adjusted to only basics, I eat very basic food, I don’t eat out, I don’t go out, I don’t travel... I do not buy clothes. I actually have done so well that I have lived on a smaller budget. I cook all my meals at home and I never eat at the school cafeteria” (Participant 2).

“...I buy my own stuff; it really saves a lot of money. I also cook my own food” (Participant 1).

Therefore, the personal character of openness, spending on basics, cooking own food, engaging in sports and gym sessions, and engaging in activities that create joy and happiness were key factors for participants to cope while living in Stavanger.

4.1.4b Social Adaptation.

This sub-theme presents all the external supportive measures that participants relied on to cope while living in Stavanger. Some of these included friends’ network, institutional support, Stavanger international community, home and host families, as presented below.

Supportive friends’ network.

These friends engaged in different activities like rotational weekend programs and shared activities like hiking, cooking, dancing, and playing games, among others. These activities kept participants engaged, motivated, and provided them a sense of belonging, as seen below.

“And in the weekends, we go to parties with friends...we cook food together with my classmates then we can go to the city centre to dance ...” (Participant 4).

“And with my friends, sometimes we go dancing, which helps with emotional stress.

I create a pattern of interaction with friends in the activities we share. We play FIFA and watch matches together” (Participant 1).

“The weekend program with friends helps us to have a very busy schedule such that by the time the day ends, you’re just looking forward to another day to begin” (Participant 1).

A self-funding participant below explained how her friends in Germany supported her practically to cope with the expensive life in Stavanger through access to cheaper goods and services.

“In Germany, I have friends, and I do not have to pay rent when I visit. I just cross over and bring a suitcase of foodstuff and other things. My friends visit me once a semester and bring another suitcase of foodstuff” (Participant 2).

Also, participants 2 and 7 below narrated how their friends and classmates provided them practical support and a sense of belonging.

“I was lucky to make a couple of good friends from my general course last semester that really helped me. The friends I made here helped me a lot because we are kind of in the same boat and we know how to make each other feel better. If I needed to go anywhere, they would take me, a few that have cars would drive me” (Participant 7).

“I have made a very close friendship with my classmates, we do hikes together, talk about the stresses, support each other, and sort of take care of each other” (Participant 2).

Therefore, friends to the participants are a source of support for meeting emotional, financial, social, and practical needs among participants, as seen above.

Institutional support.

Participants spoke about the support from their respective study institutions through different institutional programs and services. This came in the form of information and other practical support. For example, host institutions offered language classes for the students at subsidised prices. This helped participants to cope with the language barrier and academic difficulties through the utilization of institutional resources as seen below.

“Regarding the University, we have great supervisors who help us with all the practical stuff we need and necessary information to have a comfortable living in Stavanger” (Participant 7).

“Our university coordinators held mandatory counselling meetings with us on an individual basis. We shared with them what were bothering us, and If they could help, then they helped” (Participant 4).

The teaching of the Norwegian language is another kind of support that various institutions offered to participants to assist them in integrating and coping while in Stavanger, as presented below.

“I do Norwegian classes. I go to the city library to do the language course as well” (Participant 2).

“The language classes on tuesday and thursday for two hours have been helpful. I know you can’t master the language in two months. Though, with learning the language, at least when you go to the supermarkets, you can read things and

understand what you're going to buy without having to consult people. You can listen to a few Norwegian statements like greetings as well" (Participant 1).

Stavanger international community.

This presents the international community that supported participants to cope while living in Stavanger. Participants mentioned students' associations, church groups and international students as essential in the coping process. These networks provided participants a sense of belonging and practical support. It engaged participants in different activities that helped them overcome loneliness, depression, and limited social interaction, as seen below.

Participant 5 below explains how living with international students from Africa made him feel at home.

"We are international students here from Africa in this building where I live. I also met a college-met here whom we studied together in my country. So, at least we cook, eat together, talk most of the times using our mother language, and you can feel that you're at home" (Participant 5).

Participant 1 below explained how the African student association engaged him and enabled him to interact with people experiencing similar challenges.

"The Pan-African Student Association has had over ten events and I have at least attended nine of them. This is an African community; we come together to talk about different things, discuss and play games. This community of people really understand and experience similar challenges like me" (Participant 1).

Furthermore, another participant below explained how sticking to a group that spoke her language provided her a sense of belonging.

"By sticking to the social groups that speak my language, I break that feeling of being alone, and I now belong to a specific group that speak my language..." (Participant 2).

Participants below shared their views on how the church has been able to support their coping process.

"...there are those gatherings of the church like the preaching's, interactions after service, and the food sharing. It gives you a different vibe that by the time you begin the new week, you're really energized. [...] On Fridays, we have had football matches with some church members. This is also helpful to deal with fears and depression and I can find people to interact with" (Participant 1).

"Theological forum, football groups, singing in the choir that brought me closer to church are important for me in coping. Thursday evening for students brings us together to socialize" (Participant 3).

Supportive home and host families.

According to the interviews, participants shared how their home and host families have been important in providing practical and emotional support, as seen below.

"I have strengthened my communication with the people at home. I have tried to give more time to the phone calls from home...so it takes away that aspect of loneliness. Yeah, many people are far but at least you still feel bonded in some way through phone calls" (Participant 1).

“I have lived with a host family that has given me like a home setting. It has been supportive; they gave me a cheaper rent. The house has two cats which I play with them... I do normal things we do at home like taking out garbage, and it has helped me leave out of depression” (Participant 2).

4.1.4c Useful resources during the coping process.

This sub-theme presents resources that were more supportive to the participants during their coping process. Following the upper section on social adaptation, it's evident that participants friends are resourceful in the coping process, in addition to good network, WIFI and program coordinators, as seen below.

Most students expressed that their friends (the ones living in Stavanger and overseas) are a significant resource while living in Stavanger, as expressed below.

“Friends, friends, friends and friends again. I have never underrated the power of friends even when I was back home. For me, I rely on friends especially for emotional support more than family. [---] I made new friends from PASU who have helped me to deal with depression, cope with difficulties, study and stay away from home” (Participant 4).

“My friends from Germany have been giving me money and supporting me emotionally” (Participant 2).

In addition to the student's associations, participants expressed using the wider community of their countrymen to cope with living abroad, as seen below.

“Interaction with the Tanzanians who live in Stavanger, they are not students but Tanzanians. I meet them sometimes, we talk together and do everything together, and it's also one of the ways for interacting” (Participant 5).

Furthermore, participants expressed that their programme coordinators and people that have lived in Europe for some time have been useful in the coping process as seen below.

“Coordinators of the program are helpful. They provided information about general inquiries, housing, medical services, and insurance. [---] My housemates have stayed here for a period of time, so they really recommended me to places where I can get affordable foodstuffs, the bus stops, and cheapest malls. They showed me apps that I can use to know when different malls have discounts, so it was easy for me to cut down costs” (Participant 1).

Participants below expressed how the internet and WIFI have been a resource to them.

“Internet is my greatest resource because communication back at home relies on it. Academic resources are available through internet. Social life in Europe is found through internet. Movies and entertainment, music, and series are all accessible by internet” (Participant 1).

“I have Wi-Fi and I can watch movies for free through the available internet. So, internet has really been a resource...” (Participant 4).

Therefore, coping and adaptation is vital for participants because it facilitated their emotional, physical, and social wellbeing while living in Stavanger. According to the interviews, both individual and social adaptation styles were used by the participants, as presented above.

4.1.5 Individual transformation.

This theme relates to what participants transformed in to after arriving and living in Stavanger. The transformations were both positive and negative. Positively, participants narrated how living in Stavanger has made them independent and able to exercise self-control. Negatively, participants reported feeling incompetent, anti-social, and less confident while in Stavanger, as seen below.

Diagram below shows the flow of the theme: individual transformation, its sub-themes, and categories.

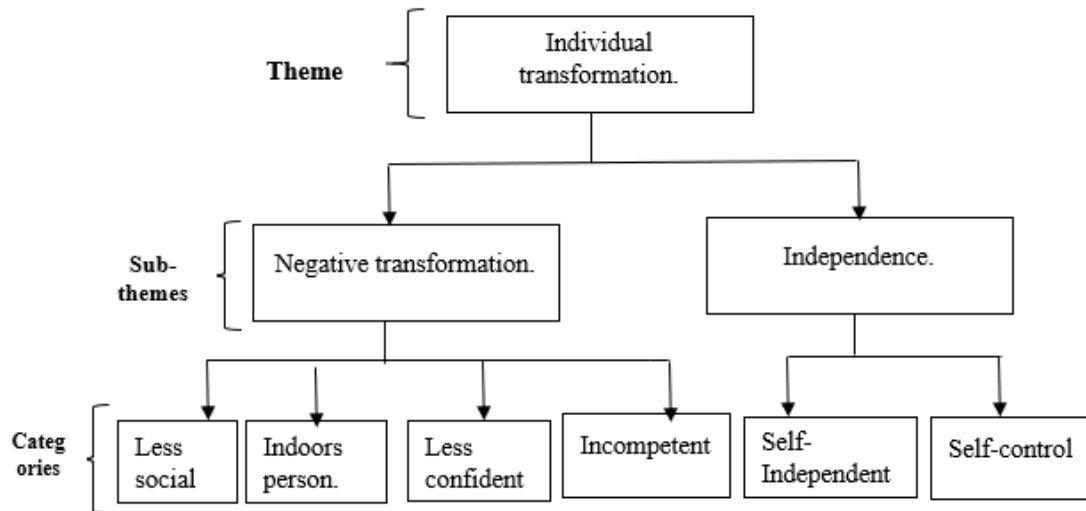


Figure 5: The theme individual transformation was developed from participants expressions on how they have changed following their lived experiences in Stavanger. Negative change of unsocial, incompetence and less confident were felt during the initial stages of living in Stavanger. Upon coping, participants positively transformed to independent and self-controlled persons.

Positively, participants below reported feeling independent while living in Stavanger.

“Here, I have to depend on myself for my emotional backup most of the times” (Participant 1).

“...You have to try your level best to be independent in practice...so, I control myself instead of asking for everything, I try to do things by myself” (Participant 3).

“I have learned to be good on my own. You know this is when you realize that you have to learn how to be strong alone” (Participant 4).

Negatively, participants reported feeling incompetent, anti-social and less confident as mentioned below,

“...I have changed from how I used to do things at home to how things are done here. I also find that when I enter the bus, I just sit alone because that is how it is done here. I stopped being social because it is what is done here. I am transforming to society here...” (Participant 2).

“I actually never used to like staying indoors or staying in my room, but now I stay in

my small room” (Participant 4).

The participants below narrated how incompetent and less confident they became.

“I used to be a very bold girl and confident... but when I came here and it was evident that no one really wants to talk, so it really messed up with my confidence” (Participant 7).

“Living here has made me feel incompetent so I try to learn the language, so I feel like I don’t have the skills to live in Norway anymore” (Participant 2).

Therefore, participants went through a transformation process to fit into Stavanger community, as seen above.

In conclusion, this chapter presented the results of the collected data about international student’s experiences of living in Stavanger. According to the data, five themes were developed and presented above including, 1) positive feelings before traveling abroad, 2) communication with people at home, 3) vulnerability and social exclusion, 4) adaptation, and 5) Individual transformation.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF A PROCESS MODEL

5.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents a discussion of the results presented in chapter four. It is arranged in two sections; the first section discusses study findings in relation to the previous studies and implications to international students, Stavanger community, and social work profession established as well. The second section presents a process model of socio-cultural and emotional adaptation among the participants.

Before traveling abroad, participants were filled with a mixture of feelings. They reported feeling a sense of achievement, excitement, and uncertainty before moving to Stavanger. Six participants reported being ready to explore the world opportunities for personal development represented by the positive feelings compared to one student who experienced feelings of uncertainty. Similarly, the desire for self-development and world exploration excited many international students to move abroad for studies. These students looked at the opportunity of studying abroad as a platform for the enhancement of social status in their home community and individual achievement, which enabled them to compete favourably on the market upon returning home (Gbollie & Gong, 2020). Therefore, studying abroad presented students with opportunities for personal development and achievement that excited most of the participants.

5.1 Discussion of the findings.

These discussions are organized in the form of questions that corresponds to both the study findings and research questions. Therefore, each question is answered by outlining the significant findings under it and discussing it together with the previous studies.

5.1.1 How have participants experienced communicating with people at home while living in Stavanger?

This question is related to the theme; communication with people at home and research questions: challenges faced and coping mechanisms. Three key findings emerged under this theme, as discussed below.

First, participants sustained communication with friends and family in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania while living in Stavanger. This was supported by social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. Therefore, it was not shocking when participants reported the internet and WIFI as a resource while in Stavanger. Participants felt obliged to call their families and friends to keep a relationship with them since they are far from home. They reported having received emotional support in times of loneliness and depression from families and friends at home.

Such findings have been reported in related studies. For instance, Chinese students in the United States maintained contact with friends and family in China through internet use. This reduced their emotional frustrations of stress and depression while living in America (Mikal et al. 2015; Straiton et al. 2017). Due to physical distance, international students improved their social media use to communicate with their families at home, which enabled them to maintain a long-distance relationship with families and friends (Kim, Yun, & Yoon, 2009). Therefore, the internet and social media platforms are resourceful in maintaining the social obligations and ties international students have with friends and family at home. Internet facilitates communication between students and other people at home (Mikal, Yang, & Lewis, 2015; Lin et al. 2012; Kim et al. 2009).

Secondly, participants communicated frequently with their friends compared to their parents at home. This was explained by the easiness of the use of technology among friends compared to their parents. Additionally, communication with parents was challenged by the high call costs, poor network, and time differences between Norway and Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. Similarly, a study of Asian international students in South Korea revealed that these students refrained from calling their families because of the high financial costs attached to the calls (Kim et al. 2009). The low development of information communication and technology (ICT) in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania compared to the top countries in the world that have developed ICT explains the poor network and connectivity expressed by the participants (Statista, 2020). Three participants spoke about how their parents live in the countryside where the phone network is so difficult to access, thereby contributing to their irregularities in communicating with them.

Contrary to Kim et al. (2009) that attributed the frequency of communication with friends and family at home to the availability of sufficient financial resources. In the current study, participants attributed their frequency of contact with friends at home to the availability of free Wi-Fi in both study institutions and residences. This allowed access to social media platforms without any additional costs. Five participants spoke about their friends at home being available and ready to talk to them through Messenger and Facebook.

Thirdly, due to the above irregularity in communication and physical distance with family, participants felt emotionally distant from their parents and closer to their friends at home. Three participants felt their needs were no longer being met by just calling their parents. Similarly, Kim and Okazaki (2014) reported that the studied international students felt distant from their family members because of the physical distance between them. This provided space for the creation of new relationships with friends explaining the close bond that participants reported with their friends at home.

By implication, social workers and other responsible professions in Stavanger have to continuously ensure the access to quality internet and WIFI in the host country for international students. This can enhance their continuous wellbeing by maintaining contact with families and friends at home. In return, international students' family functioning can be improved, which may facilitate their positive coping mechanisms.

International students in return, have to create a flexible time schedule to limit the effects of the time differences while in Stavanger. In case of calling, video calling and chatting for the contact between students and their families is recommended. Video calls provide visual chatting that may enhance the bond and closeness between international students and their families that may reduce the emotional distance between them.

5.1.2 What difficulties have participants faced while living in Stavanger?

This question is related to the theme vulnerabilities and social exclusion in chapter four and research questions on feelings and challenges. There are three significant findings under this theme including; i) limited affordability and accessibility of basic services in Stavanger due to insufficient financial resources among participants, ii) limited social interaction among participants because of the social difficulties and iii) Withdrawal of international students from the general Stavanger community because of the emotional difficulties as discussed below.

Financial difficulties limited participants affordability of a Norwegian lifestyle in Stavanger due to expensive foods in supermarkets, restaurants, and expensive housing. This became worse for the self-funding participants who didn't get part-time jobs to supplement their income. Two self-funding participants expressed difficulties in purchasing essential goods like food, getting part-time work, and settling of bills because of the limited financial resources.

These findings are in line with most of the studies conducted in the United States about international students (Sherry et al. 2010; Gao, 2008). Self-funding students have to balance between academic work and jobs since they have various bills like tuition, rent, and feeding to take care of (Lee, 2017). International students in the United States attributed their financial difficulties to failure to get a job because of a lack of referees, low confidence and limited experience for available work (Gautam et al. 2016). Contrary to these reasons (ibid), participants in the current study related the failure to get a part-time job in Stavanger to the lack of Norwegian language skills and small network of their nationals in Stavanger.

By implication, participants reported keeping within the networks of international students that experienced the same challenges with fear of overspending. Participants reported avoiding eating in restaurants and traveling in and around Stavanger to manage their financial expenditures. Therefore, participants closed out platforms like restaurants and trips that they would have used for networking and socialization with other people within Stavanger.

Socially, participants experienced limited social interaction with fellow students and the broader Norwegian community in Stavanger. Participants reported language barrier with the broader Norwegian community, social distancing from both students and the broader Norwegian society, and bad weather as limiting factors for social interaction. All the seven participants reported language barrier and social distancing, with four experiencing the bad weather.

This finding is similar to several studies that reported language barrier as the greatest challenge that international students faced while in a host country (Iwara et al. 2017; Domville-Roach, 2007). In a slight difference, participants demonstrated frustrations with speaking the Norwegian language only when out of their respective study institutions since they used English within their host institutions. They further expressed that Norwegians knew English though have low confidence in speaking it. Even though the respective study institutions taught the Norwegian language, students expressed concerns of difficulty in learning and perfecting Norwegian in three months. This finding is similar to one study which revealed that international students are faced with difficulty in language mastery and speech, creating both academic and social challenges to them (Banjong, 2015; Kaya, 2020; Sherry et al. 2010).

Consequentially, two participants failed to get part-time work because of the failure to speak Norwegian. One student expressed her difficulty in accessing medical services because of the lack of Norwegian language skills. Three students talked about the language as limiting their interaction with the Norwegian community. As a result, participants kept to their spaces, limiting their socialization with the broader Stavanger community. Studies in the United States and Japan revealed similar results that international students failed to engage appropriately with fellow students and the broader communities in these countries because of the difficulties in speaking English and Japanese respectively (Kaya, 2020; Lee, 2017).

Therefore, the aspect of difficulty in speaking the local language like Norwegian in Stavanger has far-reaching effects like limited integration into society. The lack of language skills lowered participants confidence to mix with the Norwegians, making them socially distant within Stavanger.

Culturally, five participants spoke about being shocked about public intimacy, silence, low trust for strangers, and self-service while living in Stavanger with an argument of having a different cultural orientation. They expressed coming from a more communal system of living in their respective countries. Similarly, one study argued that international students are faced with different values, ethics, and communication styles in the host country, which makes them experience cultural shock (Wu et al. 2015). Due to the culture of silence and individualism,

participants practiced social distancing that hindered free engagement with fellow students and the broader host community since most people kept to personal space.

Emotionally, participants reported withdrawal from the Stavanger community because of the loneliness, depression, and homesickness while living there. These were explained by the lack of familiar language, failure to make friends for interaction, and physical distance with home countries. Similarly, studies have reported international students feeling lonely, isolated, depressed, and homesick while living in host countries (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Sümer et al. 2008), resulting in their withdrawal from the host community (Diku, 2019; Gu, 2015). In the United States, a group of South Korean students reported failing to make friends with the American community, which made them lonely (Kim & Okazaki, 2014). Additionally, international students living in Japan felt homesick because of the failure to learn Japanese for communication (Lee, 2017).

By implication, the participants expressed maintaining a small group of friends who are also international students. Likewise, Gu (2015) found out that international students are bound to get attached to others that experience the same situation as them for social support.

The discussed social, financial, cultural, and emotional difficulties presented participants with a risk of limited integration and exclusion from social activities in Stavanger. This opens platforms for social work professionals to advocate for inclusion and integration of international students within the host societies. This can be done through social workers and other professions: 1) designing deliberate practical programs for inclusion and cultural harmony between Norwegians and international students and 2) encouraging informal Norwegian language practice by international students through home group practices, and peer to peer language practice.

5.1.3 How have participants transformed after experiencing difficulties discussed above?

Positively, three participants reported self-independence and control due to being open to learning the Norwegian culture. They narrated being able to manage by themselves without asking for help, practicing self-control and independence while with people. Similarly, Chinese students in the UK reported positive self-identity and transformation because of being open to and understanding the United Kingdom's cultural diversity (Gu, 2015). This positive transformation supported participants in coping while living in Stavanger.

Negatively, four participants reported becoming less social, incompetent, and less confident while living in Stavanger. The lack of language skills, social distancing, and cultural shock contributed to the negative participants' transformation. According to the participants, this negative transformation had an implication on their level of interaction with people in Stavanger. Most of them withdrew from the wider community and kept in their inner smaller circles of international students. Similarly, a study of Chinese students in the United Kingdom revealed that the lack of familiar friends, networks, and activities made international students lonely and less social, negatively affecting their level of engagement with other people in the UK (Gu, 2015). This negative transformation further challenged participants level of integration into Stavanger. One of the participants narrated how she wished that she knew what Norwegians wanted and how they wanted it such that she can do it because she really wanted to have at least one Norwegian friend in Stavanger.

5.1.4 How did participants cope with difficulties while living in Stavanger?

This question is related to the theme, adaptation, and a research question on coping mechanisms.

Individually, participants spoke about being open-minded, engaging in sports, face painting, cooking their own food, avoiding overspending, and listening to music to cope while living in Stavanger. These individual behavioural adjustments helped participants to manage the expensive life in Stavanger, handle loneliness, depression, and isolation at a personal level through minimizing their expenditures and keeping a busy schedule.

Similarly, Gu (2015) reported that international student's agency is critical in overcoming difficulties and that students have resources at an individual level to manage the problems they may be facing. A student can teach themselves how to handle a disturbing situation before asking for help (Lee, 2017). Additionally, openness and optimism are supportive in coping. Some international students feel free to share their difficulties with friends and remain optimistic about all the negative outcomes of living abroad (Lee, 2017; Ellwood, 2011).

Furthermore, a study of international students living in Japan reported students managing their expenditures by cooking their food to avoid spending in restaurants (Lee, 2017). Supplementary to Lee (2007) study, which focused on individual students cooking for themselves, openness and optimism, the current study revealed participants used sports activities like jogging and gym sessions, engaging in music and dance at an individual level to cope while in Stavanger.

Externally, participants reported receiving support from friends, study institutions, home and host families, and Stavanger international community during their process of living in Stavanger. Participants shared how their friends (the ones both in Stavanger and overseas) were emotionally and practically supportive. They engaged in activities like weekend cooking programs, group reading, joint games, and sports, which helped them handle different difficulties they faced through the provision of platform for interaction and socialization when out of school. Likewise, international students living in the United States reported that they had received more emotional and social support from fellow international students within the US and friends overseas. This is so because international students get easily attracted to each other because of shared experiences in the host countries (Chavajay, 2013).

According to the study results, participants reported institutional support as an essential aspect in their coping process. Study institutions provided students with practical information and orientation, offered language classes at subsidized prices, and provided counsellors that students utilized during difficult times. All these services prepared participants psychologically to leave in Stavanger. These institutional programs were targeted both for easy integration into society and coping. Some participants reported that counsellors supported them psychologically, and coordinators were instrumental in providing practical information on health and student discounts. The language classes offered them a basic understanding of Norwegian. All these contributed to the participants' wellbeing and comfortability while living in Stavanger.

Similarly, Wu et al. (2015) noted international students' utilization of institutional resources and services like recreational centres, library cultural and language classes that supported them to cope while living in the United States. These services helped them minimize academic stress and socialization challenges. Students utilized every platform provided by their respective institutions to learn the host country's culture and language. Also, one study found out that international students that participated in the school language teachings improved language skills (Banjong, 2015).

Furthermore, another study reemphasized the use of both formal and informal teaching methods to improve language skills for international students, including organizing language seminars for language practice (Sherry et al. 2010). Likewise, five participants spoke about attending language café at the University of Stavanger every Wednesday in the library to

practice speaking Norwegian. All the participants that joined both the formal and informal language classes reported improvement in their Norwegian speech.

Participants reported support from the international community in Stavanger, including the different international students' associations, international religious gatherings, different people from the same country, and churches. These different communities provided participants a sense of belonging and familiarity since they expressed that the community was able to understand them.

Four participants narrated how the Pan-African Students Association (PASU) offered them platforms for creating new friends, engaging in different activities, and a sense of belonging. This was because all PASU members were from Africa, making it easy for them to relate to people from similar contexts. Three students also expressed how church services, gatherings, and other activities provided platform for interaction between participants and other people in Stavanger through sports, student get-together, and Sunday services.

Similarly, Filipinos in Norway expressed how their Filipino community made it easy for them to make friends with similar experiences and socialize because of language familiarity. They cooked and ate together, which created a sense of belonging among them, thereby overcoming homesickness (Straiton et al. 2017). Additionally, the church was reported among places that provided platforms for socialization, discussion, and unconditional support among people living abroad (Straiton et al. 2017; Mesidor & Sly, 2016). Engagement of international students in different students' associations help them to mix with others to expand their networks of interactions (Wu et al. 2015).

According to the participants, families at home provided emotional support, and the host families offered practical assistance to live successfully in Stavanger. These are consistent with a study about Filipinos in Norway where they spent time calling their family members and friends in the Philippines for purposes of getting emotional support. This helped them not to feel homesick and lonely (Straiton et al. 2017). Therefore, love and support from families and friends at home functioned as a resource for international students to connect with the new environment while maintaining their sense of belonging at home (Gu, 2015).

Likewise, host families are key in providing practical support for socio-cultural adjustment. These families teach international students practical ways to behave and conduct themselves in a new country. They also provide information on basic necessities like supermarkets, bus tickets, and they are a potential source of connection between international students and the host community (Sherry et al. 2010). Therefore, home and host families were resources in the coping process among participants. To cope successfully, participants utilized both the individual and community resources within Stavanger, as seen above. In order to understand their coping experiences, a process model was developed, as presented below.

5.2 Presentation of a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants.

This model was derived from participants' perspectives on their experiences while living in Stavanger. Constructionist grounded theory by Charmz was used to facilitate its development. The model involves two processes that the participants went through to cope and adapt to living in Stavanger. These include 1) Initial phase of living in Stavanger, involving encountering difficulties (ED) and seeking familiar support (SFS), and 2) settling in Stavanger, involving adaptation and independence, as shown below. This is aimed at showing what participants used to cope and adapt to the difficulties while living in Stavanger.

5.2.1 The flow of a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants.

A process model of socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants living in Stavanger.

- 1). Initial phase of living in Stavanger: Encountering difficulties and SFS. 2). Settling: Adaptation and Independence.

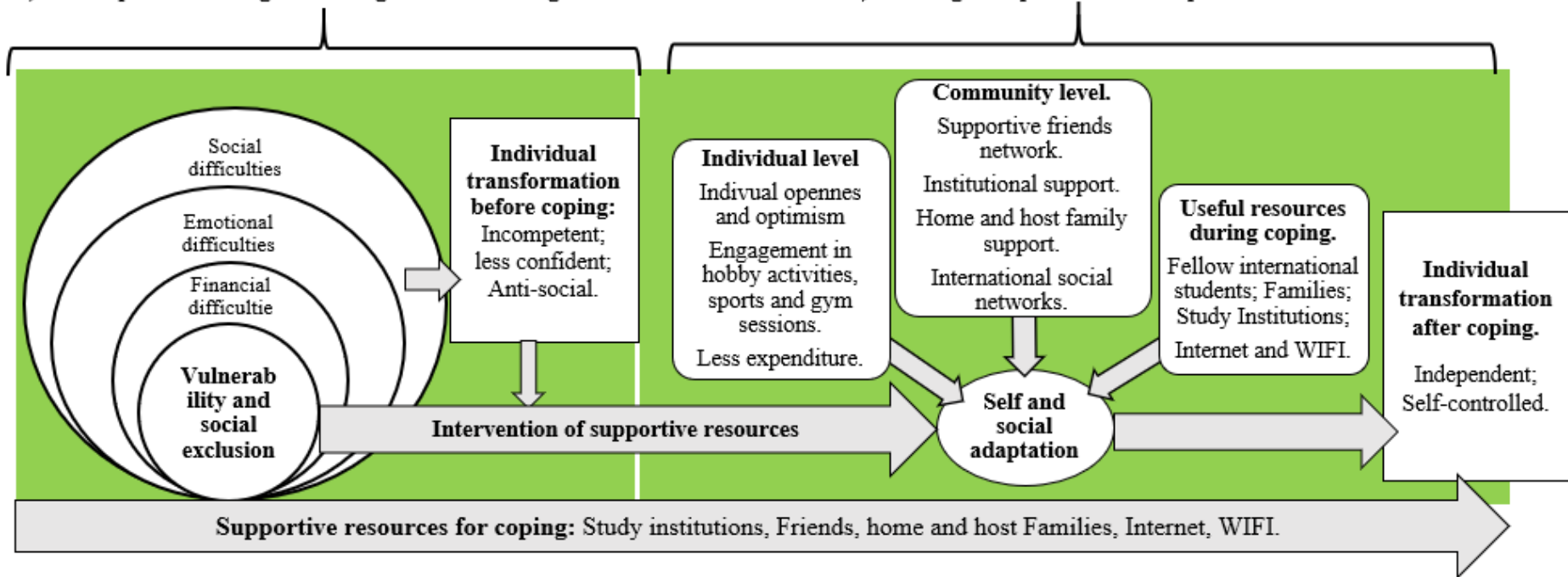


Figure 6: shows a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants. It has two processes; the first phase represents the participants encountered difficulties and sought familiar support systems. The second phase shows the adaptation and positive individual transformation as a result of living in Stavanger.

5.2.2 Coping and adaptation following the presented model.

5.2.2a First process: Initial phase of living in Stavanger; encountering difficulties and seeking familiar supportive systems.

This started from the time participants landed in Stavanger from their respective countries of origin. It explains the different experiences students faced in terms of difficulties and seeking familiar support systems.

Encountering difficulties.

According to the study findings, encountering difficulties was continuous. However, its significant negative effects were felt within one to two months at the beginning of living abroad, with mild effects felt from six months and beyond during participants' stay in Stavanger.

Participants encountered difficulties ranging from communication with people at home, financial, emotional, cultural to social challenges. Financially, participants encountered an expensive lifestyle in Stavanger in terms of expensive food and rent that limited their affordability of basic goods like food. Emotionally, participants faced loneliness due to difficulty in making friends in Stavanger, homesickness due to being far away from home, and depression due to limited social interaction with other people in Stavanger.

Culturally, participants experienced cultural shock because they came from a different cultural orientation. Socially, participants encountered language difficulties because of failure to learn and speak Norwegian and social distancing because people within Stavanger preferred personal space. In terms of communication at home, participants encountered challenges with network, time difference and high costs on direct calls, which resulted in an emotional distance with family at home.

All these difficulties limited the level of social interaction between participants themselves and between participants and the native population in Stavanger. As a result, first, participants encountered vulnerability to less integration into Stavanger community and social exclusion from social activities in Stavanger. Secondly, participants felt incompetent, less confident, and less social since they could not learn the Norwegian language that limited their participation in most of the social activities in Stavanger.

Seeking familiar supportive systems.

During encountering difficulties, participants sought familiar supportive systems that helped them cope while living in Stavanger. Participants maintained their small groups of classmates and got a few international students that spoke English. Most of the participants joined international students' associations in Stavanger, like the Pan-African Students Association and different groups of people from Uganda, Kenya, or Tanzania living in Stavanger. This helped participants to find social belonging among familiar people that shared similar challenges. In the process, participants overcame loneliness, depression, and homesickness since they would cook, interact in a familiar language, and shared some practical information about living in Stavanger.

5.2.2b Second process: Settling; Adaptation and Independence.

Adaptation and coping are subjective, and it can be realized at different times. Participants reported their initial start of the coping process between three to four months after arrival and living in Stavanger.

At the settling phase, first, participants underwent through an adjustment at both individual and community level to cope with the difficulties faced. Secondly, an individual transformation into independent person was revealed among participants during and after the coping process, as presented below.

Adaptation.

At the individual level, openness and optimism were very helpful. Most of the participants engaged in hobby activities like face painting, jogging, dancing, and singing to avoid feeling lonely and depressed. Therefore, coping among participants started at an individual level before looking out for support from friends, the host communities, and family members.

At the community level, participants utilized different community systems and networks to cope. These included supportive friends, study institutions, host and home families, Stavanger international community, and religious groups. All these networks supported participants in different ways; the friend's network engaged them in shared activities like cooking, hiking, and eating together. Study institutions provided practical information on how to live successfully in Stavanger, offered Norwegian language classes at a subsidized price, and library resources, among other services. Supportive Stavanger international community provided a sense of belonging and familiarity to the participants. The religious community engaged participants in different church activities like social gatherings for interaction, cultural mix, and spiritual strengthening.

Independence.

After experiencing difficulties, looking out for familiar support, and adapting, most of the participants learned how to manage the challenges that came their way. In the process, they became self-independent and controlled as a result of embracing diversity in Stavanger. Participants reported to having learned to be alright on their own, mind their business and enjoy their small spaces.

Therefore, a process of socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants involved individual and community efforts. During the coping process, participants went through a self-evaluation of character and culture to appropriately transform into the new culture, lifestyle, and environment in Stavanger. Most of the participants finished the race of living in Stavanger as independent individuals, as presented in the model above.

In conclusion, this chapter presented two issues, first, was the discussion of the findings and secondly the process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants. In the discussions, nine significant results were presented, including 1). Participants continuous communication with family and friends at home to fulfil social responsibility and get social support; 2). Participants communicated more frequently with peers than their parents due to the ease of using advanced technology like smartphones and social media; 3) Participants' relationship with family and parents was defined by emotional distance due to the challenges that limited contact between them; 4). Limited affordability and accessibility of basic services in Stavanger due to insufficient financial resources; 5). Limited social interaction among participants because of the social challenges faced; 6). Withdrawal from the host community due to the emotional difficulties; 7). Negative transformation to less social, incompetent, and less confident individuals immediately after encountering challenges; 8). Positive change to independent and self-controlled person as a process of coping and adjustment, and 9). Participants successfully coped with support from individual and community resources.

A process model of socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants was developed and presented as well. It showed two processes: first, the initial phase of living in Stavanger involving encountering difficulties and seeking familiar support systems, and second, the settling period involving the adaptation and independence among participants. The model showed that participants' coping process involved the efforts of the individual students and the host community. Therefore, integration and welfare programs for international students should be targeted at efforts to strengthen individual resources for coping and host community capacity and resources to facilitate and enhance the integration of international students.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCHER'S POSITION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter concludes the whole dissertation. It starts with the conclusion, followed by reflection on the researcher's position within the study, recommendations, and finally, area for further research, as seen below.

6.1 Conclusion.

The study sought to explore Ugandan, Kenyan, and Tanzanian students' experiences while living in Stavanger. With intentions to answer three research questions, including 1) What are the feelings associated with living abroad as an international student? 2) What challenges are faced by international students while living abroad? And 3) How do international students cope with the challenges faced while living abroad? To contribute more information in these three areas and develop a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants. An inductive qualitative study, with constructivist grounded theory as design and social constructivism as interpretive framework were used to realize these. Findings were established with support of thematic analysis method, and a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants was developed and presented in Chapter five.

According to the findings, participants faced challenges of communicating with people at their home countries due to high call costs, network problems, and time differences, which created an emotional distance between participants and their families. Socially, participants faced difficulties with integration into the Norwegian community and limited social interaction in Stavanger due to lack of Norwegian language skills, social distancing, cultural shock, and bad weather. Financially, participants faced limitations with the affordability of food, house rent, and eating in restaurants because of the high costs of goods and services and emotionally, participants expressed felt lonely, depressed, and homesick. These corresponded directly to the study research question on challenges faced and feelings associated with living abroad.

As a result of encountering difficulties, participants underwent through a self-transformation process to develop an appropriate personality that can survive in Stavanger. Some participants reported negative transformation into unsocial people, less confident and incompetent at the beginning of encountering difficulties in Stavanger. However, all the participants reported self-independence and control at the end of the coping process.

Participants utilized both individual and host community resources to cope while living in Stavanger. Individually, participants relied on their agency and resources to cope. Some utilized their character of openness and optimism, and others used engagement in their hobby activities to overcome loneliness and depression. At the community level, supportive friends' network, study institutions, Stavanger international community, home and host families were vital in the coping process. All these networks supported participants in different ways through providing practical information on how to live successfully in Stavanger, emotional support to overcome the emotional difficulties, and offering language classes for integration purposes, among others.

In incorporating of the above findings, a process model for socio-cultural and emotional adjustment among participants was developed to better understand the whole experience of living in Stavanger. The model showed how participants managed to cope with all the difficulties they faced. It as well provided evidence on what resources were useful to participants while coping. This information can be used by the wider host community to enhance international students' wellbeing and ease their integration in the host community.

The model involved two processes; the first process presented the difficulties encountered by participants and the negative individual transformation that made them to seek for the familiar support within Stavanger. The second process involved adaptation and positive individual transformation. The model clearly showed that in order to increase participants' welfare and integration into the host community, there has to be mechanisms targeted at both the individual international student and the host community.

6.2 Reflection on the position of the researcher within the study.

Both an insider role as an international student and an outsider role as a researcher (Kanuha, 2000) were used. I positioned myself more as a researcher to get insightful and meaningful information from participants. However, my insider role as an international student helped me to easily connect with the participants in my study, which created an opportunity for free engagement with participants during the study. Some of the opportunities of the insider role included familiarity with the participants, which provided a platform for trust between participants and me. This enabled participants to feel comfortable speaking to me about their experiences of living in Stavanger.

I practiced professionalism and carefully played both the roles of an insider and outsider. These roles never conflicted at any point during the study. The outsider role helped me to get meaningful and insightful information from participants. As a researcher, I listened to and respected participants' views. I allowed interviewees enough time to express their opinions and sought clarity and followed up for any unclear information. In addition, I refrained from interfering in participants' interpretations of their experiences.

6.3 Policy and practical recommendations.

To policymakers.

There is a need for Stavanger policymakers to ensure the accessibility of international student's statistics in Stavanger. This recommendation came as a result of the researcher failing to find Stavanger specific Statistics on international students. These statistics need to be divided by gender and country of origin. This can guide and inform the appropriate allocation of resources within Stavanger institutions for internationalization of education. It can as well provide a platform for effective analysis of the contribution of international students in Stavanger city. In addition, these statistics can also provide motivation for policymakers to attract more international students that are not statistically significant within the city to access education in the city.

There is a need for Uganda, Kenyan, and Tanzanian policymakers to facilitate ICT development and advancement in these countries. It can be done through ensuring appropriate allocation of resources to respective ICT ministries to decentralize communication masts to districts and village levels. With this, every citizen can have access to network and connections to allow communication between international students and their family members at home.

To the host institutions:

There is a need to develop deliberate practical programs for integration of international students in Stavanger. It can be done through matching a Norwegian student with an international student in Stavanger, creating activities that bring about a cultural mix, and teaching international students about Norwegian culture. This would assist international students to integrate socially, culturally, and contextually. In addition, the institutions need to continue with the formal teaching of the Norwegian language and the orientation programs, as this can as well facilitate international students' integration into the host community.

To social workers and other responsible professionals.

Social workers and other professionals need to support the host institutions and community to realize the wellbeing of international students. Educator and advocacy roles are necessary for social workers to ensure international students' welfare in Stavanger. Advocacy is needed for international students to get more necessary information on health services. Informal education for Norwegian language skills is necessary as well. This can be done through creating language home learning groups to ensure that international students practice speech and add more time for language learning.

To the international students

There is a need for openness to learning new cultures and lifestyles of the host community. Therefore, international students need to be contextual to adjust appropriately to a new environment. They need to be open to learning the host community language and culture. Also, they need to, as much as possible, try to interact and mix with the local people in the host community. This can ease their integration process.

6.4 Areas for further research.

I recommend further studies on international students' social integration styles. Asking questions like, is it a student's deliberate choice to integrate? Or Is the host community responsible and having deliberate mechanisms for international students' integration?

REFERENCE LIST

- African facts (2020) 'Facts about Tanzania.' Available at: <https://africa-facts.org/facts-about-tanzania/> (Accessed: 6 April 2020).
- Afrikanza (2020) '12 Interesting Facts About Kenya.' Available at: <https://afrikanza.com/facts-about-kenya/> (Accessed: 6 April 2020).
- Almurideef, R. (2016) 'The challenges that international students face when integrating into higher education in the United States', *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, p. 69.
- BABA, Y. and HOSODA, M. (2014) 'Home Away Home: Better Understanding of the Role of Social Support in Predicting socio-cultural adjustment among international students.', *College Student Journal*, 48(1), pp. 1–15.
- Banjong, D. N. (2015) 'International students' enhanced academic performance: Effects of campus resources', *Journal of International Students*, 5(1), pp. 132–142.
- Boccagni, P., Righard, E. and Bolzman, C. (2015) 'Mapping Transnationalism: Transnational social work with migrants', *Transnational Social Review*, 5(3), pp. 312–319. doi: 10.1080/21931674.2015.1101243.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Qualitative Research in Psychology Using thematic analysis in psychology Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77–101.
- Brooks, R., Fuller, A. and Waters, J. (2012) 'Changing Spaces of Education. An Introduction.', in Brooks, R., Fuller, A., and Waters, J. (eds) *Changing Spaces of Education: New perspectives on the nature of learning*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–18.
- Brooks, R. and Waters, J. (2010) 'Social networks and educational mobility: The experiences of UK students', *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 8(1), pp. 143–157. doi: 10.1080/14767720903574132.
- Bryman, A. (2012) 'Social Research Methods'.
- Bryram, M. and Feng, A. (eds) (2006) 'Living and studying abroad: Research and Practice.' Multilingual Matters Limited.
- Charmaz, K. (2008) 'Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for advancing social justice studies.', in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. 3rd Editio. SAGE Publications, pp. 203–241.
- Chavajay, P. (2013) 'Perceived social support among international students at a U.S. university', *Psychological Reports*, 112(2), pp. 667–677. doi: 10.2466/17.21.PR0.112.2.667-677.
- Chen, L.-H. (2007) 'East-Asian Students' Choice of Canadian Graduate Schools', *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 7(4), pp. 271–306. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.ijea.2150071.
- Chen, Y. and Chen, H. (2009) 'A Study on International Student Adjustment from Academic, Social and Cultural Viewpoints in Taiwan', *International Conference on Business Management and Information Technology Application*, pp. 52–60.
- Christensen, J. *et al.* (2020) 'Norway, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.' Available at:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Norway> (Accessed: 16 January 2020).

Creswell, J. W. and Poth, C. N. (2018) 'Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches.' Fourth Edi. Edited by H. Salmon et al. California: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004.

Diku (2019) 'International Students in Norway Contributors to Quality in Higher Education.' doi: 978-82-8421-001-8.

Diku (2020) 'Study in Norway: Tuition Fees.' Available at: <https://www.studyinnorway.no/study-in-norway/tuition-fees>.

Domville-Roach, E. (2007) 'A Comparative study of international and american study abroad students' expectations and experiences with host countries.' East Tennessee State University.

East African Community (1999) 'EAC Treaty 1999'.

Ellwood, C. (2011) 'Undoing the Knots: Identity transformations in a study abroad programme', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 43(9), pp. 960–978. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-5812.2009.00559.x.

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A. and Alkassim, R. S. (2016) 'Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling', *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), p. 1. doi: 10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11.

European Migration Network (2019) 'Attracting and Retaining International Students in the EU.' Brussels.

Foronda, C. L. and Belknap, R. A. (2012) 'Short of transformation: American ADN students' thoughts, feelings, and experiences of studying abroad in a low-income country.', *International journal of nursing education scholarship*, 9(1). doi: 10.1515/1548-923x.2411.

Gao, F. (2008) 'Financial Pressure'.

Gautam, C. *et al.* (2016) 'Challenges for global learners: A qualitative study of the concerns and difficulties of international students', *Journal of International Students*, 6(2), pp. 501–526.

Gbollie, C. and Gong, S. (2020) 'Emerging destination mobility. Exploring African and Asian international students' push-pull factors and motivations to study in China', *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(1), pp. 18–34. doi: 10.1108/IJEM-02-2019-0041.

Gebhard, J. G. (2013) 'EFL learners studying abroad: Challenges and strategies', *Asian EFL Journal*, 15(2), pp. 155–182.

Global Migration Data Portal (2020) 'Internationally Mobile Students: Key Trends'.

Gu, Q. (2015) 'An emotional journey of identity change and transformation: The impact of study-abroad experience on the lives and careers of Chinese students and returnees', *Learning and Teaching*, 8(3), pp. 60–81. doi: 10.3167/latiss.2015.080304.

Gündüz, M. and Alakbarov, N. (2019) 'Analysis of social adjustment factors of international students in Turkey', *Journal of International Students*, 9(4), pp. 1155–1171. doi: 10.32674/jis.v9i4.917.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007) 'Ethnography: Principles in practice.' Third Edit.

Taylor & Francis e-Library.

Huang, L. M. and Bilal, D. (2019) 'Speaking Out: International Doctoral Students' Information Needs, Seeking Behaviors, Feelings, and Experience during the Process of Applying for Graduate Study in the US', *Libri*, 69(3), pp. 213–228. doi: 10.1515/libri-2019-0015.

Institute of International Education (2020) 'Economic Impact of International Students.' Available at: <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/Economic-Impact-of-International-Students> (Accessed: 15 January 2020).

International Federation of Social Workers (2019) 'What is social work'.

International Organization for Migration (2018) 'Global migration indicators 2018.' Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC).

International Organization for Migration (2019) 'World Migration Report 2020,' *World Migration Report 2020*. doi: 10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004.

Iwara, I. O., Kativhu, S. and Obadire, O. . (2017) 'Factors hindering Socio-cultural integration of international students: A case of University of Zululand and University of Venda.', 15(4), pp. 1676–1683.

Joko, G. (2017) 'Summary of Lazarus and Folkman's Theory of stress, appraisal, and coping', pp. 1–5.

Kanuha, V. K. (2000) "'Being" Native versus "Going Native": Conducting Social Work Research as an Insider', *Social Work*, 45(5), pp. 439–447. doi: 10.1093/sw/45.5.439.

Kaya, J. (2020) 'Inside the international student world: Challenges, opportunities, and imagined communities', *Journal of International Students*, 10(1), pp. 124–144. doi: 10.32674/jis.v10i1.1031.

Kim, H. J. o. and Okazaki, S. (2014) 'Navigating the cultural transition alone: psychosocial adjustment of Korean early study abroad students', *Cultural diversity & ethnic minority psychology*, 20(2), pp. 244–253. doi: 10.1037/a0034243.

Kim, K.-H., Yun, H. and Yoon, Y. (2009) 'The internet as a facilitator of cultural hybridization and interpersonal relationship management for asian international students in South Korea', *Asian Journal of Communication*, 19(2), pp. 152–169. doi: 10.1080/01292980902826880.

Kuo, Y.-H. (2011) 'Language Challenges Faced by International Graduate Students in the United States', *Journal of International students*, 1(2).

Lazarus, R. . and Folkman, S. (1984) 'Stress, appraisal and coping'. New York: Springer.

Lee, J. and Opio, T. (2011) 'Coming to America: Challenges and difficulties faced by African student athletes', *Sport, Education and Society*, 16(5), pp. 629–644. doi: 10.1080/13573322.2011.601144.

Lee, J. S. (2017) 'Challenges of international students in a Japanese university: Ethnographic perspectives', *Journal of International Students*, 7(1), pp. 73–93. doi: 10.32674/jis.v7i1.246.

Li, M. and Bray, M. (2007) 'Cross-border flows of students for higher education: Push-pull factors and motivations of mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong and Macau', *Higher Education*, 53(6), pp. 791–818. doi: 10.1007/s10734-005-5423-3.

- Lin, J. H. *et al.* (2012) 'Social networking and adjustments among international students', *New Media and Society*, 14(3), pp. 421–440. doi: 10.1177/1461444811418627.
- Lunenburg, F. C. and Irby, B. J. (2008) 'Writing a Thesis or Dissertation. Tips and Strategies for Students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.' Edited by E. Brenkus *et al.* United States of America: *Corwin Press, Inc.*
- Ma, J. (2017) 'Cooperative activity as mediation in the social adjustment of Chinese international students', *Journal of International Students*, 7(3), pp. 856–875. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.570038.
- Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (1999) 'Designing Qualitative Research.' 3rd Edition. London: SAGE Publications.
- Marx, S. and Pray, L. (2011) 'Living and learning in Mexico: Developing empathy for English language learners through study abroad', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 14(4), pp. 507–535. doi: 10.1080/13613324.2011.558894.
- McGinn, T. *et al.* (2016) 'Social Work Literature Searching: Current Issues With Databases and Online Search Engines', *Research on Social Work Practice*, 26(3), pp. 266–277. doi: 10.1177/1049731514549423.
- Mesidor, J. K. and Sly, K. F. (2016) 'Factors that contribute to the adjustment of international students', *Journal of International Students*, 6(1), pp. 262–282.
- Migration Data Portal (2020) 'International students: Key trends.' Available at: <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/international-students#key-trends> (Accessed: 17 April 2020).
- Mikal, J. P., Yang, J. and Lewis, A. (2015) 'Surfing USA: How Internet Use Prior to and During Study Abroad Affects Chinese Students' Stress, Integration, and Cultural Learning While in the United States', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 19(3), pp. 203–224. doi: 10.1177/1028315314536990.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2020) 'Foreign Missions.'
- Morrow, S. L. (2005) 'Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology', *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), pp. 250–260. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250.
- Munk, M. D., Poutvaara, P. and Foged, M. (2012) 'Elite Education Abroad and Social Reproduction', *The Danish Conference of Sociology*, pp. 1–35.
- Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2003) 'An experience of interculturality: Student Travellers Abroad.', in Alred, G., Byram, M., and Fleming, M. (eds) *Intercultural Experience and Education*. Multilingual Matters Limited, pp. 101–113.
- Neuman, W. L. (2006) 'Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.' 6th Edition. Pearson International Edition.
- NUMBEO (2020a) 'Cost of Living Index by Country 2020.' Available at: https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/rankings_by_country.jsp (Accessed: 9 April 2020).
- NUMBEO (2020b) 'Northern Europe: Cost of Living Index by City 2020.' Available at: https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/region_rankings.jsp?title=2020®ion=154 (Accessed: 9 April 2020).

- Olwig, K. F. and Valentin, K. (2015) 'Mobility, education and life trajectories: new and old migratory pathways', *Identities*. Routledge, 22(3), pp. 247–257. doi: 10.1080/1070289X.2014.939191.
- Ortega, R. M. and Faller, K. C. (2011) 'Training from an Intersectional Cultural Humility Perspective : workers challenges cultural competence', *Child Welfare*, 90(5), pp. 27–50.
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2020) 'Coping,' *Oxford University Press*. Available at: https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/coping_1 (Accessed: 30 May 2020).
- Rajapaksa, S. and Dundes, L. (2002) 'It's along way home: International student adjustment to living in the United States.', 4(1), pp. 15–28.
- Roth, J. A. (1962) 'Comments on " Secret Observation " Author (s): Julius A . Roth Published by : Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for the Study of Social Problems Stable URL : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/799240>', *Oxford University Press*, 9(3), pp. 283–284.
- Rubin, H. J. and Rubin, I. S. (2011) 'Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data.', *SAGE*.
- Ruddock, H. C. and Turner, D. S. (2007) 'Developing cultural sensitivity: nursing students' experiences of a study abroad programme.', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 59(4), pp. 361–369. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04312.x.
- Russell, J., Rosenthal, D. and Thomson, G. (2010) 'The international student experience: Three styles of adaptation', *Higher Education*, 60(2), pp. 235–249. doi: 10.1007/s10734-009-9297-7.
- Sahasrabudhe, U. (2007) 'International Student Mobility: A Perspective of Graduate Engineering Students from India.' California State University, Long Beach.
- Sanchez, P. (2007) 'Urban Immigrant Students : How Transnationalism Shapes Their World Learning', *The Urban Review*, 39(5), pp. 489–517. doi: 10.1007/s11256-007-0064-8.
- Sawir, E. *et al.* (2008) 'Loneliness and International Students: An Australian Study', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(2), pp. 148–180. doi: 10.1177/1028315307299699.
- Seel, N. M. (ed.) (2011) 'Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning.' 2012 editi. Boston: Springer.
- Sherry, M., Thomas, P. and Chui, W. H. (2010) 'International students: A vulnerable student population', 60(1), pp. 33–46. doi: 10.1007/s10734-009-9284-z.
- Shouse, E. (2005) 'Feeling, Emotion, Affect', *M/c journal*, 8(6).
- Snodin, N. (2019) 'Mobility experiences of international students in Thai higher education', *International Journal of Educational Management*, 33(7), pp. 1653–1669. doi: 10.1108/IJEM-07-2018-0206.
- Statista (2020) Information and communication technology (ICT) development index ranking top-20 countries in 2017. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/267083/top-20-countries-in-ict-development-index/> (Accessed: 19 May 2020).
- Statistics Norway (2019) Migrations, 2018: In-migration and out-migration, by citizenship. Available at: <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/flytting/aar/2019-04-26>

(Accessed: 17 April 2020).

Statistics Norway (2020) *Population*.

Straiton, M. L., Ledesma, H. M. L. and Donnelly, T. T. (2017) 'A qualitative study of Filipina immigrants' stress, distress and coping: The impact of their multiple, transnational roles as women', *BMC Women's Health*. *BMC Women's Health*, 17(1), pp. 1–11. doi: 10.1186/s12905-017-0429-4.

Suen, L.-J. W., Huang, H.-M. and Lee, H.-H. (2014) 'A Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling', *Journal of Nursing*, 61(3), pp. 105–111.

Sümer, S., Poyrazli, S. and Grahame, K. (2008) 'Predictors of depression and anxiety among international students', *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 86(4), pp. 429–437. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6678.2008.tb00531.x.

Tani, M. (2017) Paper commissioned for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2019 Consultation on Migration.

Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics (2019) *Tanzania in figures 2018*. Dodoma.

The New Jersey Minority Educational Development (NJMED) organization (2019) *2019 World Best Education Systems – Final Rankings*.

Tremblay, K. (2002) 'Student mobility between and towards OECD countries : A comparative analysis', in *In International mobility of the highly skilled*, pp. 39–67.

Trice, A. G. (2003) 'Faculty Perceptions of Graduate International Students: The Benefits and Challenges', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 7(4), pp. 379–403. doi: 10.1177/1028315303257120.

Uganda Tourism Board (2020) *Destination Uganda 2019-20*. Kampala City.

UNESCO (2019) 'Education : Outbound internationally mobile students by host region'.

UNESCO (2020) *Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students*.

Wiers-Jenssen, J. (2003) 'Norwegian Students Abroad: Experiences of students from a linguistically and geographically peripheral European country', *Studies in Higher Education*, 28(4), pp. 391–411. doi: 10.1080/0307507032000122251.

Wiers-Jenssen, J. (2019) 'Paradoxical Attraction? Why an Increasing Number of International Students Choose Norway', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 23(2), pp. 281–298. doi: 10.1177/1028315318786449.

Wilken, L. and Dahlberg, M. G. (2017) 'Between international student mobility and work migration: experiences of students from EU's newer member states in Denmark', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(8), pp. 1347–1361. doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2017.1300330.

World Population Review (2019) *Norway population 2020*. Available at: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/norway-population/>.

World Population Review (2020a) *Kenyan population 2020*. Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/kenya-population/> (Accessed: 12 April 2020).

World Population Review (2020b) *Nordic Countries 2020*. Available at: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/nordic-countries/> (Accessed: 10 February 2020).

World Population Review (2020c) Uganda Population 2020. Available at:
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/uganda-population/> (Accessed: 13 April 2020).

Wu, H., Garza, E. and Guzman, N. (2015) 'International Student's Challenge and Adjustment to College', *Education Research International*, 2015, pp. 1–9. doi: 10.1155/2015/202753.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Participant Consent Form.

Project Topic: Experiences of living abroad: A study of Ugandan, Kenyan, and Tanzanian international students in Stavanger- Norway. Focus on Feelings, Challenges, and Coping mechanisms.

Background and Purpose.

The purpose of this study is to explore international student's experiences of living in a foreign country while studying in Stavanger- Norway. The study focuses on the student's feelings of living abroad, their challenges and coping strategies. The study will be guided by the following research questions,

4. What are the feelings associated with living abroad as a student?
5. What challenges are these group of students faced with in the process of living abroad?
6. How do international students cope with the difficult challenges that they are faced with?

This study is in partially fulfilment of my master's program in Social work with families and children.

Who is responsible for the research project?

For more information about the study please do not hesitate to contact;

Researcher: Akoth Agnes, agnes.akoth@yahoo.com. University of Stavanger.

Supervisor: Richard Piech, richard.piech@uis.no. University of Stavanger.

Why are you being asked to participate?

The participants are purposively selected to participate in the study. In this study, graduate international students from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania living in Stavanger will be selected to be interviewed. Therefore, you have been selected because you are an international student and your experiences of living abroad are important and unique to be explored and documented. An email will be sent to all the potential participants with the consent form and study background prior to study interviews.

What does participation involve for you?

Individual in depth interviews lasting for approximately one hour with each participant will be used as a data collection method with graduate international students in Stavanger. An interview guide with open ended questions will be used to facilitate information gathering during the interviews. A recorder will be used to capture all the information in order to ensure that no information is missed out. Graduate international students will be asked to share their experiences about their feelings of living in a foreign country, challenges faced and the coping strategies.

Participation is voluntary.

Participants involvement in this study is voluntary meaning that a participant can withdraw their consent for participation at any time during the study without having any negative consequences on the participants side. All information gathered from participants will be

anonymous.

Management of your personal data.

All information collected from the participants will be transcribed, coded and analysed with Nvivo by the researcher. This information will be viewed by only two people that is the researcher and her direct supervisor at the University of Stavanger. No names or any other background information that can identify the participants personal information will appear or be included in the final report. Furthermore, all participant names will be anonymised and therefore no participants names will appear on both the transcriptions and the final publication that will be presented to the University of Stavanger. All the participants information will be stored in the researcher's laptop that has a personal password that cannot be accessed by any other person. Upon completion of the study, all participants information, transcriptions and codes will be deleted from Nvivo software and researcher's laptop.

Where can I find out more?

In case of need for more information about the study or you want to exercise your rights please contact:

University of Stavanger
P.O. Box 8600 Forus
N-4036 Stavanger
NORWAY

Supervisor: Richard Piech, richard.piech@uis.no. University of Stavanger.

Researcher: Akoth Agnes, agnes.akoth@yahoo.com. University of Stavanger.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Piech

(Research Supervisor).

Akoth Agnes

(Researcher/ Student).

CONSENT FORM

I have received and understood information about the project "Experiences of living abroad: A study of Ugandan, Kenyan, and Tanzanian international students in Stavanger- Norway. Focus on Feelings, Challenges, and Coping mechanism" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent:

- to participate in the in-depth interviews as an international student from Uganda, Kenya or Tanzania (Cancel countries that are not your own).
- for my data to be processed for the above-mentioned purpose.
- for my data to be presented and published in an anonymous way.
- for my personal data to be used and stored safely for the purpose of master's thesis completion.

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approximately 30th June 2020.

Participants Name:

Date:

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

(No identifiable personal data will appear on the final publication)

Participants Demographics.

Name:

(Your names will be kept as secret and will not be used in reporting)

Gender: Female. Male.

Age range: 25-30 years. 31-35 years. 36-40 years. 41-45 years.

Country of origin:

Period of living in Stavanger: 5 months – 1year. 1year and above.

Current education level:

Open ended questions.

1.Student Feelings.

- How do you feel living away from home?
- Do these feelings affect how you interact and relate with people in Stavanger? If yes, then explain how?

2. Challenges faced.

a) Communication challenges at home.

- How do you communicate with people at home?
- What are some of challenges you have faced while communicating with people at home?
- Has your frequency of communication with people at home changed? If yes, then explain How?
- How has the changes in communication affected your relationship with people back home?

b) Social interaction challenges in Stavanger.

- What challenges have you faced in terms of social interactions in Stavanger?
- How have these challenges affected the way you relate with people in Stavanger?

c) General related Questions.

- Apart from the communication and social interaction challenges, what other challenges have you faced while living in Stavanger?
- How have these challenges affected your life in Stavanger?
- Why do you think you encounter these challenges?

3.Coping Strategies.

- How have you been able to cope with the realities of living abroad?
- What resources/ networks have been supportive to you? and How have they been supportive as a coping strategy?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

Appendix 3: Non-plagiarism Declaration.

I hereby declare that the Dissertation titled “Experiences of living abroad: A study of Ugandan, Kenyan, and Tanzanian international students in Stavanger- Norway” submitted to the Erasmus Mundus Master’s Program in Social Work with Families and Children:

- Has not been submitted to any other Institute/University/College.
- Contains proper references and citations for other scholarly work.
- Has listed all citations in a list of references.

I am aware that violation of this code of conduct is regarded as an attempt to plagiarize and will result in a failing grade (F) in the program.

Date: 14/06/2020

Signature: 

Name: AKOTH AGNES

Appendix 4: Ethical approval from NSD.



NSD's assessment

Project title

Experiences of living in a foreign country: A study of graduate international students from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania studying in Stavanger-Norway.

Reference number

615796

Registered

24.02.2020 av AKOTH AGNES - akothagnes@gmail.com

Data controller (institution responsible for the project)

Universitetet i Stavanger / Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet / Institutt for sosialfag

Project leader (academic employee/supervisor or PhD candidate)

Richard Piech, richard.piech@uis.no, tlf: 51831192

Type of project

Student project, Master's thesis

Contact information, student

Akoth Agnes, agnes.akoth@yahoo.com, tlf: +351917625561

Project period

04.02.2020 - 30.06.2020

Status

12.03.2020 - Assessed

Assessment (1)

12.03.2020 - Assessed