

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL PROBLEMS OF ACCULTURATION: NIGERIAN MIGRANTS EXPERIENCE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the psychological and sociocultural challenges in the acculturation experiences of Nigerian Migrants in the United Kingdom. The research was done as a qualitative study and 10 Nigerian Migrants participated in the study. Narrative inquiry approach was used to capture narratives of the participants' acculturation experiences in the United Kingdom. Findings shows that the problems the migrants experienced in the United Kingdom were majorly as a result of outrageous expectations they had prior to their travel to the United Kingdom. It was also evident that the participants experienced culture shock, a feeling of discrimination and challenges with making friends in the host culture. Narrative analysis also revealed that the incongruence between the expectations of the participants and their real experiences gave rise to circles of problems such having their emotions suppressed, experiencing achievement anxiety and an experience of psychological disorientation. Conclusions are made that the narrators had challenges with reconciling their previously held cultural values and beliefs with those of the host culture. Recommendations are made that it is important for migrants from one culture to another to have adequate information regarding what is obtainable in their proposed culture and country of travel.

KEYWORDS: Acculturation, Migrants, psychological, sociocultural

INTRODUCTION

Living in a culture different from one that a person was raised can generate emotions. In the course of surviving in the novel culture and conditioning, a person's previously held values can be lost in transition. This is because the host culture is dominant and unapologetic as it takes supremacy and enforces adherence without recourse to what foreigners have as their own culture and conditioning. Experiencing a first-hand contact with the host culture can be unsettling with a compendium of challenges and new hurdles to surmount. Although it might be exciting to think of travelling to a new culture and country, the joy sometimes might be easily lost when living and surviving within the tenets of the host culture becomes unbearable. These experiences are generally discussed within the domain acculturation.

ACCULTURATION

Research that looks at how individuals and groups who travel from one culture to another engage with and adapt to the host country's environment has constantly used the term acculturation to refer

to a process of psychological change that takes place when there is contact between two or more cultural group and their individual members (Berry, 2005). Psychological acculturation as defined by Al-Omari and Pallikkathayil (2008, p. 129) is “voluntary and comfortable modifications that occur in the individual’s lifestyle, behaviours, beliefs, values, and identity as a result of continuous first-hand contact with different cultural groups”. In contrast to this definition, however, modifications may not be comfortable. This is because acculturation presents psychological problems since there are alterations in the individual’s lifestyle, behaviours, beliefs, values and identity (Berry, 1980).

Acculturation involves the process of getting an individual to fit in into a particular culture that is different from their indigenous culture. It can be seen as a similar process to the natural process of adaptation via fitting in behaviourally to a new physical environment (Chirkov, 2009). Acculturation can also be seen as a process of cultural change, occurring because of contact between members of two or more cultural groups (Berry, 1980). Others view acculturation as a process of changing from one's original culture to a new culture with evidence of such changes being seen in their attitude and behaviour (Christenson, Zabriskie, Eggett, and Freeman, 2006).

A wider explanation of the concept of acculturation is given by Graves (1967), who argues that acculturation involves not only behavioural adjustments but also involves choices of language for communication, ethical affiliations, values and psychological adjustments, which can together be viewed as a multi-dimensional concept of identity. However, this does not happen without difficulties because, as Haasen and Reimer (2008) have noted, during acculturation people may experience the loss of their original society’s norms and values in favour of those of their new society.

In John Berry’s theory of two-dimensional acculturation, culture maintenance and culture contact (Ward and Kus, 2012), he conceptualises acculturation as a factor in either maintaining one’s own culture of origin values or coming into contact with another culture and thus developing a bicultural identity. Thus, an individual who has migrated to another culture can choose between four: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation, based on Berry’s two dimensions of acculturation (Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok, 1987). Berry and colleagues added marginalisation to describe individuals who have no interest in either adhering to the dominant host culture’s behaviours and attitudes or their native culture’s values (Berry et al, 1987). The forms of acculturation identified by the researchers above are accompanied by difficulties since they involve changes in the lives of people that sojourn to other cultures, as Berry (2005) has also noted.

One thing is paramount during acculturation, which is the point that the host culture is dominant. It is considered the popular culture and its values and attributes will surely override those of foreigners visiting that culture. This is overriding in the sense that visitors, sojourners and migrants learn to adapt to the dominant host culture even at the expense of their own previously held behaviours or values, and this situation could leads to acculturative stress, as Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell, and Utsey, (2005) have noted.

Berry and colleagues have found that, during acculturation, integration is preferred over all of the other three styles of acculturation mentioned; assimilation, separation and marginalisation (Berry et

al 2005, as cited in Ward and Kus, 2012). Integration, which leads to developing biculturalism as a new blended identity in the host culture, has therefore been considered to enhance adaptation into the new culture. However, problems associated with acculturation, like the choice of ethnic identity in the host culture when the individual tries to integrate, have been found to play a role in the development of depression (Abu-Rayya, 2006, cited in Jung et al, 2007). These problems can be exacerbated if the people involved are confused about which identity out of those of the dominant host and their ethnic origin they should maintain during such intercultural contact. This view is supported in the works of Berry et al (1987).

Researchers agree that acculturation is a critical life event (Berry, 1997). It is a period of both difficulty and survival for the individuals and the difficulties experienced during this period may affect their chances of having healthy lives. Thus, as Haasen and Reimer (2008) state, the problems individuals and families encounter during acculturation when they migrate to other cultures may lead to mental health problems. Acculturation therefore presents a complex problem whose roots have been traced to the interactions between social, psychological and biological stressors (Haasen and Reimer, 2008). Also, Lee, Koeske and Sales (2004) argue that acculturative stress is induced by the challenges in the adaptation process. However, it is worth pointing out that the mental health implications of acculturative stress experienced by individuals who sojourn to other cultures need to be well articulated in the acculturation literature in terms of the impact that the degree of acculturative stress experienced may have on the people that experience it.

The difficulties of acculturation are capable of affecting the lives of people who experience them because as researchers (Furnham and Trezise, 1983) argue, they can reduce people's abilities to connect and articulate their functional aspects. This is because the immune system experiences losses due to the stressful life events experienced during this period. Difficulties in acculturation, as seen above, have psychological, emotional and sociocultural aspects. It is therefore crucial that the various aspects of the difficulties experienced by the acculturating individuals are classified, so that we can understand how these individuals experience challenges that may affect their stability and personal development as they pursue their goals in the host culture.

Psychological/emotional problems of foreigners in the host culture

Researchers have identified some problems as characterising foreigners' experiences of living abroad. These problems confront them as they acculturate into the host country's norms and ways of living, and pursue their purposes of travel. Some of these problems affect their psychological and emotional wellbeing and may give rise to further unpleasant and disturbing experiences.

During transition, as Davis (2010) note, depression, anxiety and stress may arise as common outcomes and by-products of people's experiences. These psychological problems could have negative impacts that will reduce an individual's functioning in the new environment. Thus, as research by Amy, Baker, and Curtis (2007) has revealed, individuals face significant difficulties while adjusting to new settings or environments owing to separation from their prior social support networks (family members, peers and staff at earlier institutions). The loss of these significant networks accounts for unhealthy situations characterised by transition distress that have overwhelming emotional impacts on peoples' wellbeing (Amy, Baker, and Curtis, 2007.).

Experiencing acculturation challenges while living abroad can erode the foreigners the concentration to achieve their goals of travelling overseas. Some of them may be vulnerable to depression owing to loneliness and being vulnerable to depression which shows the degree of difficulties faced by these group of persons that might affect their sense of being and psychological wellbeing in the host country. These conditions can lead to problems of identity confusion because, as Jung, Hecht and Wadsworth (2007) note, the effects of depression are reported to be related to self or identity crises. When depression characterises the experiences of foreigners overseas, it may result in a shutdown of their engagement with both their inner and outer worlds, which may also lead to suppressing those depressive emotions. The suppression of emotional feelings may be partly because of individuals being reluctant to discuss their personal problems due to cultural stigma and the possibility that they are not aware of the psychological services available. Either of these, though, means that their voices are silenced and their emotions suppressed, which could degenerate to other conditions.

In as much as this is a condition that poses a serious threat to the existence and experiences of people, understanding them in detail is a self-enhancing process. Although a study by Gill (2007) tried to understand the acculturation problem of a set of foreigner's abroad (international students), Gill's (2007) research did not go into detail in order to understand and explore the outcomes of the difficulties on the Chinese students' wellbeing.

The nature of close contacts and closer interactions occurring around the world means that research needs to further understand some of the problems these intercultural interactions create and how it affects individuals and groups. Thus, because people live closer now, it may also mean that individual differences may generate emotions. Mental health problems may be on the increase due to cultural differences and may create a fault line in overall integrated functioning of individuals if not addressed.

Church (1982) quotes researchers (Adler, 1975; Arensberg and Niehoff, 1964; Foster, 1962; Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963; Lundstedt, 1963 and Oberg, 1960) as conceptualising the difficulties foreigners face abroad as 'culture shock'. This is seen as a process of adapting to cultural stress which may evidence symptoms such as anxiety, helplessness, irritability, insecurity and a longing for a more predictable and gratifying environment. Conditions like these create emotional tensions arising from changes and unfamiliarity that lead to further psychological distress, something which is supported in the work of Pantelidou and Craig (2006).

The psychological difficulties facing international foreigners may also affect their physiological homeostasis. As Bovin and Marx (2011) have argued, emotional stressors can have physiological reactions such as increased heart rate, dizziness, shallow breath, hot flashes, nausea and sweating. In this condition, adrenalin is intermittently secreted into the system due to the high level of fear and uncertainty present during such emotional conditions (Charney, 2004). Thus, not only do these problems impact on the psychological wellbeing of the individual but physiological states are also altered since the bodily functions are interconnected. Connections are made regarding how the human being is affected in totality in a study by Jiang, Sato, Hara, Takedomi, Ozaki, and Yamada, (2003). They found that there was a relationship between psychiatric symptoms, psychological fatigue and physical fatigue, all of which involved difficulty with concentrating the mind, being tired, feeling localised and physical discomfort.

Sociocultural problems of foreigners abroad

Social adjustment problems and difficulties experienced by foreigners, like the psychological ones, affect their normal functioning, growth and social development. Researchers have attempted to differentiate between the psychological problems and sociocultural difficulties people experience in the host culture. In the view of this, Wang and Mallinckrodt (2006), found that sociocultural problems, in contrast to psychological ones, affect foreigners abilities to acquire social skills and behavioural competencies that will enable them fit in to the new culture. Other researchers note that sojourners can experience sociocultural difficulties that could lead to changes in their sense of self or identity because their identities have been previously and locally constructed in their own sociocultural environments (Zhou, Y. Jindal-Snape, D. Topping, K and Todman, J, 2008). However, attempts to classify what is psychological and what is sociocultural will be more appreciated if efforts are made to help reduce these problems rather than just classify them.

Differentiating between these problems and difficulties, if not directed towards providing appropriate support, will not help resolve the sometimes life-threatening situations that foreigners experience. Living abroad from the threading discussions in this current research presents problematic situation with regards to intercultural adjustment due to incompetency of various kinds. Managing those in competencies is far more important than identifying them, because of the effects it has on people's wellbeing.

In another study, Schweisfurth and Gu, (2009) noted that the sociocultural difficulties that foreigners experienced arose because they could not change the social and cultural norms in the host culture. This was a problem due to the fact that they had sociocultural norms in their home cultures which were different from those of the host culture. These authors' views contrast with previous submissions by Zhang and Goodson (2011) and Ramsay, Jones and Barker (2007). These authors argue in their research on sojourners that because sojourners lack social connections with host nationals they experience more sociocultural difficulties. The contrast being that since sojourners, as Schweisfurth and Gu (2009) argued, cannot amend the local social and cultural norms, it becomes difficult for some of them to connect with the host nationals. However, the experience of sociocultural difficulties and challenges may result from both conditions. Lacking the social skills to adapt might lead to experiencing sociocultural challenges abroad. Sociocultural interaction may be difficult to achieve because of the discomfort that people of different cultures may have as they encounter each other. Sometimes host nationals may be threatened by the presence of foreigners and their presence could raise anxiety among the host nationals. Likewise, Smith and Khawaja (2011, p. 703) argue that "cultural norms, language barriers, and the nature of friendships in the host country may also impede sojourners' ability to establish friendships, and thus contribute to their feelings of loneliness". With this being the case, there may be poor interaction owing to sociocultural differences, which may leave the foreigners with more acculturation difficulties to deal with when they are abroad.

As research has shown, foreigners reacting to sociocultural problems engage in social interactions with their fellow nationals and non-host country nationals (Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001; Montgomery, 2010). Engaging in these social networks gives a sense of place and fosters a sense of being at home which has been taken from them by the current sociocultural norms in the host culture, as stated in the work of Duarte (2005). The same researcher further found that migrants

consistently created spaces in the host culture to make them feel connected with their homeland (Duarte, 2005). This view in effect suggests that foreigners may be longing for social gratification but may not succeed in getting them.

METHOD

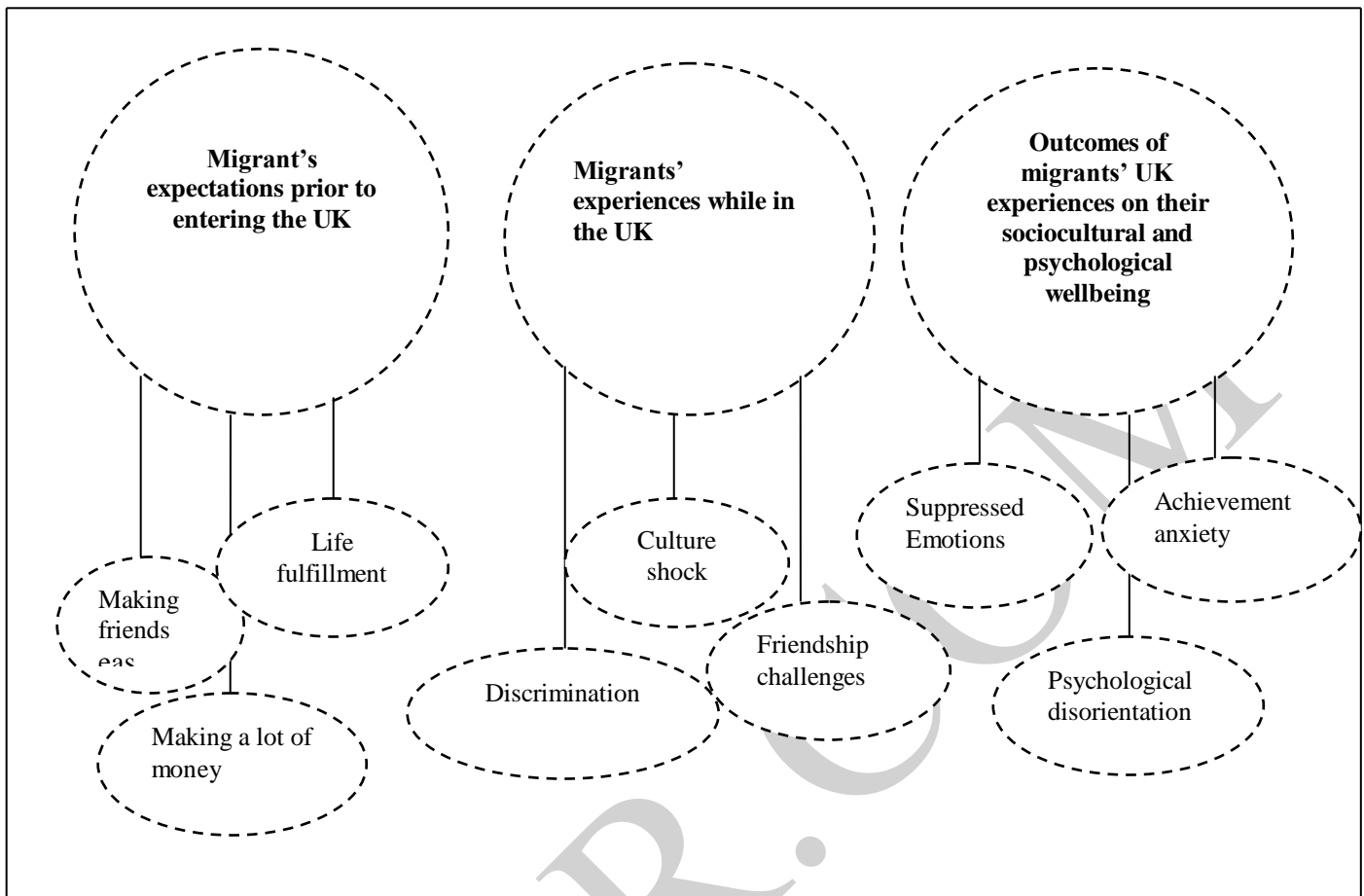
This study is purely a qualitative research. Participants in the study comprise of 10 Nigerian migrants living in the United Kingdom. They were sampled by convenience during a flight waiting time in Murtala Muhammed International airport Lagos Nigeria while they were waiting for their flights to the United Kingdom. The age ranges of participants in this study were between 25-50 years. Participants were sampled on the criteria that they were living in the UK either as business people, expatriates, or people seeking settlement in the UK. Participants were people who were born and raised up in Nigeria. The participant's anonymity is preserved in this study as none of the participants will be identified through their stories. The researcher diligently sought for their consent to participate in the study and those who granted their consent were the participants for the study. As noted earlier, the study is designed as a qualitative research and used the narrative interviewing approach to gather stories of the participants on their psychological and sociocultural experiences of acculturation in the United Kingdom. Each narrative interview lasted between 30-45 minutes and the entire narrative interviewing session was completed in 5 days. During the fieldwork process, 2 participants were interviewed in one day and the interview was conducted in the waiting lounge where the participants were relaxed and waiting for their flights to the United Kingdom. The narrative interviewing was recorded with an audio recorder for transcription purposes only.

DATA ANALYSIS

Narratives gathered from the 10 participants in this study were transcribed for analysis purposes. The narratives recorded from the 10 participant were transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. Each transcription took 2 to 3 hours because it involved listening, writing and repeating the same process until every word from the participants had been fully transcribed. The transcription practice enabled the researcher to familiarise deeply with the narratives collected in the study. Although it is time consuming to transcribe the entire narrative interviews but it was helpful in increasing the researchers' connection to the stories. Effort was made to transcribe narratives collected in each day to avoid data loss and keep the stories fresh in the mind of the researcher.

The justification for adopting the narrative inquiry was to attend to the acculturation difficulties of the participants from their own point of view. Meanwhile narrative analysis is still at the embryonic stage when compared to other conventional methods of analysis but it has the strength of evidencing how individuals construct meaning to their lived experiences which of course is the crux of this study. The method has also widened our understanding with regards interpreting the different ways that people perceive reality and make sense of their personal experiences. In this research, the narratives of the participants is undertaken through cross-narrative thematic analysis which is a method the researcher adopted to help negotiate through the entire narrative interview in a more traditional approach. The themes that emerged from the reading and re-reading the transcribed narratives in this study are grouped under three categories representing the expectations of the migrants prior to their entering the United Kingdom, the experiences of the migrants while in the United Kingdom and the observed impact of their experiences to the sociocultural and psychological wellbeing. This is represented in a diagrammatic illustration shown below.

Figure. 1 Cross-narrative thematic evidence



The illustration above is the narrative evidence from the narrative interviewing undertaken in this study. This has been grouped into three major categories with themes that weaved through the stories of the participants in the study.

Prior to entering the United Kingdom for their various purposes of travel, the migrants confirmed in their narratives that they had expectations and it was common to all of the participants as their stories revealed. These expectations are grouped in three major themes and they include; making friends and of course increasing their connections, making a lot of money more than they can make in their home country and being fulfilled in life.

The second category in the cross-narrative thematic analysis is the experiences of the migrants while they were in the United Kingdom and these experiences include; culture shock, discrimination and challenges with making friends.

The third category addresses the impacts of the experiences of the participants as they acculturate in the UK. Themes that emerged from their narratives included; suppressed emotions, facing achievement anxieties and experiencing psychological disorientation.

The stories of the participants are analysed without alteration of any kind because they represent the participants' unique experiences and this is done to retain the meaning of those stories to the participants. Vignettes from the participants' stories are included to connect them with the on-going

analysis of the narratives from the participants.

Migrant's expectation prior to entering the United Kingdom

Making friends: Participants in this study had expected that their migration to the United Kingdom will be very interesting as they were expecting to make many friends and increase their connections. This according to them will be very helpful in achieving their life dreams of travelling to the United Kingdom. Meanwhile from the themes that weaved the entire narrative interview, it was evident that they had difficulties making friends with the host culture nationals which of course was a reason why they resorted to making friends with their fellow home culture nationals as opposed to their earlier view of engaging with multiple friendships with the host culture nationals. This can be seen in some of their vignettes:

“...my view was to have many English people's friends”[participant 1], “...it was about expanding my connection with the people of London”[participants 4], “...when I was in Nigeria, one will hope that he will make friends and learn from them”[participant 6], “... issues like wanting to be friends with the people of the land which I never saw”[participant 8], “...my people in the village even me was just thinking that it is an opportunity for me to have new contacts with white people” [participant 10], “...I left my friends and promised to send them pictures of me and the white people immediately I enter London”, [participant 9].

As the vignettes suggest, making new friends was a major part of the migrants' expectation which according to majority of the stories was something they lived and dreamt of achieving. There were still others with such expectation.

[Participant 5] “...Who would think that I will not have made so many friends in the UK since three years I have lived there?”my only major friends are Nigerians but that is not what I expected” [participant 3], “...to even become friends with them is a problem and I never expected that” [participant 2].

Just like the stories of expecting to have many host national friends were common, several other participants emphasized a lot on that factor as among what they felt will help them to survive their stay in the United Kingdom. Thus, participant 7 said:“...people from Nigeria are now my friends which is not supposed to be so because I expected to have English friends” Participants in this study saw making friends with the host nationals as a ladder to making money as well which follows in the theme below.

Making a lot of money: The entire narrative interviews reveal that becoming richer than they would have been in Nigeria was the expectation of the narrators. Although they were disappointed as most of their stories revealed that the expectation did not come to reality because of some challenges they met as they experienced the United Kingdom. This is evident in their vignettes as participant 6 said:“...the hope that I would make too much money as you well know that Nigeria is difficult is really disappointing”. Others who shared the same kind of expectation saw making money as major among their chief expectations before they travelled to the United Kingdom. Thus: [participant 4] “...I was expecting to be very rich when I entered England,” [participant 8] “going to England as I thought was just to make a better life through making good money”, [participant 2] “...this saying

that money is cheap to make in England is not true and you know this is our notion in Nigeria”.

Stories of the participants above reveal a strong positive feelings and expectations of making money overseas which according to them was a notion in their home country. Others also shared the same kind of expectation. Thus:[participant 5] “...all my thought was that it is easier to make money in UK than in Nigeria because of the stories we hear in Nigeria” [participant 1] “...I did even odd jobs that I can’t do in Nigeria just to make money which was not what I thought before I came to London” [participant 3] “...some people think that money fall from tress in the UK and of course I usually think like that before that yes there is avenue to make some real cash when I will enter the United Kingdom” [participant 7] “...see how our brothers are engaging in drugs and some other illegal business just to survive but we never thought it was going to be difficult for us to make money in England and Nigeria might even be better”.

As seen in the stories above, easy money making expectations were common which however did not materialise leading some migrants into illegal activities to survive in England. Their expectations of making a lot of money were so high that they represent their thought about money as falling from trees. This is an outrageous expectation which never came to fulfillment. There were still others whose expectations before they entered the United Kingdom was to make money very easily and comfortably. Thus:[Participant 9] “...life in the UK is expensive, you pay for everything except air you breathe and you know you can’t have money left under such a difficult situation, which was not in thinking before we travelled abroad” [participant 10]”...people will not even understand me in the village just like returned home because they thought just like me before I entered England that I was going to be too rich in a short time immediately I enter England”.

Their expectation did not play out well with regards to making money in England as obviously seen in the stories above which made the participants to feel that making money in Nigeria was easier. This again was contrary to their previous thought processes while they had not travelled to the United Kingdom.

Life fulfillment: feeling fulfilled in life was among the expectations of the participants in this study as narrative interviews has shown. The stories told by the participants about their life fulfillment suggest that they were less fulfilled contrarily to their previous thinking before they experienced the UK. This is shown in some of their narrative vignettes below.

[Participant 1]”...life in the UK is not better than life in Nigeria but the fact is that I am already pursuing something that why I am still there. Before I went to England I expected to be more fulfilled and happier in life”[participant 4] “...there are times when I feel like just going back to Nigeria to start afresh because I am not happy there in the UK like I am always in Nigeria which was even what I did not expect. Like we always think that Overseas is better than Nigeria until we experience it”, [participant 2]”...happiness is everything in life and I thought I was going to be happier in England but that is not true because too many things to think about will not make a person to feel fulfilled”[participant 5] “...I will not even advise anybody who is doing something meaningful to leave Nigeria to UK because you will not be fulfilled and relaxed because of bills and tight rules which some of us did not think about before we left Nigeria”[participant 7]”...whenever I remember how I was thinking before I left Nigeria, it baffles me to think that people don’t know that

they will be more fulfilled if stay back home in their country because no place like home. We are not finding it funny in England and life is not what it should be”.

Participants in this research have lost touch with understanding why some of them even travelled overseas as their life fulfillment expectation crumbled and never came to pass. This has affected the kind of advice they will give to people in Nigeria who think that coming to England will be source of their life fulfillment. The thoughts of not being fulfilled were still seen in the stories of others as shown in the vignettes below.

[Participant 8] “...you can imagine that I don’t feel fulfilled in the UK as a result of the challenges we face as foreigners who did not know how their system works and we were thinking otherwise”[participant 10] “...if I think about how much I have developed myself within the time I travelled to England I would still be wondering if I have made meaningful life changes because people are expecting much from me and things are not easy there as we use to think making life even more difficult”[participant 9] “...living in England is not easy as one may not really say that our life is better off here than when we were in Nigeria but we sometimes feel that it will be until we get there”[participant 3] “...when I was travelling back to UK just like now after Christmas, my joy will disappear because I am a stranger and you know the life of stranger is not always at rest, life in Nigeria is far better than in UK like I have seen although I thought otherwise”, [participant 6]”...nobody should think that we in England are living a fulfilled life because it is not true, there are so many things to deal with but they will not agree because I use to think like that before now. The fact is when you can’t go home empty handed you manage wherever you see”.

Being fulfilled in the United Kingdom was something that did not happen in the experiences of the narrators in this study because they had experiences that eluded them the sense of satisfaction and life fulfillment as their stories have shown. Meanwhile it was because of their failed expectations that made their cognition to shift from thinking and feeling fulfilled to feeling unfulfilled.

Migrant experiences while in the United Kingdom: the stories of the participants in this study reveal an experience of acculturation challenges which affected the realization of their held expectations before they travelled to England. This is grouped under three categories culture shock, discrimination and friendship challenges

Culture shock: culture shock was seen to be among the major experiences of the narrators as shown in their stories. The participants had issues with understanding how to negotiate in the host culture and it affected how their expectations were met or not met. In the vignettes below, participants were not able make a lot of money as they had expected due to cultural barriers. Thus:

[participant 2] “...it is difficult to make it in another culture because we are not from here and you know that it can frustrating”[Participant 5]”... when you arrive the UK you will know that it is not the same kind of thing you use to know”[participant 4]”... it’s about the new environment that will surely knock you off making it difficult for one to make meaningful progress”[participant 7] “...Those people’s culture is tough, no respect for elders and nobody greets you like in Nigeria” [participant 6] “...they always say they need their space at all times and so you may not see friendly people” [participant 3]”...people of other cultures are discriminated against, because sometimes

they will not allow you come close” [participant 1] “...Loneliness is a problem and it is major among what we go through in England and it is heart breaking” [participant 8]”...The interaction that use to exist back home is lost while abroad and it could hamper a person’s programme”[participant 9] “...I am particularly affected by the English weather which is different from what we have in Nigeria”[participant 10] “...Life is expensive especially buying our native food in the UK is costly, so sometimes you just find out that you are working and paying back to them”.

Just as the evidence from the themes in the narrative experiences of participants in this study revealed, culture shock and acculturation challenges formed a major part of their experiences in the United Kingdom. Difficulties and frustrations arising from the differences between what they held as their own cultural values and what they experienced in the host culture affected their individual adjustment. It was more like people who were lost in transition such that their previously held conception about the host culture was inconsistent with what they eventually experienced.

Discrimination: having a feeling of being discriminated against was also evident in the themes that emerged from the participants stories. This is also shown in their narrative vignettes.

[participant 9]”....seriously they see us in England as inferior people, [Participant 1] “...sometimes when I enter the public bus, people will even sit far away from me as if I am smelling bad”[participant 4] “...you know I dint know I was black until even as fair as I am until I went to UK and they made me know that I was really black”[participant 3] “...if people know what it means for a person to be avoided then they will know that it is better they are in their home country”[participant 5] “people normally avoid us like sickness because we are from Africa” [participant 10]”...sometimes they tell us plainly that they don’t want us in their land because we are Nigerians and we are seen as corrupt and dubious people”[participant 6] “....you will eventually know by their actions that we are not one”[participants 2] “....if not because of the fact that I am waiting for paper in the UK I will just leave that country, they discriminate us a lot” [participant 8] “...its only in the church where you can get love in that country but at work or anywhere else you will not”[participant 7] “...if is was possible for them to reintroduce slavery they will because people from our side are not getting what they deserve just because they are not from that place”.

Participant’s stories had elements of feeling being discriminated against in the host culture. As seen in their narrative vignettes, all of them had stories that evidenced that they felt some form of discrimination in their experience in the UK ranging from not having a feeling of being loved and accepted to having a feeling that they were seen as inferior individuals.

Friendship challenges: narratives of the respondents show that they experienced difficulties in making friends in the host culture and it weaved through the entire stories in this study. This is further shown in their narrative vignettes.[Participant 4] “...to find a friend whom to trust is difficult because they don’t trust us too” [participant 1] “...I have tried to get along with people in the UK but sometimes you just know it is not working” [participant 5] “...English people always say they want their space and so what it means is that you are not wanted as a friend”[participant 3]”...to be friends with them is not easy but such is their life though”[participant 2] “...everybody is just on their own with their own country people so that is the order of the day there” [participant 7] “...UK

is a difficult place to find friends especially those of us that are blacks” [participant 6] “...when people are afraid of each other then there is no way you can find trusted people to be friends with”[participant 10] “...I know how difficult it is even to find a friend to confide in”[participant 9]” so I just have friends that are Nigerian too to avoid getting into trouble” [participant 8]”...the freedom we enjoy back home is not the same in the UK. Because you can find people of the same kind with you and be friends and life goes on but that doesn’t happen very easily in the UK”.

The idea that the host culture will be friendly did not really hold for the participants in this study. They had experiences that were akin to a person who is swimming in lonely water which means that they were actually seeing people but could not have a fulfilling relationship with them. Just as their stories above revealed, the participants had experiences that made feel them feel like they were not accepted in the UK. The meaning they made from their encounter with the host culture nationals was that the host nationals did not want their companion as foreigners. Meanwhile it is important to still point out that this was their stories about their experiences of difficulties in establishing relationships from how they construct meaning to their lived experiences.

Outcome of migrant’s UK experiences on their sociocultural and psychological wellbeing

This is last category in the migrant’s narrative themes which focuses on the effect produced by the expectations of the migrants that was not met and the real experiences they had on their personal psychological and sociocultural wellbeing. This is examined under three themes that emerged from their narratives.

Suppressed emotions: participants in this study had experiences they had no control over which of course was overwhelming leading them to suppress their emotions. Thus:

[participant 1]”...because we don’t have a choice than to endure it and continue pursuing why I am there”[participant 6] “...the point is that I can’t help myself under these experiences so I can’t even complain” [participant 5] “...when I look around and there is no one to pour my feelings on I just live with it after all” [participant 8] “...when you complain you will not even get any response so me I don’t want to share my thought with anyone as well” [participant 4] “...a stranger will always be a stranger, there is no point trying to show yourself so we just have to lock up and survive”[participant 3] “...who cares about how you feel? So you have to deal with it yourself”[participant 7] “...there is no father to complain to, no mother to complain to, or even brother or sister, so it’s really difficult” [participant 9]”...assuming one has a friend there to trust then we can always let them know how difficult it is for any of us but it not there”[participant 2] “...best companion in the UK is yourself and yourself and that means that you are on your own as nobody really cares about how you are doing” [participant 10] “...in such condition you may find out that lock up his emotions without a way of relieving it”.

All the participants in this study made sense of their experiences in the UK as one that made them suppress their emotions. They had feeling of helplessness and this was evident in their stories as they continuously reminded themselves that there was no need seeking help to manage their life challenges. What that means is that there was nothing they could do to express how they felt because they felt that their voices will not count owing to what they know about the host culture. The idea of not wanting to share their emotional states reveals the extent they felt that it was not going to make

things any different. This is a psychological state of learned helplessness characterised by not trying to do because the previous was not fruitful. The avenue for them to share their experiences of acculturation challenges was not there from their stories which made them to suppress the feelings associated with those experiences.

Psychological disorientation: participants shared stories that reveal situation of psychological disorientation. This can be seen in the vignettes of their narratives.

[Participant 1] "...in that kind of situation one don't know what he is doing again" [participant 4] "...I felt like I don't know what is happening to me in that particular period"[participant 2] "... I experienced something that made me begin to doubt myself "[participant 3] "...in the midst of the whole thing I was asking myself what was wrong with me"[participant 10] "...the things I have seen abroad is very unclear sometimes"[participant 6] "...It was like a mirage or dream because I was not expecting those experiences"[participant 5] "...suffering in that kind of place without anybody to help me was like I did not know what was happening to me"[participant 7]"...the experience is so bad that I feel like am I still the same person that they are doing like this" [participant 8]"...I wondered if I was still aware of what I was doing because it wasn't easy trying to survive in England"[participant 9] "...I got so angry, got so disappointed and felt like I was not alive anymore all because I need to live and get a stay in England".

A feeling of psychological disorientation was common in the stories of the participants. They had experiences that made them feel like their sense of consciousness has eluded them. In their narratives they revealed having experiences that made them doubt their self-awareness and self-concept. Not being in touch with time and place is an example of psychological disorientation which has been seen in the vignettes.

Achievement anxiety:

Achievement anxiety is a situation where a person becomes unsure and tensed about whether they are going to achieve their life goals or not. In such situations, the individual is very pessimistic about achieving in life. This category is the last category in the cross-narrative thematic analysis and it is among the themes that emerged in the stories of the participants in this study. It also emerged as narratives of what the participants experienced after their expectations were not met. This is evident in their narrative vignettes below.

[Participant 2] "...the fears of making it will just grip you because the challenges are just too much" [participant 4]"...the money we want to make in England is not even in view because one has not even established the contact of making the money" [participant 5] "...they always think that making it in England is easy but we that have seen how difficult it is cannot be sure that we will even make the money"[participant 6]"...advancement in life was among the reasons I entered UK but people of my friends in Nigeria have made it big time and I am still unsure of tomorrow"[participant 7] "...a man that is surrounded by all this issues and discrimination in a foreign land I don't know how it going to end for me because I can't come back to Nigeria with nothing too"[participant 1]"...the way forward is not always seen sometimes in the UK when you are there like we are now but people back home always see everything"[participant 8]"...the fears of going back home without enough is mostly our problem because people at home are expecting much from us so some of us will stay

back even without hope of making it in life”[participant 9]”...my fears are that one may just be saying he is living in the UK and still will not do anything tangible”[participant 10] “...the rules are very tight in England and that is why I wonder how we can even make it under that kind of condition”[participant 3]”...although nobody knows tomorrow but to find immediate job is even not easy because the good jobs have been taken by their people, so we are only left with small dirty jobs and is that what will pay our bills and form our savings? I doubt”.

Participants in this study have made sense of their lived experiences in the UK from different lenses. However what was common in their experiences in this category is that they are not sure of achieving much owing to conditions ranging from not having a good job, feeling of discrimination, stringent rules, lack of social connections and other difficulties. This was seen throughout their narratives as they kept ruminating on what will be their fate if they don't eventually achieve what they expected to achieve. The narrators had expected more from coming to the United Kingdom and not experiencing those expectations gave rise to circles of psychological and sociocultural problems as those seen and analysed above.

Discussion of findings and Conclusions

The cross-thematic narrative analysis above has shown that migrants who participated in this study had outrageous expectation which did not materialise and led to series of complications of thought and disruption of psychological wellbeing. Sociocultural difficulties were also present in their stories as they had experiences that were different from what they experienced in their home cultures. Such experiences were also contrary to the kind of expectations they had prior to their travel to the United Kingdom. The study also reveal that culture shock was among the experiences they had but as their narrative suggests they were not prepared to handle the shock due to little knowledge of how to reconcile their held cultural differences and those of their host culture. Acculturation challenges and the dissonance they experience was partly because of the inconsistency between their prior perception and the real experiences they had. Making a lot of money, being fulfilled in life and expanding their contacts through making friends in the host culture were the precursors to the acculturation problems the participants had. This of course was responsible to the experience of culture shock, feeling of discrimination and problems of establishing contact and friendship with the host culture nationals. As the findings further revealed, the participants were affected by their experiences in the host culture with evidence of that seen in their narratives as all of them had elements of feeling psychologically disoriented, suppressing of emotions and experience of achievement anxiety. Acculturation challenges differ depending on the purpose of sojourn and the individual circumstances. The issues that this research has opened up relates to how wrong perception can create psychological tension leading a disconnection in different level of functioning in an individual. Just as a study by Montgomery(2010) has shown, when people experience diversities it could erode them their sense of selves and this seen in the current study were participants had series of psychological disorientation and doubt of self-worth and sense of self. In their experience of culture shock, participants had spent reasonable amount of time in the United Kingdom but were still experiencing culture shock and acculturation problems. This is however contrary to the submission of Oberg(1960) who opined that people would have overcome culture shock a few months of their stay in the host culture. The implication of this is that people are different with regards to acceptance and adjustment which might account for why certain cultural individuals in the host culture spend their entire time adjusting to the host cultural values. This was

also found in the stories of the stories of participants in this study. Findings of the study has also revealed that participants were in flight, fight or freeze condition wherein they had to suppress their emotion because they were helpless and could not just afford to go back to Nigeria for reasons of social stigma. Such conditions as Levine (1997) have noted, occur when people are driven down to their defense cascade where fight and flee are not possible. The current research was reflective because the narrative inquiry adopted in this research was seen as useful as the narrators had a sense of relief after narrating their experiences from their own perspectives. This could be argued as one of major strengths of narrative inquiry because it tends to give the narrators a voice of relief.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Personal circumstances exist and it will be probably not useful to have a common acculturation adaptation strategy that will serve the various categories of migrants overseas. This is because the participating individuals had their past experiences which were unique to them and which will continue to account for how they perceive and appraise future experiences. However, as findings of this study have shown, adequate and accurate information is necessary when people are planning to travel to novel cultures. This will help to reduce unreal expectations because when such expectations do not come to pass as this study have shown, it could be responsible for disconnecting a person from their selves. It is important that the information is double-edged such that people in various cultures are educated properly on what obtains in another culture and society. The fears of facing social stigma if they return back to settle in Nigeria as seen in the narratives of the participants in this study is an example of how the entire social system is existing in fallacy. If it is addressed, it will help make expectation to be in congruence with experiences and may help to reduce acculturation difficulties occurring as a result of the disparity in what are expected and what is experienced.

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