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Exploring the Experiences of Black International Caribbean Students at a Canadian University

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Education

EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK INTERNATIONAL CARIBBEAN

STUDENTS AT A CANADIAN UNIVERSITY

(Spine title: Experiences of Caribbean Students in Canada)

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by

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Abstract

Drawing upon an anti-racist theoretical perspective based on the work of Dei (1995), this research examines the cross-cultural experiences of Black International students from the Caribbean studying in Canada. The focus is on foregrounding the experiences and voices of the participants. By adopting a case study methodology, I interviewed three female graduate students regarding their cross-cultural experiences at one particular university. This research found that all three of the students were concerned about the existence of racial discrimination in Canada including at the university and spoke of the invariable consciousness of their skin colour. The students' narratives communicated that there are not enough diversity and opportunities for cross-cultural learning in the university curriculum and that their needs are not adequately addressed. By investigating the diversity that the students perceive to be present at the university and the effectiveness in ensuring equity for minority students, this research aims to increase awareness among educators about the circumstances that adversely affect international Caribbean students.

Keywords: cross cultural experiences, racism, anti-racism, internationalization, Black International Caribbean students

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my deceased Dad to whom I credit my perseverance.

Acknowledgements

I am obliged to recognize all the individuals, who assisted in the completion of this thesis. I deeply value their contributions. Without them, this very significant requisite for earning my Master of Education Degree would not be attained.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the purpose and background of my study, identify the research questions, introduce, and describe the theoretical framework guiding the research. The chapter also presents a brief discussion on some of the key terms applied throughout the study. The central topic is Black International Caribbean students' experiences at a Canadian university in the context of internationalization. This study is informed by the research of Dei et al. (1995), involving Caribbean students in Toronto High Schools. The theoretical framework draws on anti racism perspectives from within the field of education. According to Dei (2000), "the anti-racism perspective" is one that can be used "to interrogate both structural barriers to and social practices for systematic change" (p.34). The data for the study were collected using semi-structured interviews conducted with three female International Graduate students from the Caribbean attending a particular university in Canada. The students' responses were interpreted and analyzed in light of the anti-racist literature, and resulted in the emergence of four major themes: instances of racism inside and outside the university: experiences with internationalization-personality factors and an assessment of the overall university experience.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to examine the cross-cultural experiences of Black International Caribbean students at a Canadian university and to understand the relative importance of the students' perceptions of internationalization in light of their experiences. Research on this more marginalized group within the population of international students is sparse. Presently there is limited knowledge about Caribbean students studying at Canadian universities and my research seeks to fill this gap in the literature. In contrast to previous investigations on international students, the present study focused on Black Caribbean students' perceptions, and experiences regarding aspects of the cross cultural climate including those related to race. Using a qualitative case study, I investigated the students' experiences with racism and provided an in-depth analysis of how such experiences impact on their identity, social interactions, and academic success. The study also examined the students' perceptions of the university's efforts to internationalize the curriculum and whether they believed that the internationalization policy was, at the time of the study, meeting its mandate. Weber (2011) affirms that there is a need to understand internationalization from the vantage point of the international students themselves and, hence, information regarding the students' experiences of internationalization should be obtained directly from them. The students' perceptions of whether they are being discriminated against or catered for provide a means for assessing the university's thrust towards internationalization. My research has the potential to build a foundation for other researchers in the area and to drive further action for understanding and addressing the needs of other International students at the university. Further research on the topic can investigate and reveal whether the experiences of the students in my case study are representative of other

International Caribbean students enrolled at the university studied or at other universities in Canada.

Context of the Research

The university being studied has over the years grown to become an internationally recognized teaching and research institution. With an aim to increasing cultural diversity, internationalizing higher education and maintaining its viability in a highly competitive knowledge economy, the university has embarked on a rapid drive to expand its existing international student population. In the process, it has recruited top quality international students from more than sixty countries around the world. Because higher education is a valuable resource, many students, irrespective of geographical or ethno-cultural backgrounds, aspire to the best quality university education and black international students, including those from the Caribbean are no exception. Some have made the decision to choose the University among many other North American/Canadian higher education institutions. These students venture far away from home and their experiences in their new environment should be enriching, enjoyable and rewarding. As confirmed by Caroll and Ryan (2005):

Many international students face significant difficulties having taken the decision to study abroad, many encounter difficulties in their quest to be academically successful in the learning environment….Even students with a good command of English can struggle with local peculiarities and lack of discipline specific vocabulary. However, international students must deal with all these things and more: they have different social and cultural mores and customs, norms and values from the ones they have known; different modes of teaching and learning; and different expectations and conventions about participation and

performance. They must cope without their usual support systems…often each problem exacerbates the others and can become overwhelming. (p.5)

This can prove difficult for some international students. It is incumbent on those entrusted with the responsibility, to ensure positive cross-cultural connections and to create enabling environments that will assist international students in maximizing their full potential.

Despite wide claims of diversity and multiculturalism in Canada, many seem to be unaware of what these terms really mean and what they should represent. According to the results of the most recent survey of international students posted on the website of the Canada Bureau of International Education CBIE (2008), about 30% of the total number of international students surveyed reported that they had experienced some form of cross cultural racism or discrimination as an international student in Canada. Such data provide support for my research and a basis for comparing the experiences of international students in Canada. Among the international students surveyed, European students were the least likely to report experiencing cross cultural racism, followed by the North Americans and the Asians respectively. Among the African students who participated in the CBIE study, 42% of those from Sub-Saharan Africa and 29% of those from North Africa and the Middle East admitted to having some experience with cross cultural racism. Among the Caribbean students who participated in the research, 31% of them, and 31% of those from Central/South America, reported experiences of cross cultural racism in Canada (CBIE, 2009). The results of this survey demonstrate the feelings of cross cultural discrimination among international students in Canadian universities and provide an indication that the internationalization and equity policies at the Higher Education level are not responding to the diversity among students.

Research Questions

Qualitative research according to Creswell (2003) includes a central, overarching question and related sub questions. The overarching question outlines the main purpose of the study while the sub questions narrow the focus of the study. In adherence to Creswell's proposition, I investigated the following question and sub questions:

The main research question of my study is:

1. What are the students' cross cultural experiences in the context of internationalization at one particular Canadian university?

The sub-questions are:

A.   How do the students describe their 'in class' and 'out of class' relationships with 'white' professors and students at the university?

B.   How do the students view the university's efforts at ensuring diversity and cross- cultural interactions in the classroom?

C.   Have the students experienced any form of cross cultural racism or discrimination within the university?

D.   What are the students' understanding of and attitudes towards the university's internationalization policies and practices?

Significance of the Study

My interest in this topic was in part sparked after I took the 'Globalization and Educational Restructuring' course during the Intersession period of last year. While reading for the course, I became enlightened about the concepts of Internationalization, anti-racism theory and anti-racist education. My experiences as an International student further stirred my interest in

the topic and guided my idea for this research. The conclusions drawn by a number of researchers regarding the negative experiences of international students in North American universities further contributed to my idea for this research. Marginson and Erlenawati (2011) maintain that the experiences of international students vary according to their national-cultural background and physical appearance. According to Marginson & Erlenawati, international students are 'othered' by stereotyping and discrimination in the institutions where they are studying. Popaduick and Arthur (2004) support Marginson and Erlenawati's research findings. They ascertain that international students "face many demands as they try to make the cross-cultural transition that is required for them to live and learn in host countries…influenced by cultural differences between the educational methodologies in their host countries, as well as the demands to make changes in the roles of daily living" (Popaduick & Arthur, 2004, p.127). Research conducted by Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009), also confirmed that international students face challenges concerning their language and classroom experiences and that feelings of marginalization in the classroom are common among international students in Canada.

Because Caribbean students seemed to be among the most invisible, marginalized and neglected groups of international students attending universities in Canada, it was important to ascertain how they were affected, how they evaluated the process and the position they assumed within this perceptibly complex environment. Among the major issues that were addressed in my study were the students' cultural experiences including encounters with racism both in class and out of class, the impact of internationalization on their interactions, as well as the factors that influenced their decisions to study in Canada. The students' experiences and perceptions of the university's internationalization process also warranted examination in the thesis. In-class experiences such as relationships, integration, communication, expected class room behavior,

curriculum and pedagogy were among other specific factors that the study sought to investigate. Out of class experiences such as administrative and bureaucratic institutionalized support services, non-formal support, including student-groups and on campus support offices, were also examined. The results and recommendations from this study may prompt many other questions about the experiences of Black students in Canadian Higher Education institutions and signal directions for further research.

Theoretical Framework

This study of students' cross-cultural experiences is informed by my engagement with one related theoretical perspective which I considered relevant to the topic. The anti-racism perspective adopted in my research is based on the epistemology of Dei (1995), a researcher, educator and expert in the field of Black students' studies. The theory assisted me in formulating my research questions and was paramount in providing a clearer understanding of what anti-racism means, as well as in presenting a cross-cultural approach to improving educational outcomes for minority students in Canada. Further, the use of the anti-racism perspective encompasses issues of institutional and systemic racism, as it provides me with a conceptual framework for understanding the potential of racism and structures of inequality to affect the lives of black international students who are also visible minorities. Further, the anti- racism perspective:

> Interrogates the institutional structures of teaching, learning and administration of education. The framework acknowledges the role of educational systems in producing racial, gender and class based inequalities. …It acknowledges the pedagogical need to confront the challenges of diversity and differences in Canadian society and the urgency

for an education system that is more inclusive and capable of responding to minority

concerns. (Dei, 1995, p. 13)

The preceding quotation provides a foundation for the supposition that racism is inherent in the

education system and by extension, in the cross cultural interactions of diverse groups. The anti-

racism perspective is appropriate for informing this research and for explaining the cross cultural

experiences of the students in this study.

Essentially, an anti-racism framework seeks the task of addressing race relations and

power-related issues affecting international students from the Caribbean in Canadian

universities, with the intent to propose more inclusive and equitable policies and practices.

The framework provides the conceptual means by which to confront discrimination in Canadian

education systems and to appreciate the rich knowledge and experiences of minority groups. My

use of anti-racism framework in the study also drew upon one other anti racist perspectives from

within the field of education. According to Rezai-Rashti (2005), anti- racist education:

"aims at truly achieving equality, justice and emancipation of minority students….Insists

on closely studying and revealing the sites, institutions and ways in which racism

originates….Argues that the persistence of stereotypes and prejudices must be met

with   comprehensive analysis of their origins by way of questioning existing social and

political structures….Claims that although social, economic and home factors cannot be

ignored, much of the blame for minority students' failure can be traced to the existence

of institutionalized racism within the classroom" (p.7).

Further, "anti-racist approaches to conducting research "give voice to marginalized people and

provide them with a space for empowerment" (Lee, Okazawa-Rey et al., 2002. p. 10). Anti-racist

research "places the minoritized at the centre of analysis by focusing on their lived experiences

and the simultaneity of their oppressions" (Brewer, 1993, p. 16). Likewise, the use of the anti racism framework as applied to this study, will focus on the educational and social experiences of the three Black students and provide them with a voice. The framework will also assist in determining the extent to which the university is achieving the goal of fostering equity and diversity. Consequently, anti-racism theory "allows us to get explanations for why things are the way they are in terms of power relations and inequality issues" (Lee, Okazawa-Rey et al., 2002, p. 10). By focusing on the internationalization of education at the university and its impact on three sojourners, I endeavour to build knowledge about any discrimination and suppression that is experienced in the delivery of higher education within the specific university studied.

Defining Racism

The term racism can in effect have several connotations. How racism is defined is reliant upon the perception of the individual providing the definition and the context in which such meaning is being derived. The term, racism, has been applied to a variety of attitudes, some of which are often misrepresented and devalued to mean less than a tendency to dislike some people for the colour of their skin (Healy & O' Brien, 2007). Racism, according to Lewis, Sutherland & Brooks (2010), has everything to do with skin colour, but it is not just about skin colour. According to Sutherland and Brooks, race is also about relations of power and how they work to provide privileges for some and disadvantages for others at the systemic level. Similarly, Lee (1996) has perceived racism to be "the use of institutional power to deny or grant people and groups of people rights, respect, representation and resources based on their skin colour" (p. 27). According to Lee, racism is usually reflected in a hierarchy in which anything associated with Whiteness is placed at the top and the school is one place in which this hierarchy is deep-rooted. The term racism is also used to describe instances when individuals intentionally or

unintentionally use their position of power to target an individual or group of people negatively in a discriminatory manner because of their race and/or skin colour (Brathwaite, 2010).

Concomitantly, the experience of racism has several dimensions and can be classified using what Jones (1997) terms a 'tripartite typology.' The first form of racism proposed by Jones (1997) is individual racism. With this form of racism, individuals are likely to experience racial discrimination on a personal level. The second form of racism offered by Jones (1997) is institutional racism, experienced as a result of social and institutional policies that exclude those affected from participation in society. The third and final form of racism is cultural racism, which occurs when the cultural practices of the 'dominant' group are generally regarded by society and its institutions as being superior to the culture of a 'subordinate' group. Complimentary to Jones' (1997) proposed typology of racism, Brathwaite (2010) propounds the concepts of institutional racism, structural racism and systemic racism which he defines as follows:

> Institutional Racism: any form of racial and covert policies of an institution or organization within the education system for example, a biased curriculum. Structural Racism: a system of social structures that produces cumulative, durable race-based inequalities e.g. a system of hierarchy and inequity, primarily characterized by White supremacy-the preferential treatment, privilege and power for White people at the expense of Black and other racially oppressed people. Systemic Racism: racism so entrenched in an institution that established policies, procedures and practices result in accepting racial discriminatory policies and practices as the norm. (pp.309-310)

Beyond the theoretical underpinnings of Jones and Brathwaite, Lipson (2008) posits the concept of "everyday racism." According to Lipson, 'everyday racism' is manifested in the small ways in which racialized people experience racism while interacting with members of the dominant White culture. This type of racism can take the form of, but is not limited to behaviours,

anecdotes, jokes, glances, gestures and forms of speech (Lipson, 2008), it is often painfully felt by its victims (Lipson, 2008). This is telling and provides verity to James' (2003) claim that race has the potential to affect how individuals identify themselves, interact with others and understand their place in society. Moreover, if the individual issues are to be addressed, then race and racial differences need to be acknowledged as salient to individual experiences (Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009).

Similar to everyday racism, polite racism, is ingrained in the daily actions of dominant groups. According to Hughes and Kallen (1974), polite racism is difficult to detect and involves instances where the perpetrators, in polite and covert ways, discriminate against and segregate themselves from their Black counterparts (Hughes and Kallen, 1974). Another form of racism found to infiltrate societies is cultural racism (Cohen, 1998, Henry et al., 2000). Cultural racism is woven into the fabric of the dominant culture and involves collective and mass beliefs about race (Samuel, 2005). The final type of racism pertinent to this discussion is silent racism (Trepagnier, 1996). Silent racism is racism performed by people "who by all accounts, would classify themselves as not racist" (Trepagnier, 1996, para. 1). "In this form of racism, the dominant group holds negative beliefs and attitudes about the minority group but are only semi-aware of them" (Samuel, 2005, p. 25).

Much of the discourse on anti-racism has emerged from the contributions of pioneering anti-oppression scholars including George Dei. Anti-racism is defined by Dei and Calliste (2000) as "an action-oriented, educational and political strategy for institutional and systematic change that addresses the issues of racism and the interlocking systems of social oppression" (p. 13). According to Dei (2007), the concept of anti-racism challenges definitions of what accounts for knowledge, how such knowledge is produced and whose voices and experiences that it

marginalizes. Anti-racism, can also be defined as "a conscious rejection of the belief in anyone's race inferiority or superiority, which in turn leads to a rejection of the necessity for institutional reinforcement of racism and for personal acts of prejudice and discrimination to affirm racial superiority" (Aptheker, 1993, p. xi).

As a value stance, anti-racism serves to counter racism as a system of privilege, inequality and oppression based on perceived differences among groups of individuals (Basham, 2003). From an academic perspective anti-racism work can be defined in terms of dismantling any unjust policies and practices within educational institutions, strengthening the cultural and racial diversity of their demographic profile and infusing issues of anti-racism and multiculturalism throughout their curricula (Basham, 2003, p. 290). Conclusively, anti-racism is about social change.

Defining Black Students

The term "Black students" has been used by previous researchers to refer to those students of Afro Caribbean descent who identify themselves as such (Dei, Mazzuca, McIssaac & Campbell, 1995). The term Black is also used in reference to African-Canadians. Since the concerns of Black/Afro Caribbean Students and that of African Canadian students, vary to some extent (Dei et al. 1995), it is necessary to operationalize the term 'Black students' as it applies to this current study.' The term "Black" was used in this research for the purpose of describing and/or identifying only those Afro-Caribbean Students who identify themselves as 'Black'.

Defining Caribbean Students

To date, the majority of studies on Caribbean students have focused mainly on children or grandchildren of Caribbean migrants to Canada, some of whom were either born in Canada or migrated to Canada during their early or late childhood. Essentially, the term Caribbean students,

as it applies to this current study, includes only those students originating from one of the ten Caribbean territories of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as students from Guyana, Haiti and Bermuda.

Defining International Students

Caribbean Students are also a subset of the wider population of International students at the University which is the subject of this study. The term 'international students' refers to all 'Non-Canadian' students who are studying in Canada on a valid study permit. These students do not have "permanent resident" status and are not authorized to remain in Canada beyond the terms of their study permit. In other words, international students are those who have come to Canada specifically to pursue their higher education (Statistics Canada, 2012).

Defining Internationalization

Jane Knight (2004), one of the most prominent scholars in the field, provides a recent and succinct definition of the term internationalization and describes it as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of higher education" (p.2). Drawing on Knight's definition, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada ([AUCC], 2007), proposes that in the higher education context, internationalization should be understood "as the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension to the teaching/learning, research and service functions of a university" (p.2). As Knight (1997) continues, internationalization means different things to different people, and as a result, the concept has been interpreted in many different ways. Further, Knight cautions that such a wide range of interpretations can lead to confusion and a poor sense of legitimacy with regards to internationalization culminating in little recognition of its benefits for higher education. Despite

the ambiguity of the term internationalization, there seems to be a consensus that it is both good and necessary for higher education (Harris, 2011).

Summary

The chapter introduced the background and purpose of the research, the conceptual framework and the definition of some key terms. Drawing on the work of anti-racism and internationalization theorists, the chapter provided an anti-racism theoretical perspective as a basis for framing my research questions and topic. The cross cultural experiences of Black International Caribbean students in Canada have never been studied. My hope is that the use of the anti-racism perspective will highlight the positive as well as the negative experiences that International Caribbean students share on campus. By highlighting both positive and negative aspects of the students' experiences, my study aims to provide some knowledge about the university's efforts in providing some opportunities for inclusion. The objective of the study is to also inform and encourage the development and implementation of new and improved policies and practices that have the potential to address the concerns and needs of minoritized international students. The thesis contains five chapters, the first of which explains the background and purpose of the research, as well as providing definitions of some key terms. The second chapter reviews the literature that relates to this study. The third chapter describes the methods employed to conduct this study, while the fourth chapter presents an analysis of the findings. The fifth and final chapter provides the conclusion, outlines the implications for future research and offers some relevant recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

The literature review in a research study accomplishes several purposes. It shares with the reader the results of other studies that have investigated issues closely related to the one under consideration. The literature review also relates the study in question to the larger ongoing dialogue in the literature about the topic under review (Cooper, 1984). The Literature Review "provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a bench mark for comparing the results of the study with other findings" (Creswell, 2003, p.25). This chapter reviews the existing literature available regarding the experiences of Black students. The review begins with a broad overview of literature from major contributors in the field of Black student studies. The remainder of the chapter explores the experiences of students with cross cultural adaptation and internationalization respectively. In an attempt to provide more relevant literature on the research topic, the chapter also reviews the available literature on international students' experiences in higher education. Although there has been some research on the experiences of Black International students, these studies are not plentiful, especially in Canada. The majority is not very recent and many of these studies have been published on the topic of African American students in the United States (Allen, 1985). Other studies of the lived experiences of Black International students have been conducted outside of Canada and the United States, where the Black student population may be considered as either significantly smaller or deserving little or no attention. Studies carried out in countries like Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia have also revealed that Black students face discrimination in these environments. Although the geographic, social and economic environments in which these studies have been conducted are

somewhat different, many of the issues confronting the students and the factors that account for their experiences are similar to those encountered by students within the Canadian context.

A number of researchers in Canada have studied the experiences of international students. For example, a few Canadian scholars have focused on issues related to Black students, but have targeted mainly second generation African and Caribbean students (e.g. Dei, 1995; Hamilton & Shang, 1999; James, 1993; Hernadez-Ramdwar, 2009). None of these studies have specifically examined the lived experiences of Caribbean International students. Particularly, one known study was conducted among a group of International Caribbean students attending two universities in Ontario (Nisbett, 2011). In her case study, Nisbett focused specifically, on the students' perceptions of the Canadian job market and the factors that influenced their decisions of whether to remain in Canada to work or to return to their home territories upon completion of their degrees. Among a list of 'push' and 'pull' factors as they relate to 'home country' and Canada respectively, the students expressed frustration with not being able to work in Canada, and perceived more discrimination (a push factor) in the Canadian job market compared to their country's labour market. These findings have implications for my research, as they demonstrate that Caribbean students in Canada perceive discrimination and marginalization beyond the university. By way of contrast, my study is different and has explicitly examined the lived cross cultural experiences of Caribbean International students in Canada. Unlike many of these and other researchers, I have broadened the scope. I have included Caribbean students in my examination of how race is a powerful agent of Black international students' experience, and how matters of internationalization affect their university experience. It is paramount to understand the experiences of those students who are directly affected and the lessons that can be learned from them for further research in the field. The findings of my research can contribute to

filling the gap in the field, provide new knowledge and add to the discourse on the education of Black students in higher education.

Studies on Racism

George Dei and his colleagues conducted some of the most popular studies and research projects on Blacks in Canadian schools. Dei et al. (1995) studied racism among Black and Caribbean students in Canadian schools. In one study, they investigated the effects of racism on 'dropout' rates among groups of Black students in Canada. Their findings indicated that Black students' experiences of racism presented persistent pressure for them. Results exposed high dropout rates among Black students of African and Caribbean descent enrolled in Ontario schools. One study revealed that 36% of the Black students still enrolled, were at risk of dropping out because of their failure to accrue the required number of credits to graduate compared with 26% for Whites at those same schools. The students reported feeling alienation and a lack of support, which was further compounded by the fact that many of the teachers interviewed did not recognize any problems in the education system. The teachers blamed the Black students' failure and drop out on their prior experiences and viewed them as socially awkward. Based on reports from the Black students studied, the main cause of their troubles was perceived to be racial discrimination by White peers and teachers.

A 1990 study conducted by Carl E. James to examine career aspirations among youth in a small Canadian city revealed that 41% of Black students reported having experienced racial discrimination compared to 15% of Whites. Crosby (2010) affirms that racism exists and persists in Canadian post-secondary education. In his paper entitled "The International Student Experience in Canadian Post-secondary Education," Crosby identified many incidences of racism that have occurred at a number of Canadian universities. Some of them have received

great public attention while others have been 'swept under the carpet' (Crosby 2010). Crosby went on to highlight incidences of racial discrimination including those at Ryerson University and York University in Toronto, Sir George Williams University in Montreal and the University of British Columbia, which created public outcry resulting in recommendations such as those made by the Ryerson Report. "In light of several incidents of racialized discrimination at Ryerson University in Toronto, the university commissioned a Task Force on Anti-racism which released a 107-page report in January, 2010" (Crosby, 2010, p.399). There were other incidences of racism that had taken place at the Universities of Manitoba, Halifax, Dalhousie and Saskatchewan and had stirred the development of programs to address racism within these campuses (Stewart 2009). A report issued by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS-Ontario, 2010) outlined the financial barriers and structural discrimination facing racialized students. Surrounding this report was a series of incidents involving racialized discrimination on Canadian campuses, including graffiti, verbal assault and police violence (Chiang, 2010, Queen's, 2010; Ravensbergen, 2010).

Studies on Black Students' Experiences in Higher Education

Most of the studies involving Black students in higher education, including Caribbean students, have focused mainly on their experiences with racism, and have been conducted within the context of predominantly white institutions in the United States. Hamilton and Shang (1999) and Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009), have conducted notable studies on the experiences of Black and/or Caribbean students in Canadian universities. Hamilton and Shang (1999) conducted in-depth interviews with a total of nine black students- three males and six females. Many of the students were born in the Caribbean but had become Canadian citizens. Although the students had experienced personal difficulties, identity crises, feelings of isolation and encounters with

racism, all but two of them displayed generally high levels of satisfaction with their college experience. The students' relationships with their professors were positively correlated with their experiences on the school campus. Their involvement in clubs or student organizations or living in a residence hall were also factors that contributed positively to their experiences. The participants from the study described having maintained or developed a positive sense of self within the context of their own ethnic group and recognized the importance of a strong community of students of color.

The results of Hamilton & Shang's (1999) research revealed that the participants who were born in the Caribbean encountered greater difficulty being accepted or regarded as Canadian. These students explained how their accents made them stand out and how people often thought they were International students from the Caribbean. The students also registered their discomfort with the feelings of exclusion that they felt because they were from a different culture. Hamilton & Shang drew attention to the fact that because these students were originally from the Caribbean, they were categorized as 'new Canadians', meaning that they were not born in Canada or had not lived their whole life in Canada. This 're-categorizing' of the students, strongly identified them with being foreign or being an "immigrant" (Hamilton & Shang, 1999), which made their experiences comparable to that of the Black international Caribbean students in my study.

In a study entitled 'Caribbean Students in the Canadian Academy: We've Come a Long Way', Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009) conducted a number of structured interviews with graduate and undergraduate Caribbean students of mixed racial background at a university in Canada. Eight of the fourteen students interviewed by Hernandez-Ramdwar were of 'Afro Caribbean origin', one student was of 'mixed origin' one was 'Chinese Caribbean' and the other four were

'Indo-Caribbean.' Two of the students had recently migrated to Canada from the Caribbean, one had moved back and forth during her childhood while all the others were second generation 'Caribbean Canadian'. One main conclusion drawn from the findings of Hernandez-Ramdwar's (2009) study was that structural racism had negatively impacted on the students. Hernandez-Ramdwar found that for the younger students, university was seen as a place in which important connections were made both socially and professionally. For some of the other students, the university experience was perceived as less pleasant, especially in institutional terms.

According to Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009), the students expressed meaningfulness in identity formation as it relates to their racial background. This was achieved either through their involvement in student groups or by taking classes that had Caribbean and/or Black content. Two of the students recounted instances in which they felt they were discriminated against by particular professors and saw such discrimination as a barrier to their achieving good grades. This resulted in poor academic performance among them. In an effort to allow the students to discuss their individual experiences with racism and 'the larger problem of structural racism inherent in the institution of university', Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009) asked them if they had ever experienced racism at the university. Some students recounted instances of racism they had either witnessed or experienced based on skin colour, personal appearance and accents. The most prominent account of racism by the students was in relation to the lack of diversity in the university's curriculum, faculty, student body and administration. One student described the courses as "biased and lop-sided…only certain histories were represented." She further referred to her specific Graduate program as "not very diverse….run by a dominant class of professors who do not teach from a minority perspective" (Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009, p. 120). Although there were three students (two of Indo-Caribbean descent and one of Chinese Caribbean descent)

who said they had never encountered racism at the university, Hernandez-Ramdwar found that the narratives of the other students revealed a correlation between the number of years that they had spent at the university and the number of incidences of racism they had encountered. The following statement by Hernandez-Ramdwar, suggests that the denial of racism among the three Caribbean students in her study, may have been a direct result of their ethnic background and self categorization as "non-blacks."

> Racialized people who fall into categories of 'White' and 'Black' are viewed/used as 'model minorities' or buffer groups by the dominant groups, and are therefore sometimes also positively stereotyped (as in Chinese people are good at Math and Computer Science, Indian people are good at business and know how to make money, whereas people of African descent are more likely to be stereotyped negatively (2009, p. 116).

This quotation by Hernandez- Ramdwar (2009) entails that by nature of their skin colour and other racial or social stereotypes, the students of Afro- Caribbean descent were more likely to become racialzed or to be discriminated against as opposed to those of Indo-Caribbean or Chinese Caribbean descent. Although the students of Chinese or Indian descent were considered as neither White nor Black, they were held in higher regard than the Black students. Studies have shown that 70% of the Black students, who enroll in four-year College programs in the United States, drop out at as compared to 45% of White students (Steele, 1992). Allen, Epps and Haniff (1991) assert that Black students have higher attrition rates, weaker educational backgrounds, less satisfactory relationships with faculty, lower grade point averages and lower enrollments in post-graduate programs. Allen et al. (1991) have attributed these factors to the fact that "Black students experienced considerable difficulty making adjustments to an environment which is culturally different, academically demanding and socially alienating" (p.96). Other factors that

contributed to high attrition rates among Black students have been identified by Love (1993) as being White racism, lack of institutional leadership by students /faculty of colour, lack of social integration, finances, cultural dissonance and environmental incongruence. "The research has consistently shown that the experience of Black students in White institutions is substantively and qualitatively different than the experiences of White students in White institutions" (Love, 1993, p.34). These are only a few examples from a growing body of research showing that the overall college and university experiences of Black and White students differ. Since colleges and universities are both institutions of higher education and a wide range of research on Black international university students is not available, the literature on the experiences of Black international college students serves to represent the experiences of those at the university level.

In a study entitled "Racism in American Education," Sedlacek and Brooks (1976, 1987) explained how institutional racism was embedded in higher education and how student characteristics assisted them in overcoming these institutional barriers. They highlighted the six "non-cognitive" factors they found to assist students in overcoming barriers and racism in the institution. These included: positive self-concepts, the students' ability to deal with racism, recognition of their personal strengths and weaknesses, long range goal development, a strong support system and any previous leadership and/or community involvement experiences that they had.

Rhone (2010) explored the lived experiences of Black students attending predominantly White institutions and how these experiences influenced their development of racial identity. Rhone found that that the students experienced feelings of isolation in the classroom, eagerness to join Black students' organizations and lack of knowledge of White culture. Most of the students expressed a need to develop relationships outside of their race and to broaden their

outlook on critical race issues. The students saw the development of meaningful racial interactions to be a result of their own internal drives, and not due to motivation from the university. All these results combined confirm that racism forms a very significant part of Black students' cross cultural experiences and further ground the epistemological basis of the anti-racism theoretical framework.

Taylor- Gibbs (2007) considered the different expectations that faculty members held of Black students who attended their predominantly white university in California and the kinds of problems that those students experienced. The students shared their concern for the fact that faculty expected them to integrate into the university without providing them with any academic modifications or program accommodations. Black students were also expected to compete academically with Whites who already had sufficient high school preparation and prerequisite college skills. Little consideration was shown for the cultural and socio-economic differences of the Black students who were expected to automatically blend into the socio-cultural environment of the predominantly White campus. Similar to the students in Sedlacek and Brooks' (1987) study, the majority of the students reported that their participation in Black student organizations served as a form of therapy and provided them with a sense of belongingness on the White campus (Taylor-Gibbs, 2007).

Ancis, Sedlacek and Mohr (2000) assessed the perceptions and experiences of Black students with reference to campus cultural climate in a predominantly White university in the United States. Results revealed that there were significant racial and ethnic group differences regarding perceptions and experiences of cultural interactions on campus. Ancis et al. (2000) reported significant differences in the experiences of racial and ethnic groups on several dimensions. African American students reported more negative experiences compared with Asian

American, Latino and White students. African American students reported experiencing more racial ethnic conflict and separation, more stereotypes and less equality of treatment from faculty and staff than Asian American and White students. On the other hand, the White students reflected narrow perceptions of racial-ethnic tensions in their responses. They perceived the university climate to be one characterized by respect for diversity (Ancis et al., 2000). Compared to the Black students, White students reported having met with fewer expectations to conform and a greater degree of respect from faculty and students.

Based on the assumption that racial prejudice and discrimination on university campuses can have direct effects on Black students' performance, social and experiences, Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella and Hagedorn (1999) studied the perceptions of prejudice and discrimination among White and African American students. Their findings suggested that, while the African American university students illustrated their commitment to completing college and express similar levels of satisfaction with White students regarding the encouragement they receive from faculty, the African American students were less likely than the White students to report overall positive experiences.

Balcazar, Orellana-Damacela, Portillo, Rowan and Andrews-Guillen's (2003) conducted a study to examine specific situations in which Caucasian students and students of colour including African Americans, experience differential treatment at a predominantly White university. "A sample of 500 Caucasian and 495 students of colour who were randomly selected from a pool of 5,272 undergraduates (3,994 Caucasian and 1,278 students of color) enrolled at a private Midwestern urban university. Participants received a survey containing a list of 20 events of differential treatment" (Balcazar, Orellana-Damacela, Portillo, Rowan & Andrews-Guillen, 2003, p.431). The research findings contended that there were no significant differences between

the experiences of Hispanics and Asian students. In contrast, African American students reported the highest incidence of 'differential treatment' by their professors and classmates. The fact that no disparities were found between the Hispanic and Asian minority groups, implicates that the darker the colour of one's skin, the higher the probability of being discriminated against (Wyatt, 1997).

Research indicates that strong relationships with faculty are vital to the success of college students. In a study by Allen (1985), Black undergraduate students attending universities in the United States were surveyed to determine what contributed to their academic success in a college environment. Some Black students claimed to having more positive relationships with faculty, participating in Black student organization activities, holding more positive views toward the support services they received and experiencing better race relations at the college. These students reported better integration and greater satisfaction with the campus social life, as well as better academic achievement than other Black students. Despite the positive feedback from some Black students, the general findings of Allen's (1985) research relay that Black students do not fare well on North American campuses.

Data from a study conducted by Solorzan, Ceja, Yosso and Yosso (2000) revealed that African American students are confronted with several types of racial "micro aggressions" perpetuated by White students and faculty at an American university. Such acts of subtle racial aggressions took many forms including both verbal and non-verbal. The students spoke of the high levels of racial tension in and out of their classrooms. Some students reported feeling invisible in the classroom which they attributed to being a racial minority. They also showed concern for the negative interactions with faculty and instances when faculty held low

expectations of them even when they proved them wrong. Many of the students complained about the racial segregation that took place in their study groups and peer groups as well.

Among the most important findings of Nettles, Thoeny and Gosman's (1986) study were those regarding the 'Black student-environment fit' to determine the quality of their college life experience. The student-environment fit was evaluated using the Black students' feelings that their predominantly White university is nondiscriminatory among other measures and yields wide ranging and positive effects on students' performance. The overall findings confirmed that lower feelings of racial discrimination contributed to increased college performance for Black and White students alike.

In another study, African American students at a predominantly European American university related their experiences with everyday racism. During the in-depth interviews conducted by Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald and Bylsma (2003), the students recounted experiencing forms of prejudice, bad service, staring or glaring and difficulties in interpersonal exchanges with White students. The work of these researchers highlights how race is a powerful agent of cross cultural adaptation and interaction and how racism impacts on Black students' cross cultural experiences.

Research conducted by Malaney and Shively (1995) proved that the expectations and experiences of American students of colour vary. They measured the difference between Black students' expectations upon entering college and their perceptions after one academic year at their institutions. The Black students were more likely than the Asian, White or Latino students to feel a weak sense of belonging to the institution and to feel like the institution was not making an effort to make them feel comfortable.

In a qualitative study by Kraft (1991), Black students at North American institutions were interviewed regarding their perceived academic experience. Kraft learned that students attributed success or failure to a combination of factors including discipline/organized effort, ability, ambition, effort/hard work, high school preparation, interest, self-confidence, supportive faculty, support of fellow students and parents as well as not being intimidated by White faculty and students. Kraft also viewed receiving adequate advice from White faculty and interaction with White students as the most troublesome issues confronting Black students.

The experiences of successful Black students at a university in Canada, was the focus of an interview by Codjoe (2001). The Black students interviewed shared five main concerns about their experiences, namely: different treatment by race, negative racial stereotypes, lack of representation of Black/African students and low expectations from faculty. All the students said that they had experienced some form of either subtle or overt racism. "Their experiences show racism and racist attitudes in school and out of school, the impact of racism on them and how they cope with it. They conveyed psychological damage, emotional pain and personal humiliation" (Codjoe, 2001, p.348).

Nottingham, Rosen and Parks (1992) reported that most Black students attending predominantly White institutions experience more difficulty adjusting academically and socially to campus life than their White counterparts. In his research study entitled "Blacks in College" Fleming (1985) categorized the major issues in the education of Black students as being related to social adjustment, racial mistrust, isolation and financial difficulties. Fleming also found correlations among factors like the stress of racial tension, feelings of alienation, adjustment problems, psychological withdrawal and impairment in academic functioning and Black students' experience. According to Fleming (1985), feelings of racial tension and inequality

experienced by Black students on campus can generate psychological discomfort that impedes academic functioning. Related studies have also examined the relationship between race-related stressors and the psychological discomfort that results from a situation or event that an individual appraises as troubling because of racial discrimination or isolation (Plummer & Slane, 1996).

There are at least two studies confirming that race-related stress affects academic performance for Black college students (e.g. Gougis, 1986). The overall findings of these studies suggest that Black college students attending predominantly White institutions on average, experience additional stress related to being a racial minority in a predominantly White setting. Such high levels of stress result in loss of retention, a slower adjustment process and poor academic performance. (e.g. Anderson, 1988).

Negga, Applewhite and Livingston (2007) established major differences in the stress levels of African American and White students in a study entitled "African American College Students and Stress: School Racial Composition, Self Esteem and Social Support." When African American students at 'predominantly White' institutions were compared to those at 'all Black' institutions, it was discovered that the African American students at predominantly White institutions reported lower levels of social support compared to Whites at that same institution and other Blacks at 'all Black' institutions. Other issues requiring attention among the Black students at predominantly White institutions include issues of racial discrimination, isolation and coping. The findings of the afore-mentioned studies provide a wider significance of racism. Negga et al. (2007) suggest that negative experiences especially with racism can have health related effects on minority students. Another theme found in the literature is the varying degrees to which groups of international students experience racism. To determine how international students experience racism depending on their country of origin, Lee (2010) studied the

experiences and attitudes of international students from developing and developed nations attending a U.S. university. The students from the developing countries were more likely to experience unequal and unfair treatment. They also expressed less satisfaction with non-academic resources but greater satisfaction with institutional services among other things, than those from developed countries. This literature highlights that international students of different races experience university differently and that their feelings of inequality and racial discrimination may vary based on demographic factors such as ethnicity and country of origin.

In an effort to examine the state of anti-racist measures within Canadian universities, Dua (2009) investigated the existing policies and practices that are in place and assessed their effectiveness. The study looked at anti-racism policies from thirty- seven Canadian universities, and included interviews with University and Union Human Rights & Equity Officers from 10 Canadian universities. Dua (2009) discovered that most universities had anti-racism offices and anti-racism policies had been developed in the form of either employment equity policies, anti-harassment policies and clauses or anti-racist workshops. The study further concluded that many of these policies had not been properly implemented and the initiatives taken by the offices had limited success in dealing with the race issues that prevailed on their campuses. Dua's work is an important step towards providing insight into anti-racism policies and their implementation and enactment within the university context. Much of the available literature, in fact, provides an important step towards understanding how issues of race influence the cross cultural experiences of minority students on college and university campuses.

Studies on International Students' Cross-cultural Experiences

Over the years, a few empirical studies investigating international students' experiences with cross-cultural adaptation and cross-cultural transition at foreign universities have emerged.

Popadiuk and Arthur (2004) in an article entitled 'Counselling International Students in Canada' admitted that international students face many demands as they try to make the cross-cultural transition required to live and learn in host countries like the United States and Canada. Arthur (1997) and Popadiuk and Arthur (2004) have joined Hayes and Lin (1994) in stating that the positionalities of international students in cross-cultural settings add many unique dimensions to their experiences. They highlight that the experiences of international students may be influenced by cultural differences, as well as by the demands to adapt to these differences in their daily activities. Arthur (1997) affirms that international students from countries that have similar languages, cultures and demographics such as race, are less likely to experience culture shock associated with cross-cultural transition. Conversely, international students in host countries that are culturally different to their home country, experience more difficulty with transition (Arthur, 1997). Similarly, Tomich et al. (2003) and Pederson (1991) postulate the belief that the greater the difference between home and host cultures, the greater the adjustment demands faced by international students.

In a case study designed to investigate a group of international Asian students' experiences with integrative racism at a Canadian university, Samuel (2005) found that the students were dissatisfied with several aspects of their university life. With regards to the peer group interactions, many of the students perceived the campus as lacking integration and diversity. Most of the International Asian students in Samuel's (2005) study expressed a dire need for the university to recruit and enroll more minority students. The students raised issues with regards to the small number of minority faculty and administrative staff employed at the university and called for an increase in the acceptance of minority professors. In sharing their thoughts about the curriculum, one of the students suggested that racism should be discussed in

classes and that minority students should be incorporated into the existing curricula. In other words the curricula should be more inclusive. For example, the students shared the following concerns:

> Everything is Eurocentric rooted in Irish or Scottish tradition. They are representing a whole lot of people and they really have to change their perspective on that… If you talk about White people, it is not inclusive education. Anti-racism discourses need to be included in the main stream curriculum. (Samuel 2005, p. 152)

The students argued that integrative anti-racism policies can foster an atmosphere more receptive to racial differences. Further, they made recommendations for the university to incorporate integrative anti-racism strategies into regular courses.

In a study 'The Squeezing Effect: The Cross-Cultural Experience of International Students, Luzio-Lockett (1998) interviewed a group of overseas students in higher educational institutions in the United Kingdom to explore how and why they might be affected during the cultural transition period. Luzio-Lockett discovered that in order to adequately adjust, the students were required to assimilate. According to Luzio-Lockett (1998), there was a tendency for the students to attempt to "squeeze their identity within pre-established conventions" (p. 209). Language restrictions and other affective and situational factors were considered detrimental to the students' academic performance, self-concepts and impacted on their overall education experience (Luzio-Lockett, 1998).

A study investigating the relationship between the personality traits and cross cultural adaptation experiences of a group of international Asian and European students in the United States identified skills, attitudes, demographics and personality as four broad categories of factors relevant to the adaptation process of the students (Tomich, Mc Whirter and Darcey,

2003). According to Tomich, Mc Whirter and Darcey, skills such as local language, prior knowledge and interaction with the host population contributed greatly to the students' ability to adapt to the new international environment. Such factors provide the international student with a greater understanding of the host population's motives, behaviours and attitudes and help them develop better coping skills and a greater willingness to interact with the host population.

Similar studies conducted by Kealey (1989) and Torbiorn (1982) found that high levels of contact between international students and local individuals, resulted in greater satisfaction with their overseas experience. Further, the degree to which the students' home culture overlapped with that of the host culture also had implications for adaptation. Tomich, Mc Whirter and Darcey (2003) affirm that the greater the gap between the two cultures, the greater the adjustment and the longer the time needed for the adjustment. Babiker, Cox and Miller (1980) support this view on the premise that the amount of stress experienced by foreign students is directly related to the distance between those students' home culture and that of their host country. Their findings supported previous claims by Ying & Liese (1994) that the greater the amount of contact with domestic students, the quicker and easier the adjustment process. The findings of this study by Tomich, Mc Whirter and Darcey (2003) also embrace the suggestion by Sodovsky and Plake (1992), Ward and Kennedy (1992), Ward and Searle (1991) that the length of time international students remain in the host country and their ability to adapt to the host culture are positively correlated.

Some researchers found it necessary to identify the factors that led to satisfaction among international graduate students at one university in the United States. Perruci and Hu (1995) undertook a quantitative analysis to measure satisfaction in the areas of academic program, academic appointment and non academic social relationships. They identified the determinants

of satisfaction as being the availability of individual resources e.g. language skills; social resources e.g. contact with domestic students and social support. Academic satisfaction was linked to the students' contact with their host country, their language skills and perceived discrimination. Social satisfaction was linked to the students' marital status, their language skills, perceived discrimination and contact with local students. The social context of the students' experiences was determined by factors such as perceived discrimination. The findings also revealed that the students' gender and grades had the weakest correlations with satisfaction, while their language skills, exposure or contact with local students, discrimination and negative attitudes revealed the strongest correlation. The most important factors linked to satisfaction among the international students studied by Perruci and Hu (1995) were self-esteem, contact with local students and discrimination. Those students who expressed satisfaction with their academic program did not perceive discrimination by their host country and had rewarding social contacts with local students. They also reported having positive feelings about themselves and their achievements.

Some studies have concentrated on cultural adaption and cultural adjustment experiences from the position of the international student. Lewthwaite (1996) interviewed twelve international students originating from four East Asian countries to determine and describe how they experience and adapt to their new environment in New Zealand. Lewithwaite reported that the students experienced loneliness, mismatch of culture, frustration with the lack of integration with aspects of their host culture. More significant to the findings, was the students' inability to engage in meaningful intercultural communication.

Chirkov, Safdar, Guzman and Playford (2008) studied the self-determined motivation and the goals of a group of international students in Canada in terms of the role they play in adapting

to studying abroad. They measured the students' level of autonomous versus controlled

motivation to study aboard as well as the level of determination that they exercised during the

decision. Motivation for moving abroad to get an education was found to be a more powerful

predictor of international students' adjustment.

Using semi-structured interviews, Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell and Utsey

(2005) examined the cultural adjustment experiences of twelve Kenyan, Nigerian and Ghanaian

international college students in the United States. The seven themes emerging from the students'

responses were their perceptions of the host country, their cultural adjustment problems, their

responses to prejudice or discrimination, family and friendship networks, strategies for coping

with cultural adjustment problems and openness to seeking counseling to address their cultural

adjustment problems. Constantine et al. (2005) assumed that race may have played an especially

important part in the cultural adjustment processes of the African international students in the US

and that racial discrimination may have led to or compounded their cultural adjustment

difficulties (see also Hayes & Lin, 1994).

In fact, an empirical investigation by Furnham and Bochner (1982) concluded that some

of the problems that confronted the international students studied were natural and predictable

and were faced by all individuals who are crossing cultures. Language problems, accommodation

difficulties, racial discrimination, separation reactions, dietary adjustments, financial stress,

misunderstandings and loneliness were common transition and adaptation problems. Some of the

academic stress factors were found to be common to all students, whether local or international;

others emerged from the cultural background of the students (Furnham & Bochner, 1982).

Notwithstanding the negative experiences of international students presented in this

discussion, international students have had some rewarding experiences. Moores and Popadiuck

(2001) assert that these positive aspects of the international student experience have received little attention. They identified eight categories of factors that helped international students during their transition process. In one study entitled, "The Positive Aspects of International Students' Transition" Moores and Popadiuck (2001) revealed that growth and/or change, social support/building relationships, learning to navigate host culture, enjoyable activities outside of school work, previous experience and preparation, supportive faculty and staff, persevering through hard times and a sense of belonging all contributed positively to the cultural transition of international students. The majority of the students reported considerable personal growth and an increased sense of independence as they cross-culture. Having supportive roommates and peers, supportive faculty and staff were reported as being important assets. Previous experiences and preparation for transition, cultural learning through courses and residence activities that allow for cultural integration and the recognition of academic differences between the two cultures, were other factors that students attributed to their successful adaptation. Students also mentioned their commitment to persevere by overcoming obstacles, believing in themselves and demonstrating determination. The students' positive experiences during adaptation also depended on their ability to maintain their personal identity, stay connected to their roots and maintain contact with family and home culture.

Sherry, Thomas and Chui (2010) examined the experiences of international students at a university in the United States. Many of the findings were consistent with the existing literature. The majority of the students indicated that they had no problems adapting to new cultural norms. The rest reported facing little or few problems adapting to a new culture including, English Language problems, financial problems, problems with friendship and social support. Many of the students did not feel that people at the university understood their culture and were very

vocal in making suggestions about how the university can enhance its response to the cultural needs of international students.

Studies on Students' Experiences with Internationalization

Studies by individual scholars, as well as national organizations such as the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), have highlighted the special challenges faced by international students in Canada. In 1980, Ruth Groberman (1980) wrote, "Canada is not a haven for International Students - as a country we do very little to encourage their presence here or to welcome them to our society" (p. 6). More recent research on the internationalization of higher education in Canada revealed that some students held positive perceptions of Canada's education system and expressed satisfaction with their decisions to study in Canada.

In 2009, the CBIE conducted a survey with a total of 5,925 post-secondary students from 26 institutions, to explore a range of academic and life experiences. The vast majority of students indicated that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies in Canada and expressed appreciation for both Canada's academic advantages and quality of life. The students expressed their love for the Canadian quality education, Canada's reputation as a safe and peaceful country, the programs of study offered in both English and French, the prestige of the degrees and diplomas offered by the higher education institutions, the overall reputation of the institutions and the after- graduation employment possibilities. The majority of international students who participated in the survey concluded that Canadian higher education institutions no doubt meet their expectations.

Similarly, Madgett and Belanger (2008) conducted a voluntary online study among international students attending Canadian universities to understand their choice patterns in selecting Canadian universities in comparison to other countries. The students' perceptions of the

selected university's role in providing information, services before and after their arrival were also taken into consideration. Compared to other countries including the United States, the level of satisfaction with Canada was very high among the respondents. Canada was chosen on the basis of the quality of programs offered by the universities, the ability to offer services at the lowest price and the openness to foreign students, concerns for security and visa availability. Among the factors that attracted the students to their respective Canadian institutions were the influence of significant persons like parents and friends, the fixed characteristics of the institution such as cost, financial aid, location and availability of programs and thirdly the institutions' own effort to communicate with prospective students. The responses of the students revealed that globalization and internationalization had provided new avenues to learn about diverse cultures and had rewarded them with a broad cultural background.

Findings from the surveys conducted by the CBIE (2009) and Madgett and Belanger (2008) present interesting information regarding the factors that influence international students' decisions to study in Canada. The literature has shown that factors related to diversity such as openness to foreign students and visa availability influence students' decisions to study abroad. These factors are not unique to specific minorities and are valuable when considering those that influence Black international students' experiences.

Grayson (2008) conducted a study, to examine the 'experiences and outcomes of domestic and international students at four Canadian universities.' The students' experiences were assessed on six dimensions namely, classroom experiences, out-of-class contacts, friendships, event involvement, social support and academic involvement. According to Grayson, the results of his survey contradicted the claims made by some researchers. The international students who participated in his survey reported having more trouble making friends and

received less social and academic support than the domestic students. Although the international students showed less involvement in classes, they were involved in as many out-of class activities as their domestic counterparts. Despite these challenges, Grayson believed that the overall experiences of the international students who participated in his survey were not as negative as previous researchers had purported.

Phillip (2010) conducted a study among a group of ten international students to find out whether they were satisfied with their decision to study in Canada. All the students reported satisfaction with their decision. Eight out of the ten students indicated that both their courses and universities met or exceeded their expectations. The results of these studies indicate that despite the challenges that international students may face while studying at Canadian universities, they are likely to share positive experiences and to show some level of satisfaction with their institutions, which has implications for the findings of my study.

A study by Cameron (2006) conducted at the St. Francis Xavier University in Atlantic Canada claims that scholars have neglected to examine the international student presence in Canada. Using a case study approach, interviews were conducted with students, staff and faculty. Student publications, university documentary and statistical records were also drawn on to analyze the experiences of international students who studied at St. Francis Xavier University. The research highlighted important factors that seemed to either inhibit or enhance international student integration. The factors included the students' "national-linguistic backgrounds, their individual personalities, the policies and practices of their host institutions, their programs of study, their length of stay, the social context, federal and provincial government policies, and international political developments" (Cameron, 2006, p.1). Among the three categories of international students studied, the undergraduate overseas international students including those

from the Caribbean faced the most difficult barriers to successful integration (Cameron, 2006). "The foreign students who spoke out about their experiences at the university recognized that attaining successful integration was a two   way street. Personality differences, assumptions about gender roles, and embarrassment about weak English language skills often made overseas students at St. FX reticent to participate" (Cameron, 2006, p. 15).

Findings of Cameron's study revealed that the key players namely, the federal and provincial governments, university administrations, faculty, support staff and Canadian students and their unions, often appeared slow to recognize the vulnerability and special needs of this group of international students.

Weber (2011) studied the internationalization experiences among Chinese and International students at a Canadian university and found that although the students were aware of the impact of globalization on their lives, they were not certain about their global identities and responsibilities (Weber, 2011). All the students experienced cultural barriers in forming relationships. According to Weber, "the students found their intercultural interactions occurred most often in structured situations such as when a professor facilitated interaction in the classroom, or when they were participating in organized international activities such as the International Peer Guide Program" (p. 210). The students commended Canada for its lower prices for education in many programs compared to that of the UK, USA and Australia. They applauded and commented positively on the 'openness to foreign students', the concerns for security and the swift approval of visas and study permits for international students. Notwithstanding these positive attributes, there was a significant difference between the international students' expectations before coming to Canada and their actual experiences once they arrived (Weber, 2011). For instance, they expressed little satisfaction with the services

rendered to them at these higher education institutions. Although the majority of students in these studies were not Black international students, their experiences can provide an essential lens through which to examine the internationalization experiences of the Black international students' in my study.

Summary

This study review of literature has summarized the broad themes in the existing literature using the integrative approach (Cooper, 1984). The literature review began with research related to Black students' experiences at colleges and universities worldwide. Due to the lack of research on Black International Caribbean Students attending Canadian universities, I was forced to use the studies involving Black international students at colleges and universities in other parts of the world. Although the geographic locations of these universities may vary from the one included as the focus for my study, the experiences of Black foreign students may be similar in nature. There is no doubt that Canadian educators can learn a great deal from the research that has taken place in the United States and elsewhere (Hamilton & Shang, 1999). The questions asked by these international researchers can lead the way for those researchers in Canada to begin to inquire about and investigate the experiences of minority students attending their own local institutions. Many of the studies in my review that deal with Black students' experiences, identified issues of racial discrimination as a key factor affecting the academic and social interactions at college and university level. Some studies have also shown concern for the under representation of Blacks students in predominantly White school environments, while others have emphasized the down side of being a Black student at a White institution. Research focusing on student experiences with internationalization in universities was also reviewed. Findings revealed that international students share both positive and negative experiences as they

try to live and learn in their host countries. Overall, the literature reviewed highlights the value

and need to conduct further research into the experience of black students in the Canadian

context.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology adopted in this research study. I describe the

qualitative case study as the research design and the interview as the method of data collection.

The chapter also includes an outline of the data collection and analysis process, as well as

detailing the limitations associated with the methodology chosen.

Overview of Methodology

A qualitative case study methodology was chosen as the basis for conducting this study. I

explored the experiences of three Black International Caribbean students attending a particular

university in Ontario. Other researchers interested in studying the experiences of Caribbean

and/or Black students attending Canadian Universities have conducted similar studies and have

used a qualitative method of research involving interviews as a means of collecting data. (e.g.

Hamilton & Shang, 1999; Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009). As Creswell (1994) affirms, a qualitative

study is "an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a

complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and

conducted in a natural setting" (p.1). Creswell, 2007 further explains:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a

theoretical lens and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals

or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative

researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a

natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study and data analysis that is

inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation

includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher and a complex

description and interpretation of the problem and it extends the literature or signals a

cause for action. (p. 38)

Given the intended purpose and goals of my research, the preceding quotation, served as the

guiding principle for the methodology employed in my research. Qualitative methodology also

enabled me to gain access to students' perceived experiences and to explain the meanings they

give to these experiences. Qualitative inquiry is a "way of finding out what people do, know,

think and feel by observing, interviewing and analyzing data" (Patton, 2002, p. 94). In

determining the value of qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) postulate that

qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality and seek to answer

questions of how social experience is created and given meaning.

Qualitative research is widely used in student matters to help understand the meaning

they give to their experiences (Hamilton & Shang, 1999). According to Kaplan and Maxwell

(1994), "the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and

its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified"

(p.45). This statement by Kaplan and Maxwell confirms that a qualitative methodology is more

germane to achieving the purpose and aims of my research. Patton (2002) further contends that

"case studies provide in-depth detail and individual meaning" (p.16). In solidifying the

commitment to the use of qualitative analysis, Patton (2002) writes: "qualitative studies are

useful, in that they allow the researcher to examine small samples in depth" (p. 230). Moreover,

Stake (2008) ascertains that "from case reports, we convey and draw forth the essence of

qualitative understanding that is, experiential knowledge" (p.134). Case studies assist researchers

in presenting the experiences of the actors and stakeholders in the cases, provide the researcher

with the actual experience of studying the cases and enhances the reader's experience with the case (Stake, 2008). Stake concludes that the narratives, assertions and experiential descriptions presented by the participants in a case study are easily assimilated and put into memory and use. The foregoing arguments put forward by these qualitative researchers, offered innumerable reasons and a strong basis for the use of qualitative methodology to conduct my research study.

Participant Recruitment

The institution where the research was conducted is a large undergraduate, graduate and post graduate degree granting university in Ontario Canada. International students, more specifically Caribbean students, were chosen as the population of interest because they belong to a minoritized group by nature of their small enrollment numbers, geographical origin and physical appearance. In an effort to follow the necessary protocol to recruit participants for this study, I solicited the assistance of the Presidents of both the Caribbean Students' Association and Black Students' Association on Campus. I also consulted the respective International Students' representatives of some departments, who in turn forwarded the advertisement, inviting eligible Caribbean students to participate in the study. (See Appendix D for the Recruitment Advertisement). Because of Caribbean students' membership in these two organizations, they served as suitable sites from which to draw my sample. Subsequently, I followed the protocol for placing an advertisement in a designated location on the main campus of the university. The advertisement included the email address which the interested participants would use to respond. Six participants responded to the emails, one of whom was male. Eventually, the male was deemed ineligible to participate. Although he was born in the Caribbean, he had at the time of the study, acquired Canadian citizenship and did not meet the intended definition of 'Caribbean student.' Due to unspecified circumstances, subsequent attempts at arranging an interview with

either of the other two female students who had initially volunteered to participate in the study proved futile.

Sampling Method

The original protocol of my case study was probability/random sampling involving the selection of a sample of four participants. The process of sample selection was not without complications. Because of the small number of students in this category, I encountered difficulty in finding a more diverse sample. Originally, I intended to interview two female participants and two males from a cross section of program levels but neither of these was accomplished. Consequently, I resorted to the use of non- probability/non random sampling and interviewed the three female students who had volunteered and remained committed to participating in the study. The three students provided me with a 'convenience sample' for the study. A convenience sample is one where the participants selected for inclusion in the sample are the easiest to access (Patton 2002). More precisely, convenience sampling, as the name suggests, involves doing what is fast and convenient for the researcher. Convenience sampling allows the researcher to do what is easy to save time, money and effort and is probably the most common and least desirable purposeful sampling strategy (Patton, 2002). Although it is not the most desirable sampling method (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007), the logic of convenience sampling is to select information rich cases for in-depth study (Patton, 2002). The focus of the study was to look intently at the cross-cultural experiences of the relatively small sample of Black International Caribbean students that I was interested in. The application of convenience sampling as an alternative means of creating a sample served to ensure the collection of data and to ultimately achieve the aims and purpose of my research study.

Data Collection

The interview method was selected as the sole data collection instrument for the research. (See See Appendix C for Interview Schedule). The data was collected over a period of three weeks -commencing April 2nd and ending April 20th 2012. During the data collection period, I conducted a 'one-on-one' semi-structured interview with one participant per week. The interviews were conducted at the faculties of the respective participants, at locations, which they deemed most conducive. All three participants were allowed to select the venue for their interview, to allow them easy access and to ensure that they felt comfortable enough to open up and share their experiences. The interview was an appropriate method of data collection because it best served to capture the students' distinct experiences. The interview method also permitted me to take into account the varied views of the participants and to ensure that they understood the issues that were discussed.

Yin (2009) refers to the interview as one of the most important and essential sources of case study information (p. 106). As Yin (2009) observes, the perspective of others is meaningful" (p.341) and "interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge" (Patton, 2002, p.4). The preceding statements, underscore the power and flexibility of the interview method and its ability to generate valuable data in response to the research questions in my study. The interview is also a superlative method for use among a small sample. Morse (2000) contends that information is easily obtained in interviews, fewer participants are needed and that, the fewer the number of participants there is, the greater the amount of useable data obtained from each person.

Interviews

As Patton (2002) asserts, the task for the qualitative researcher is to provide a framework within which the participants can respond in a way that represents their points of view in an accurate and thorough manner. For this reason, the one-on-one interviews gave voice to the three minority students, and assisted in obtaining specific types of responses that were necessary for addressing the research questions. The interview provided the opportunity for a 'conversation with a purpose" (Hamilton, 1997) and an opportunity "to capture participants on their own terms" (Loflan, 1971, p.7). The interview also gave advantage for probing more deeply to obtain additional information, and the opportunity to rephrase questions whenever the interviewees had difficulty understanding.

At the beginning of the interviews, I introduced myself to the participants and administered the Letter of Information. (See Appendix A for Letter of Information). After reading the Letter of Information, the participants were granted an opportunity to ask questions and to clarify any doubts or issues. I proceeded by presenting the participants with the Consent Form (See Appendix B for Consent Form), which they read, signed and submitted back to me. After signing and returning the Consent Form, each participant was required to select one out of three pseudonyms- Pat, Laura and Alison. The pseudonyms were used to conceal the students' identity throughout the entire study- from the onset of the interviews to the presentation of findings. Prior to the commencement of the interviews, the participants were notified that their responses would be audio-recorded and they all agreed. This was a convenient way to document the data since the participants' responses could later be referred to for clarification and/or accuracy. Audiotaping also allowed me to focus entirely on the interview process as opposed to both listening and writing notes, which would have been distracting and time consuming.

The interview sessions lasted approximately fifty minutes depending on the pattern or extent of the individual students' responses to the specific interview questions. As the researcher, I followed the prescribed procedure for the interview and asked each participant the same set of open-ended questions allowing them to openly express their opinions on the phenomena that was being studied. "Open ended questions are used in order to get as many details as possible" (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003, p.1). The open-ended questions comprised in my interview, were specifically designed to allow the participants to respond from their own perspectives, speak openly about their experiences and to share their unreserved concerns about being a Black minority international student in a predominantly White university environment. Conclusively, the use of open ended questions in the interviews, has added depth, detail and meaning (Patton, 2002) to the students' commentaries; enabled me [as the researcher] and ultimately the readers, to understand the students' experiences as they see them.

Data Analysis

Once the data was collected, I proceeded to the analysis stage. Data analysis according to Hatch (2002) is a systematic way of searching for meaning and a way of processing qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. Considering the small sample size and the convenience of using descriptive data in case study research, computer software programs and statistical analysis were not necessary for my study. Patton (2002) opposes the use of statistical analysis in case study research and argues that although "statistical data provide a succinct and parsimonious summary of major patterns .... case studies provide in-depth, detailed and individual meaning" (p. 16). After transcribing the audio recording of the interviews verbatim, the transcripts were shared with the respective participants with an aim to ensuring accuracy and precision of the data. Patton (2002) explains, that the purpose of data analysis in

case studies is to "facilitate the search for patterns and themes" (p. 302) and by doing this, the researcher transforms data into findings" (Patton, 2002, p.302). In keeping with this purpose, I read each transcript repeatedly and searched the students' narratives for patterns and themes that emerged from their responses to the interview questions. Each theme or sub theme contained one idea or piece of information (Creswell, 2003). These were then labelled using 'codes.' Patton (2002) describes this approach as "the process of labelling the various data and establishing a data index" (p. 300). This process allowed me to derive meaning and establish relationships among the students' experiences. As Patton observes: "the challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data" (2002, p. 432). However, through the use of qualitative content analysis, I was able to overcome the challenge, and manage the huge amount of information that was collected from the interviews. Content analysis is a "data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (Patton, 2002, p. 243). More specifically, content analysis involves "identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying and labelling the primary patterns in the data" (p. 463). Contextually:

> Content analysis emphasizes an integrated view of speech/texts and their specific
>
> contexts… It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific
>
> manner….Qualitative content analysis is a valuable alternative to more traditional
>
> quantitative content analysis, when the researcher is working in an interpretive paradigm.
>
> The goal is to identify important themes or categories within a body of content, and to
>
> provide a rich description of the social reality created by those themes/categories as they
>
> are lived out in a particular setting. Through careful data preparation, coding, and

interpretation, the results of qualitative content analysis can support the development of

new theories and models, as well as validating existing theories and providing thick

descriptions of particular settings or phenomena. (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p.1)

During the content analysis, the responses were coded and categorized based on similarities and

differences identified in the students' perceptions. The codes were then organized into four broad

categories of themes and sub themes, which will be discussed in Chapter 4 namely: instances of

racism inside and outside the university; experiences with internationalization; personality

factors and an assessment of the overall university experience. After the initial categorization,

description and interpretation of the students' narratives, the explication process was used to

present the data. Reports were written to provide qualitative representations and interpretations

of the findings and explicit reports on how the students perceive their experiences. To assist with

the presentation of the research findings, I carefully selected and used suitable quotations from

the respective participants' narratives, which account for evidence to support the themes and

findings. Patton (2002), describes direct quotations as "a basic source of raw data in qualitative

inquiry, revealing respondents' depth of emotions, the way they have organized their world, their

thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions" (p. 21). While

efforts were made to report all the findings of the interviews verbatim, some information

regarding names, places and events were changed to ensure participant anonymity.

Research Participants

Three female Black International Caribbean students –Pat, Laura and Alison, were interviewed for this study. The following is a brief introduction of each of the case study participants:

Table1: Research Sample

Pseudonym	Age	Location of Home Country	University Program	Number of Years in Canada
Pat	31	Eastern Caribbean	Master's Degree	1 year, 10 months
Laura	31	Western Caribbean	Master's Degree	9 months
Alison	27	Western Caribbean	Doctorate	2 years, 7 months

Pat

Pat was a 31-year-old female Graduate student from the Eastern Caribbean who had been in Canada for 1 year and 10 months. She was the second child from a low-income single parent family and received the majority of her education in her home country. Pat was an Honours student with eleven years of work/professional experience in her country. Before coming to Canada, Pat had been actively involved in a number of church and community organizations in her home country. At the time of the interview, Pat was serving as member of several committees/ organizations at the university. Prior to studying in Canada, she had travelled to the

United States of America and some parts of the Caribbean for vacation but this was the first time that she was living away from home for such an extended period. Pat was very articulate and possessed an energetic, vibrant character. She was the most vocal among the three case study participants and conveyed the greatest concern for the issues discussed. Pat was eager to share her experiences about her life in Canada and expressed her gratitude for being afforded the opportunity to voice her opinions regarding issues of racism and internationalization that had confronted her since her entry to Canada. She was forceful in singling out her direct experiences with racism on campus and was hopeful that by sharing these experiences, she could assist in identifying areas of prejudice, discrimination and inequality in student matters at the university.

Laura

Laura was a 31-year-old female graduate student from the Western Caribbean who had been at the university for a period of nine months. She was the first-born child in a middle-income nuclear family of five. Like Pat, Laura obtained all of her previous university education in her home country. She had worked as a professional in her country's public service for a period of seven years before becoming a student in Canada. Prior to her enrolment at the university, Laura had been a visitor to Canada and had travelled to the United States and some other Caribbean islands for vacation. Although Laura had been travelling with her parents since childhood, this was the first time that she had spent such a long time away from home. She was the only case study participant with English as her second language. Laura's poor command of English did not put her at a disadvantage or hinder her ability to answer the interview questions. She was very expressive, confident and sufficiently focused on the issues at hand.

Alison

Alison was a 27-year-old female graduate student who was in the third year of her program. She was the youngest of the case study participants and the first of the four children in her middle-income household. Similar to the other two students, Alison had worked in the public service of her Western Caribbean state before coming to Canada. Unlike Pat and Laura, she had received her previous degree at a University College in the United Kingdom (UK). Alison spoke proudly of her exposure to a UK environment and how it had prepared her for life here in Canada. Apart from having lived in the UK for a period of two years, Alison had previously visited the United States (US) for vacation. Among the three cases study participants, Alison had been in Canada for the longest period.

Ethical Considerations

This research posed no apparent threat (s) or danger to the participants; Nevertheless, I remained vigilant in ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality, by using pseudonyms. I also ensured that characteristics such as name, country of origin, program, faculty, professional background and other identifiable information were not disclosed in the thesis. The following are some of the ethical concerns and considerations that were addressed in the study. Background information collected about the individual participants was kept separate from the interview data. Electronic sources of data including audio files of the interviews, files containing demographic data and transcriptions were stored on my computer and kept confidential by a secured pass word. To ensure all issues regarding the ethical conduct of the research were addressed, a Letter of Information and a Consent form were issued before the actual research process. Both documents were required for ethical purposes.

The Letter of Information provided participants with an overview of the study, the nature and purpose of the research and the intended interview process. It also informed participants of their right to withdraw at any point in the study and thoroughly explained how confidentiality and anonymity were to be protected. The letter outlined the nature and duration of data collection and described how results of the study were to be distributed. Participants were allowed to retain the Letter of Information for their future reference. In the event that the issues discussed aroused any level of discomfort for the participants, the Letter of information provided them with a list of available student resources within the university that were available for advice or information if they chose. The participants were also invited to email me if they became interested in learning about the results of the study. Besides the time, effort, tokens and electronic devices required for completing this study, there were no significant expenses to be incurred from my research. The Consent Form constituted the written agreement of the respective participant's decisions to participate in the study. The Consent Forms and other materials will be kept under locked storage at the Faculty of Education where they will be retained for a period of two years and then shredded.

Situating the Researcher

As the researcher, and as a Black Caribbean student, I valued the time spent interviewing the participants in the case study. According to Shrigley (2009), "the beauty of qualitative research is its ability to maintain a connection between the researcher and the participants" (p.30). Further, qualitative research "gives participants a chance to speak as the expert and to balance the differential power between researcher and participant" (Shrigley, 2009, p. 31). All the participants identified with me as a fellow Caribbean student and provided me with more information than I actually needed. I was able to relate to the anecdotes provided by the

participants, given my own experiences as a Black International Caribbean student in Canada. Being a graduate student myself, and having experienced racism within certain sectors of the university, I was able to connect with the interviewees' perceptions. This familiarity helped generate understanding, provided validation of the participants' stories during the interviews, and provided a basis for interpreting the implications of their comments accurately.

In most qualitative work, especially in long interviews, the researcher literally becomes part of the project design (McCracken, 1988). There is, therefore, an obligation on the part of the researcher to allow the reader to learn something about the kind of person undertaking the investigation and the kinds of motivations that led to the inquiry in the first place (Walcott, 1990; Rubin and Rubin, 2004). Echoing the sentiments of Samuel (2005), "I do not agree with the traditional point of view that detachment is always a better condition for doing research than close involvement" (p.41). It is of paramount importance for those who read this case study to come to the realization of how, I [as the researcher], approached the study, and how I felt about the process (Perry, 1998). As Strauss and Corbin (1990) reiterated "one can come to the research situation with varying degrees of sensitivity depending on one's previous reading and experience relevant to the data" (p.16). According to Strauss and Corbin, personal experience, along with other factors, such as the analytical research process itself, the existing literature and professional experience, are important sources of 'theoretical sensitivity'. Theoretical sensitivity as characterized by Strauss and Corbin (1990), involves a personal quality of the researcher that is based on the attribute of having the ability to give meaning to data.

Throughout the interviews, it was inevitable for me to situate myself in the place of the participants, reflecting on my own personal experiences and looking for similarities and differences. As an 'insider' researcher, I possessed personal experiences and a clear

understanding of the perceived expressions of the participants, given my own experiences as a visible minority in a similar predominantly white North American university context. Personal experience, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), is derived from the background that we each bring to the research situation. Further, Strauss & Corbin (1990) articulate that this often-implicit knowledge helps us to understand events, actions and words and to do so more confidently than if one did not bring these particular life experiences into the research. My position as a Caribbean student and my awareness of the use of the Caribbean dialect made it easy for me to understand the participants' oral expressions even when they were not using 'Standard English' and were speaking in their own local 'Creole' or 'Patwa' dialects to respond to the interview questions. This was a very important factor in the interview process since the "Caribbean school system recognizes Standard English as the primary language of instruction, even though Creole or Patwa dialect is more commonly used outside of school" and that "some people consider Creole and Patwa dialect to be a form of uneducated…country slang. (McDonald, 2011, para 5).

In providing support for the use of personal experience in research, Delgado-Bernal (1998) concludes that we, as minority researchers, have cultural intuition that is, unique viewpoints based on shared cultural understandings that can provide us with a perspective and insight into the participants' lived experiences (p. 563). However, Dei (2005) has warned that "anti-racism research is not about becoming located or situated in another's lived experiences, but is rather an opportunity for the researcher to critically engage in his or her own experience as part of the knowledge search" (p. 2). My "insider-outsider" role was indispensable. Undeniably, it [my 'insider-outsider position], rendered some valuable insights beneficial to achieving the aims and purpose of the study. I experienced a sense of camaraderie throughout the process and many times during the interviews, the students made references using the pronouns "us" and

"we. However, some of my observations, interpretations, encounters and interactions were quite different from those of the participants, hence accentuating my "outsider" positionality. All of this made it imperative for me to acknowledge the fact that I had assumed both an "outsider" and an "insider" status during the study, and to underscore the arguments put forth in the preceding discussions that there is no neutral position that can be adopted by a researcher.

Summary

In this chapter I discussed the qualitative methodology employed to gather, analyze and interpret the data generated from semi-structured interviews as means by which to study the cross cultural experiences of Black International Caribbean students in the context of internationalization. Given the fact that very little empirical data exists on the experiences of Black International Caribbean university students, my study has been designed to fill this gap in the research. To fulfill the purpose, I generated qualitative data to help build knowledge about the topic and to capture empirically the lived experience and viewpoints of a selected sample of three student participants. The use of interviews were justified in light of my stated purpose which was to generate data that would enable me to generate insights into the experiences and perspectives of international students from the Caribbean studying at a predominantly Anglo-Canadian university. In the next chapter I provide a detailed thematic analysis of the data generated from the interviews I conducted.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation of Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews that were conducted with the three Case Study participants: Alison, Laura and Pat, and provides a discussion of these findings in light of the existing literature. The research drew upon the narratives of these black International Caribbean students to document how they perceived their experiences as a visible minority among a wide pool of International students at a predominantly 'White' university. The study participants were asked questions pertaining to their cross-cultural experiences, including their cross-cultural relations and interactions, their opportunities for intercultural learning, as well as their experiences with racism and internationalization. The thesis also investigated the challenges that confronted these students and the strategies employed for adaptation and success. Further, the thesis examined the factors that influenced the students' decisions to study in Canada, more specifically at the university.

An analysis of each interview was conducted to search for recurring themes in the students' responses. These themes were used to foster relationships among the individual students' perceived experiences and to make connections between their subjective experiences and the findings from existing literature. The chapter also presents the four major themes and related sub themes that emerged from the students' narratives: (a) instances of racism inside and outside the university; (b) experiences with internationalization; (c) personality factors and; (d) an assessment of the overall university experience.

Instances of Racism Inside and Outside of the University

Existing research and evidence reveal instances of racism operating at Canadian universities (e.g. Crosby, 2010; Henry and Tator 2009; Nakhaie 2004). Sedlacek and Brooks (1976, 1987) explain how institutional racism is embedded in higher education and how student characteristics help them in overcoming these institutional barriers. Crosby (2010) contends, "while allegations of racism in Canadian post-secondary institutions have become public knowledge, the discourse of denial still persists" (p. 405). In light of these presuppositions, the interviews in this current study provided an opportunity for the participants to report on any reflections of discrimination in their cross-cultural encounters at the specific university where they are currently enrolled.

Conceptualizations of Racism

Contrary to findings of earlier research, (e.g. Dei, 1995; Hamilton & Shang, 1977; Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009; James, 1993), overt on campus racism was not a salient issue among the three "Black Caribbean" students in this study. Nevertheless, while direct racism was not regarded as prominent at the university, the narratives of all three students provided some reflection of 'institutional racism' in university policy. Their most prevalent account of institutional racism manifested in their concerns for the lack of diversity in the pedagogical approaches and "a biased curriculum" (Brathwaite, 2010, p. 309). Furthermore, the 'on-campus' experiences reported by Pat, alongside the 'off- campus' occurrences described by Laura and Alison, have led to the assertion that more subtle forms of racism seem to exist on and off the university campus. For the most part, the students focused mainly on positive cross-cultural experiences. Although only one of the students reported having experienced direct racism on campus, the other two shared their experiences with racism as off campus occurrences. The students also shared a clear understanding of the racism discourse. In direct response to the

question 'what is your understanding of racial or ethnic discrimination?' Pat defined discrimination as "a bias, disproportion based on skin colour." Laura defined discrimination as follows: "the fact that one is treated differently based on your ethnicity or skin colour. They treat you differently and they have a certain perception of you that is different from the perception they have of the majority." For Alison, discrimination involved "some form of racial prejudice that could stem from many places, from lack of knowledge, just from people thinking that they are superior and they don't even know why."

Despite their conceptions of racial discrimination, when asked whether they believed racism existed at their university, the participants' perceptions varied. Alison and Laura admitted that, while they were not denying the existence of racism on campus, they as individuals, did not pay attention to it and, hence, were not adversely affected by it. Alison boldly stated:

> I think, thinking about things being racial, has a lot to do with the person who is listening. Because if you are a person who has been facing it [racism] a lot, then you end up listening out for it [racism] and you end up missing other comments that were not meant to be racial. However, generally, I do not try to find the racial meaning behind anything. So unless it is direct and explicit, I wouldn't know.

The continuous denial by Laura and Alison of having had any direct experience with racism on campus may be a consequence of the sensitivity of the issue and the fear of being scrutinized. Moreover, the students' insouciance about the issue of racism may be attributed to their temporary situation. The fact that the students are sojourners may have provided them with a coping mechanism. This is contingent upon the fact that, at the time of the study, all three of the students had perceived themselves merely as 'international students' or 'foreign students' who were pursuing their degree in Canada, with the intention of returning home upon completion.

This may have also contributed to their positive academic self-concept. According to the results of a study conducted by Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen and Van Horn (2002) among 'international student sojourners factors such as "self efficacy, social support and cultural novelty predicted adjustment and strain during the transition period" (p. 458). Adler (1975) has identified five phases of cross-cultural adjustment that "delineate a progressive depth of experiential learning" (p.6). Following the phases of "initial contact, disintegration and reintegration," (Adler, 1975, pp.16-18).

"....The autonomy stage of transition is marked by a rising sensitivity and by the acquisition of both skill and understanding of the second culture. The individual is to a large extent, independent of previous defensiveness and is experientially capable of moving in and out of new situations. …The person is relaxed…. Although the extent of the individual's skills and understanding may not be as deep as he or she feels them to be, the individual often regards him or herself as an expert on the second culture… The individual is a fully functioning person in his or her role and is both comfortable and secure with his or her status as an insider-outsider in two different cultures. The stage of autonomy is especially marked by the growth of personal flexibility and by the development of appropriate coping skills for the second culture. (p. 17).

Definitively, the 'independence phase' of transition:

"Is marked by attitudes, emotionality and behaviours that are independent but not un-dependent of cultural influence. The individual is fully able to draw and accept nourishment from cultural differences and similarities as well as eliciting a high degree of trust and sensitivity, and is able to view both him or herself and others as individual human beings that are influenced by culture and upbringing. He or she is expressive,

humorous, creative, and is capable of putting meaning into situations. The individual then is self actualizing to the degree that both choice and responsibility are exercised in situations while also fully re-experiencing other emotional, behavioural and attitudinal states marked in earlier stages of transition….Where an individual is independent, he or she is capable of experiential learning that is holistically incorporated into identity, while at the same time capable of again having preconceptions, assumptions, values and attitudes challenged." (Adler, 2005, p. 18).

Conclusively, the transitional experience begins with the encounter of another culture and evolves into the encounter with self. The sequences of changes which take place between contact and independence are indicative of a progressive unfolding of the self" (Adler, 1975, p. 18). The two final phases of the "transitional experience" (Adler, 1975) are indicative of the high level of efficacy, agency, autonomy and independence displayed by the students in this study and their ability to maintain their racial identity and cope with any challenges or instances of racism.

Direct and Indirect Experiences with Racism

As a follow up, I asked the students whether they had encountered any direct or indirect experiences with racism or discrimination. Alison remained defensive:

I try not to read too much into certain situations because sometimes I find that people say stuff and they don't mean it to be anything racial. Nevertheless, if you know the person you know it's something they might have said to a white person as well.... I think sometimes we experience it [racial discrimination] because we look for it [racial discrimination], I don't but if it [racial discrimination] comes at me I'll know.

Although she had never experienced any form of direct racism on the university campus, Alison was able to describe an incident, which occurred to her off campus.

I could remember one direct incident, it happened on …Road. My boyfriend and I used to go for walks in the night, while we were walking, some guys pulled up in a car and started shouting 'monkey or pigs' or something like that. That was my only experience. But the thing is, we just didn't pay any attention to them, but that was my experience here with any form of prejudice outside of campus. At school, I'm fine, no one has ever actually. That was the only instance I could think of.

Like Alison, Laura did not report any experiences of blatant or direct racism on campus. Laura attributed this to the fact that she was not interested in social interactions on campus. In sharing her experiences with racism outside the university campus, however, Laura spoke in detail about her two separate encounters with racial stereotyping. Both incidents involved individuals who had asked Laura whether she was on her way to attend the 'Black Baptist Church.' I proceeded to ask Laura whether, she was aware of any other experiences, especially on campus, and she responded: "No, not something that shook me like those two." Reflecting on her reaction to the questions, Laura stated: "I understand that being black I need to integrate, but why do they presume that being black I need to go specifically to the Black community church?" From Laura's perspective, the two individuals in question had formed racial stereotypes of blacks as belonging to the same religious background, and based on her skin colour, they had viewed her through their racial lenses. This claim is substantiated by the Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship's definition of racial discrimination: "a set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon an ideology of inherent superiority of one racial or ethno-cultural group over another." Based on this definition, it is apt to conclude that the two individuals in Laura's anecdotes had engaged in "cultural racism" (Henry et al., 2000, p.52).

One aspect unique to Pat's cross-cultural experiences among the three case study participants was her perceived direct encounters with racism on the university campus. Pat was the only one who openly admitted to the experience. She explained that not only had she heard talk of racial discrimination among other minority students attending universities in Canada, but she had also experienced racism herself. Pat provided the details of the two incidents that led her to assume that position:

> I was sitting in a room getting ready for a class and realized that no one had sat next to me in any of the vacant seats on either sides of me. Maybe they'll say it's because they were giving me personal space but everyone else, all the 'White Canadian' students had someone sitting next to them. When I brought my observation to the class, one student got up from where he was sitting and sat in one of the seats next to me saying 'I will sit next to Pat.' The other incident involved a support staff at my faculty. I had been there for more than ten minutes waiting for the individual to acknowledge my presence and to ask me whether he/she could assist me. For a while, that individual kept avoiding eye contact with me, probably trying to give me the impression that he/she was too busy to attend to me. But as soon as another 'White Canadian' walked in, the individual immediately lifted his/her head and asked that person [the White Canadian] who had walked in 'can I help you [the White Canadian]?

Pat also acknowledged that on other parts of campus the "unskilled staff" were just "plain mean" and that she had seen levels of discomfort and curiosity among them when dealing with or serving black foreign students. Despite her concerns about the issue, Pat noted categorically, that although one or two people in different departments may have expressed acts of subtle racism towards her, she was not willing to generalize. She attributed such individual acts of racism to

factors such as ignorance, lack of education on how to deal with issues of racism, lack of experience with dealing with black/ foreign students, feelings of superiority over others or mere insensitivity. The experiences reported by Pat clearly demonstrate the "polite racism" described by Hughes and Kallen (1974, p. 214).

The issue of racism, whether stated implicitly or explicitly, was an emergent theme throughout the students' narratives. All three students expressed awareness of racism and at some point, submitted to the idea that it exists on campus. Essentially, the findings of this current study challenge some of the conclusions drawn by earlier researchers that Black students often experience blatant racism on campus (e.g. Thompson et. al, 2000) and that for many, the environment can be unpleasant because of racism (e.g. Jones, 1997). Although the students had reported only a few instances of racial discrimination, with the majority occurring off campus, the effects did not appear to be detrimental to their identity. Unlike the students in other studies (e.g. Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009), who had experienced- low self-esteem and feelings of isolation, the students in my case study had autonomy over their situation and were not adversely affected.

Relationships with Peers

In describing her relationship with her classmates, Pat spoke openly about her difficulties coping in class. She identified as being the only black student in her classes and thought that she stood out and was often made to feel conscious that she was black. Beyond that, Pat described feeling a sense of "polite indifference" among her classmates. I proceeded to ask what she meant by the phrase and she explained:

the fact that they gave the polite smile, and did not go out of their way to either accommodate or discriminate or make me feel bad...I didn't get the impression that they

just engaged in her research. Nonetheless, she summed up her experiences in and around the research labs as follows:

> In my department and my program, there's a diversity of ethnic groups and I like that but it's honestly not something I think too much about, everyone is here for a purpose and everyone does what they are here to do and I haven't had any problems so I've had a good experience...they're positive, this community, we seem to act like a close knit group and that's what it is, so there are people from Asia, Caucasian and I am a black person.

It was interesting to note that even with Alison's recognition of her department as a 'close-knit group,' she heedfully identified herself as 'black' among the other ethnicities enrolled in her program. This speaks to the view held by Adams (1996) that racism is entrenched on the basis of physical characteristics such as skin colour. Skin colour, according to Adams, is the most conspicuous and prominent signifier of one's race. Alison's consciousness of the racial and/or ethnic differences within her department and her ability to 'self-identify' as a 'black person' represented her awareness that her race can in effect place her on the periphery.

Relationships with Faculty

In response to the questions pertaining to their experiences with professors, all three of the participants felt that they had developed positive relationships with their professors, contrary to the findings of similar studies, (e.g. Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009, Codjoe, 2001). All three of the students found the relationships with their faculty to be among the most gratifying. Not one of them perceived racist attitudes among their professors. Laura described her experiences with her professors as "very supportive, respectful and accepting." Similar to Laura, Pat expressed satisfaction with her professors, describing them as 'very accommodating and welcoming." Pat continued: "Most people are unfriendly but professors are motivating, they offer ideas…most

administrative staff members are accommodating and helpful too." This statement clearly reflects the students' satisfaction with their faculty and professors and illustrates the importance of positive faculty relationships to minority students. As Bock (1997) emphasizes, "faculty play an important role in influencing the overall campus climate and in creating culture -conducive learning." (p.7).

Earlier research indicates that Black students who claimed to have more positive relationships with faculty also reported better integration and greater satisfaction with social life on their campuses, as well as better academic achievement than other Black students (Allen, 1985). Echoing the same sentiments, Astin (1999) purports that strong relationships with faculty are crucial to student success at college, and that faculty-student relationships are positively correlated with student satisfaction. "Obviously faculty influence the academic success of minority students. Even though they spend only a limited time in class rooms, they help shape the thinking of students" (Samuel, 2005, p. 184). Although support from professors is often positive and motivating, Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009) warns that professors may have other motives for ensuring that the minority students in their classes perform well and succeed.

> This is also a burden placed on racialized students…that one must be superior, do better,
> strive higher and basically be extra ordinary and exceptional to change the status quo.
> The onus is somehow never on the people in the positions of privilege and power to
> change the status quo, but rather on the racialized 'token mentor'. Too often, we
> [professors of colour] become representatives of the race, overburdened with
> expectations and baggage that our white peers do not have to deal with. (p. 107)

While Pat had referred to instances of 'differential treatment', overall, the students did not report experiencing any overt or direct racism from their professors. The fact that all three of the

students in my study received favour among their faculty may have served as hindrances to their open admission of any perceived expressions of racism from their professors. Conversely, the favour and support received from faculty could be a significant contributor to these students' academic success. In discussing the value of positive faculty-student relationships, Tinto (1975) explains that faculty promote feelings of assertiveness and belonging among students. Positive interactions between faculty and students stimulate vibrant relationships, increase academic commitment and encourage students to persist in their studies.

Strong Racial Identity

All of the participants in this case study reported feeling proud about their racial background and seemed to have embraced the fact that they were members of a minority group on campus. The students did not report high levels of differential treatment similar to that reported by the Caribbean students in other studies (e.g. Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009, Coelbo 1988 & Henry 1994). The participants articulated their consciousness of their 'racial identity.' Thompson et al (2000) define racial identity as a measure of the importance that members of an ethnic group place on their cultural heritage. Chavez and Guido-Di Britto (1999) have confirmed the importance of racial identity in personality development. Racial identity is an important part of an individual's overall identity and is influenced by social and cultural manifestations. Although, the students expressed pride in their 'black identity,' they admitted that they did at times become conscious of the fact that they were black among a significant white and/or coloured university population. None of the three students had become immersed in the Canadian culture. They assured me that they would not assimilate and that maintaining their personalities and Caribbean culture was 'key'. According to Allahar, (2010), assimilation assures that one loses one's culture, distinctiveness and through a process of social, cultural and political

and even biological blending" (p.72). All three students viewed their black identity, their cultural values, strong personalities, high self-efficacy, motivation, and grounding as the most instrumental factors in their cross-cultural adaptation and academic success. In discussing issues of identity, Laura referred to herself as an ethnic minority. She expounds:

Socially speaking, I don't think I have a difference, probably being an ethnic minority, it's like you are self-conscious. But to say I've been outwardly positioned or put into that category? I don't think I have, no. Because mainly I feel since we're at an academic level, I don't feel that much of a difference between myself and the other students.

Alison described herself as a representative in her program, a role model for other black students from the Caribbean. In describing her feelings about being the only black student in her program, she admitted: "I am already comfortable with the fact that… I'm in a field where there are not too many black people in there so that shouldn't make me shock." Pat on the other hand, admitted that she was extremely conscious of being among the few black students at her university. This was a clear indication that although they shared varying perspectives on the situation of being black in a white dominated school atmosphere, all the students perceived power relations between themselves as black students and other racial groups on campus.

The students spoke of the many instances when they had to educate people about the Caribbean and describe the location of their respective countries in relation to Canada in an effort to respond to the question 'where are you from?' (James, 2001). This question according to James, can be considered a friendly way of initiating a conversation, indicating an interest in the background and experiences of the respondent. Conversely, the question can epitomize a way of showing that the person asking such a question has seen some form of 'difference' in the respondent, mainly based on accent and colour (James, 2001). The above discourse described by

James adds relevance to some of the issues discussed during the interviews. Pat especially, described the discomfort that she felt at times:

> I am black, I stand out, the reality is I can't help being black…the only time I don't feel uncomfortable is when talking academic stuff I know and can contribute. They're uncomfortable with me, which makes me uncomfortable knowing that… I know that I have been treated differently because of my skin colour.

This quotation implies that "identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact…we should think instead of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete, always in the process and always constituted within, not outside representation" (Hall, 1990, p. 222).

Challenges with Language and Accent

Among the three participants, Laura was the only one with English as a second language. Being an ESL learner and having a Caribbean dialect as her first official language have made her stand out. Her experiences with language and oral communication were unique from that of the other two participants. As an ESL learner, Laura had encountered some difficulty with oral expression, but reported having received 'preferential treatment', as opposed to differential treatment, from professors and fellow classmates. Laura elucidates, "When I do struggle to find my words because my thinking is in another language, I don't have any unpleasant encounters with my colleagues. They've been very understanding." Although English was her first language, Pat made specific reference to her accent, as a barrier to communication in class. She expressed the concern that she was often not understood because of her accent, and was frequently asked to repeat or explain what she was trying to say, which obviously became frustrating for her. When asked how she had overcome that difficulty, Pat explained that the situation had led her to stop participating in class discussions, since she thought that her

contributions were not being appreciated. Unlike Laura and Pat, Alison did not report any problems with accent or language, but mentioned her enthusiasm for speaking her local dialect whenever she met with other students from her country. The experiences described by Pat, Laura and Alison reflect their subjective interpretations of the situation and by extension, the subjective biases of the dominant group regarding minority languages. James (2001) emphasizes the role of language in cross-cultural relationships, "race, ethnicity and correspondingly language are part of the subjective ways in which we and others make sense of who we are, the places from which we speak, our encounters with others, the relationships we establish and the experiences we

Limited Social Interactions

All three participants attested to their lack of social contact outside of school. Pat described her social interactions as limited and attributed it to the small black population within the city where the university was located. Except for a few white classmates who had offered her rides after class, or others who sought her help with their assignments, Pat reported having made very few close friends within the university. She also expressed her frustrations with cultural barriers, feelings of invisibility and unfamiliarity with Canadian norms. Laura described her social interactions as follows:

> I'm not the type of person who would be looking for interactions and those kinds of things. I'm most likely about my own business. I've come here to pursue my degree and my main focus is that. If I don't have interactions with other students, that's ok. If I do it's, ok, as long as the interaction is respectful.

Similarly, Alison registered her disinterest in social interactions outside of her faculty. At several points during the interview, she stated, "I'm always here [her faculty]. I only go to other parts of the campus when I have to go to do business. .. I'm a person who tends to spend a lot of time by

myself." The students' narratives demonstrated that they had voluntarily engaged in "self-segregation" (Samuel, 2005, p. 94). Research conducted by Samuel (2005) found that minority students who experience feelings of marginalization and exclusion tend to segregate themselves and interact less with white peers. Given the fact that they were all high achievers, the students had very little time for extensive socialization. While all three students reported having limited social interactions, they did not reflect any feelings of social isolation. They described their strategies for keeping their cultural traditions and ensuring 'cultural maintenance'. Laura, for example, informed me that she played her local music almost every day. Pat reported spending time on the internet, reading or listening to the news from her country. Alison spoke of the Caribbean food that she obtained from an international food market in the city. Also, the students explained how they remained strongly connected to their home culture and kept strong ties through constant communication with their family and friends from home.

Experiences with Internationalization at the University

The interview included a number of questions pertaining to internationalization at the specific university. All three students indicated their awareness of an internationalization policy at the university. While the students acknowledged the fact that they were, in effect, beneficiaries of the policy implementation, they expressed the need for the inclusion of an international perspective into the curriculum and a greater awareness of the diverse needs of the international student population.

Lack of an International Perspective in the Curriculum

All three students were of the opinion that an international component, including a Caribbean Studies course, would enrich the academic experience at that university, promote intercultural learning and create awareness among other students about the Caribbean region. Alison, for example, mentioned that other universities in Ontario were offering courses in

Caribbean studies and that the university should follow suit. This argument is supported by Crosby (2010) who believes that measures implemented to host international students are lacking. According to Crosby, much of the attention given to international students in the initial stages of their journey is during the recruitment and pre-arrival process. Pat and Laura spoke of their inability to relate to all aspects of the curricula and the irrelevance of some of the course content to the global/Caribbean context. Alison, on the other hand, expressed a sense of empowerment with the curriculum owing to the nature of her field. Although she agreed that the context was at times too 'Ontario specific,' Alison described her curriculum as applicable and transferable to her country. The afore-mentioned discussion focused on the issue of an 'internationalized curriculum,' one that encourages the integration of an intercultural and global dimension into the delivery of education (Knight, 2004, AUCC, 2007).

In keeping with Knight's model of internationalization, the university's curricula should be aimed at equipping all students with skills necessary for functioning in the global environment. Internationalized curricula should have an international orientation and should be designed for both domestic and foreign students. This speaks to the need for cultural diversity in the execution of programs at the university. Notwithstanding the irrelevance of some of the curriculum content to their Caribbean context, the students in this case study had an advantage not shared by some of the students in other studies (Henry and Tator 2009, Hernandez-Ramdwar 2009). They applauded some of their professors for ensuring their inclusion in the classroom by allowing them to incorporate their home experiences in class discussions and course papers.

Little Evidence of Internationalization Policy

When asked whether they had seen evidence of internationalization in the curricula that they were studying, the students acknowledged that while the university had made the effort to

enact an internationalization policy with the intention of internationalizing the curricula, this was not reflected in classroom interactions. Pat indicated that she had chosen the university as her place of study based on the high quality of the program advertised on the website and its compatibility with her professional interests. She further noted that when she actually got to the university she was disappointed with the course content. She found it too 'Ontario specific' and lacking the global dimension that was purported on the website. Pat comments: "I am concerned that what I'm learning here isn't transferable to my country…I want to learn what people all over the world are doing and to make comparisons…not Ontario driven." Alison did not show as much concern for the issue of an internationalized curriculum as Laura and Pat. Because of the nature of her program, she described it as "internationally recognized." In her attempt to address the question, Alison remarked: "I think they're really working to ensure that they have diversity." Laura described her classes as 'enjoyable' but expressed concerned for the irrelevance of some of the curriculum content to her own local context:

> I came to love [topic] and being in that [course] it was like 'mind blowing.' .… So far I have not been in a class, I didn't enjoy. To transfer it back home? OMG! That's a million dollar question. Ok, why would I say it's a million dollar question? I think in my [name of course] class, I've been learning a lot about [topic] and I realize that, it's like, I don't think there's gonna be any 'silver bullets' in trying to transfer what I've learned here. I don't think that's a right course.

Recommendations for Internationalization

The participants were allowed an opportunity to make suggestions regarding how the university might better meet its mandate of internationalization to better serve students like themselves. The following are the suggestions made by Alison:

I would say keep on doing what you're doing; aim to accommodate international students from a wider background in the future. I know it has a lot to do with finances and I know they are doing very well. I conducted some research on the school before I applied and it shows that over the years they have been accepting more international students and that there is funding for international students. So, I think if they go on the track that they are on, then eventually they will be able to do the same thing for more international students. So keep doing what they're doing right now and keep building on the number of international students that they are able to facilitate. And maybe they could adopt something from … University, which has a program in Caribbean Creole.

Pat expressed the need for the university to ensure that all categories of international students are catered for. She made suggestions for the university to develop programs that encourage diversity and to increase the intake of Caribbean students. She advised: "Be ready and poised to develop a program that would encourage diversity…recognize that international doesn't mean Asian and the term must include all students...Caribbean is not factored in but others are…admit more Caribbean students would make it more visible." Laura's suggestions were for the School of Graduate Studies and International Students' Centre. She called for better organization of the bursaries or scholarships offered to international students. Moreover, Laura highlighted the need to improve the 'Peer Guide' program designed to assist incoming international students:

There's a program at the International Student Centre…it will be interesting to kind of automatically assign someone to the peer guide rather than someone having to request it. Imagine there might be other people who might want that help but won't ask for it. Therefore, that kind of help should have been automatically assigned. If they had a way of gently assigning someone to you, that would be better.

This suggestion is reinforced by James (2012), a leading expert and advocate in the education of Caribbean students in Canada. In a report by Ward (2012, February 29, Et cetera, para.7) entitled "Caribbean Students Look for Their Future in their Curriculum," James noted that Caribbean students are informed by their experiences and that this should be reflected in their curriculum. "There should be more required African Canadian and Caribbean students' history, more African diversified learning resources" (Sadlier cited in Ward 2012, para. 12). It is important for those responsible for the education of international students to ensure diversity and cross cultural learning. International students should be better appreciated and acknowledged. The use of these suggestions by educators can assist in creating an enabling environment for all students. It is often argued by universities and governments that through their interactions with international peers, Canadian students will be exposed to different culture, and international students will acquire insights in Canadian culture and develop networks that will be mutually beneficial in the future. (Grayson, 2008, p.220)

Personal Factors Influencing Cross-cultural Adaptation

Quintana (2007) warns that when black students enter predominantly White universities they tend to develop their own mechanisms to adjust or to filter their identity in that new environment. These students often adapt to the new environment in ways that either facilitate or diminish their own racial identity (Sheets, 1999; Tatum, 1997). Conclusively, Sedlacek and Brooks (1976, 1987) maintain that student characteristics aid in overcoming institutional barriers. They highlight personal factors such as positive self-concepts, the students' ability to deal with racism, recognition of personal strengths and weaknesses, long-range goal development, a strong support system and any previous leadership and/or community involvement experiences (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1987).

This is telling because all three of the students in this case study highlighted certain personality characteristics that had influenced their cross-cultural experiences. The students spoke proudly of factors including their high levels of self-efficacy, a strong sense of agency and strong personalities that contributed to their high academic achievement. In making the link between her personality and her academic success, Pat noted: "Academically I know what I'm about. I excel, I share, explain to them. If not, they wouldn't be drawn towards me if I needed them. Identity makes it easier to cope." Laura provided the following details about her personality:

> I know what I can do and what I cannot do, the fact that I have those guidelines helps a lot and also my personality. The fact that I do not expect anything from anybody is a huge help. It's like you depend on yourself and then if everything goes well with everybody else-okay, if everything doesn't go well with everybody else it's not the end of the world.

Alison attributed her strong personality to discipline. "I'm very disciplined; I know how to survive on almost nothing, right? So you can put me in almost any situation and I will survive." She continued: "I can say there's a link to my experiences now and the way I was raised."

Family Influence and Academic Commitment

Family expectations were seen as another factor influencing the students' experiences. Each of the students in this case study was either a first or second born child or the first child to attend university in the family. This may have resulted in high expectations from family members and ultimately a determination to bring pride and honour to the family. According to Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009), being the first in a family to attend university can "mean a sense of obligation and responsibility toward the rest of the family- the shining example syndrome" (p.

112). For all three of the students, part of the reason for attending university was to gain qualifications and for professional development. Furthermore, each of them possessed rich intellectual capital and was a recipient of some form of internal or external funding. The students had the responsibility of working hard to maintain the academic standard for preserving that funding. Some researchers have focused on high achieving students' of colour have and their ability to perform well in school while maintaining their racial identity. (e.g. Carter-Andrews, 2009). In coping with the "overwhelming presence of whiteness in education and the overt nature of racism in the achievement process…. one way in which students' of colour reconcile, is by using school success as a form of resistance (Carter-Andrews, 2009, p. 298). Carter-Andrews defined such resistance as "prove them wrong" (p.298). Other scholars including Brayboy 2005; Carter 2008; Gayles 2005; O'Connor 1997; Sanders 1997; Yosso 2002 and Foster 2005 cited in Carter-Andrews (2009) have defined resistance as follows:

> Succeeding in school to reject race and racism as structural barriers to students' upward mobility….a resistance strategy represents a commitment to maintaining a historically rooted ideology of racial uplift and thriving against all odds as a member of one's racial group….students who embody this characterization have been called race-conscious high achievers (Carter-Andrews, 2009, p. 298).

As Carter-Andrews (2009) continued:

> Being a black…achiever in a predominantly white high school means embodying racial group pride as well as having a critical understanding of how race and racism operate to potentially constrain one's success. It also means viewing achievement as a human, raceless trait that can be acquired by anyone. (p. 299).

The foregoing discussion identified a range of potential motivators in the student participants' cross-cultural adaptation and academic success.

Past Experiences

Alison was upfront in explaining that her previous exposure to a British educational environment had prepared her for the cross-cultural challenges in Canada. Earlier visits to North America, exposure to North American culture via cable television and the internet had to some extent, prepared the students for a widely diverse environment. For instance, they did not report experiencing any form of culture shock during the adaptation process in Canada. Alison explained:

> There was no culture shock for me, I did expect it, we live in, this is …it's mostly white people…so I came here with a purpose, I already lived in another country, I have lived in the UK and that was my purpose to study. So coming here, I came with a purpose. I came with an open mind, and that is how I approach things.

In addressing the issue of cross-cultural adaptation, Laura indicated: "No, no, I don't think I was shocked…..I've been travelling since I was two and mainly to USA and Canada so my interaction with white people, with white communities, did not, it wasn't a shock."

The students reported maintaining a strong sense of cultural identity in a cross-cultural context. All of the students recognized that certain factors including, but not limited to self-efficacy, family support, past experiences and cultural maintenance were instrumental in shaping their experiences. All of these positive attributes have served a protective function. They have assisted the students in maintaining a strong sense of agency and remaining grounded in the face of perceived racial or cultural discrimination.

An Assessment of the Overall University Experience

In addition to the major themes discussed previously, accounts of the students' overall university experiences both positive and negative pervaded the narratives. They explained the factors that influenced their decision to study at the university, their impressions of the university and made some suggestions and recommendations for improving its internationalization process at the university. When the students were asked why they had chosen to study in Canada, more specifically at this university, the reasons were similar. They had each received a prestigious scholarship with universities in Canada as the options. After careful review of the course offerings of these universities' websites, they came to the realization that the content of the program offered by their present university was more aligned and superior and that the curriculum stood out.

When asked about her first impressions of her professors and the student body when she first entered the university, Pat replied, "Wow! All white!" Despite her perceived challenges, she expressed overall satisfaction with the university and indicated how privileged she felt to be a student there: "I have not had a totally horrible experience. This university offers a superlative quality of education." In summing up her academic experience at the university, Pat described it as rewarding, and proudly informed me that she had excelled in all of her courses. Similarly, in describing her overall university experiences, Alison reported:

> I would say I've had a very good experience here…well I can talk specifically about my department, I find people to be really helpful   and I like the fact what I'm studying and who is my supervisor. If I have a question that can be better answered by   somebody else, by another department another area of study whatever, they've been really happy to help. So I feel like, I like the facilities of my department, they have really good facilities,

so whatever I could have thought of to study in my area, it would have been possible here.

Laura described her university experiences as follows:

Quite favourable ethnically speaking, probably the difference might be with regards to our experience, our past experiences, and our professional experiences. But other than that, I don't feel any other experience that has had a negative impact on me with regards to my classroom.

In response to the question: "Would you recommend this university to other Caribbean students?" Pat responded with a resounding, "Sure!" and offered the following advice:

Be prepared to feel invisible in the beginning, immerse in the Canadian culture but ground themselves. From day one, remind themselves that it can become frustrating, speak slower to limit the number of times they will be asked to repeat. Remind themselves that people are unfamiliar with their accent. Be open-minded, don't just come and cry racism, deal with the situation as it comes along.

Laura assured me that she would recommend the university to other Caribbean students, but would advise them as follows:

I would encourage people but tell them be cautious of who you are, and if you don't know who you are, wherever you land, whether it's at this university or in another country at another university, you need to know who you are. You need to know where you stand and need to have your purpose stated…just know exactly who you are and why you're coming, that's pretty much my recommendation. For somebody attending a university outside of their home country and mainly if they're coming as a minority group, know who you are, know where you're coming from and where you're going.

Like Pat and Laura, Alison agreed to recommend the university to other Caribbean students and stated:

> I would, I have, so many. I think it's a great experience. A lot of people I know, I really know some smart people and sometimes they just don't have access to training facilities but I do encourage people, I have encouraged people to apply… Come with an open mind and know your purpose and do not assume that somebody is gonna treat you differently because of race. If it [racism] happens, you deal with it [racism] but it depends on what it [racism] is. I mean, you could choose to ignore it [racism], you could choose to comment on it [racism], you could choose to report it [racism]somewhere or whatever you want to do, depending on what it [racism] is obviously but, but don't come expecting it [racism] because when you look for something you will find it.

The degree to how positively or negatively the students rated their experiences varied. While the students highlighted the challenges of their university life, all three of them evaluated their experiences at their university as rewarding. They each shared unique features of their faculties/ departments. For example, Pat proudly listed a number of clubs and organizations of which she has been an active member, and spoke of the frequent opportunities for her to attend conferences. Laura spoke proudly of her ability to assist her colleagues with learning one of Canada's official languages. Alison conveyed much pride in her ability to conduct research in a 'state of the art lab.' Unlike the students in Hernandez-Ramdwar's (2007) research, the students in this case study saw the university as a place in which important academic and social connections were made. All three of them proposed to recommend the university to other Caribbean students and offered some advice to assist those students with successful adaptation.

Summary

This chapter has provided a detailed analysis of the case study participants' cross-cultural experiences in the context of internationalization. The key findings of this research are that cross-cultural experiences can affect the overall in and out of class experiences of the students. The interviews revealed that despite a few day-to-day challenges, all three students have had relatively positive academic and social experiences at the university. However, the findings revealed an awareness of racism and racist attitudes among the students. The participants did not perceive any racial discrimination among professors and administration of the faculties and/or departments. Unlike the Caribbean students in the case studies conducted by researchers such as Dei (2005); Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009); James (1990) and others, the students in this case study were not greatly impacted by racism. This may be attributed to a number of factors including the students' strong sense of self, their intellectual capital, maturity, support from faculty and family and personality characteristics. Although all three of the students perceived racism to exist in Canada and by extension at their university, only one recounted direct encounters with racism on campus while the other two students reported off campus occurrences. Among the internationalization issues discussed, the greatest concern was for the curriculum. This provided an indication that some form of 'structural racism' (Brathwaite, 2010) is inherent in the university's policy. The applicability of the curriculum to a Caribbean context was a major issue among all three students. Overall, they articulated the need for fundamental changes in the internationalization process and a more inclusive curriculum.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Implications for Further Research

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the key points of this research, discuss the implications of the findings, present the main conclusions, identify the limitations of the study and make recommendations for future research. This thesis has explored the cross-cultural experiences of three (3) Black female students originating from the Caribbean and enrolled as International students in a post- secondary program at a university in Canada. My own observations and experiences as a Black foreign student prompted my interest in this research topic. The report on a study conducted by Dei et al. (1995), citing racism as the main cause of 'dropout' and 'disengagement' among 'Black' High School students in Toronto, motivated me to investigate whether Black Caribbean students like myself who attend universities in Ontario share similar experiences. Other studies on the experiences of international students in North America also steered my interest in the research.

Due to the limitations of my resources as well as the constraints of time and space, I was restricted to studying students at only one university. Furthermore, because of the small number of Black International Caribbean students enrolled at the university and the poor response to the advertisement for the study, I was able to interview only three participants. Nevertheless, my research study filled a gap in research on this category of students and added to existing literature on Black and/or Caribbean students in Canadian educational institutions. "As research on racism in Canadian society in general and in the university in particular has expanded rapidly in the last two decades, so too have the various theoretical perspectives that seek to analyze and explain the phenomenon in its various institutional guises" (Henry & Tator, 2009, p. 23). One of the most

widely used theoretical perspectives for understanding and resisting 'social oppressions' is the anti-racism analytical framework proposed by George Dei (1995). Dei's anti-racism framework was used in this current case study, to inform and report on the cross-cultural issues confronting the three students. The students' voices were crucial in exploring whether any forms of racial/ethnic/cultural discrimination were experienced by Caribbean international students, particularly given the current emphasis on equity and internationalization policies in Canadian universities.

My thesis, however, did not seek to evaluate or analyze the university's equity, multi-cultural or internationalization policies, or to dwell on issues of racism within the university. Rather, the thesis sought to examine whether the students felt that they had experienced any form of racism or ethnic discrimination at the university and the impact of such experiences on their social and academic well-being. According to Henry and Tator (2009), anti-racism theories have been useful in not only explaining the persistence of racism in the university's structure [culture of whiteness] but also in showing how social justice and educational equity can be achieved in the universities. This goes to say that my own cross-cultural experiences and understanding of racism, ant-racism and the globalization of education clearly informed my analysis of the cross-cultural experiences reported by this group of 'minoritzed' student participants.

A qualitative research case study methodology was used due to the size of the research sample and the nature of the research question. This methodology was suitable since the aim of the research was to gather data and acquire first-hand knowledge of the participants' lived experiences and to develop a deep understanding of those experiences, which could not have been better achieved through the use of quantitative analysis. As Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009) states, "qualitative research, such as the use of interviews and the inclusion of personal

narratives, is helpful in providing a more holistic picture of the experiences by using the words of students themselves" (p. 106). Moreover, the case study design afforded the researcher and participants the opportunity to connect (Patton, 2001). However, Rezai-Rashti (2005) cautions that researchers need to mindful about their relationships with the participants and that they are also responsible for interpreting and making judgements and deriving meaning from the participants' narratives.

While there were guiding questions to ensure consistency in the interviews and to ensure that the research questions were addressed, the use of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions was useful in allowing the participants to reflect on and describe their experiences freely and in as much detail as necessary. Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009) maintains that 'numbers do not necessarily tell us the whole story, particularly the subtle nuances of everyday lived experience" and so, by interviewing three (3) students, I was able to gain in-depth information regarding the main guiding question of my research. The research project has been a rewarding and insightful experience for me. As a Black International Caribbean student myself attending a university in Canada, I was eager to explore the experiences of other students. The study created an awareness of a small group of international students attending the university. Moreover, the study further and provided access to a discourse in higher education that aimed to address the needs of all categories of students, in order to ensure that issues of equity, diversity, multiculturalism and anti-racist education do not remain on the periphery.

Conclusions Drawn from the Research

The first and most foremost conclusion stemming from my interviews with the three student participants was the perceived prevalence of racism in Canada. The findings of my study have revealed that seventeen years after the 'ground breaking' study conducted by Dei et al.

(1995), there is still some evidence of perceived racial discrimination among black students in the Canadian education system. Although only one student admitted to experiencing direct racism at the university, the other two students shared their experiences with racism outside of the university campus. Contrary to the findings of previous studies (e.g. Dei, 1995, Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009) the students in this current study who reported experiencing racism, displayed greater tolerance and were better able to cope with the incidences. The students' experiences provided some indication that although institutional or systematic racism were not visibly entrenched in the university's structure; individual racism was embedded in the everyday actions of some of its members. It is disconcerting to note that while there is much talk of Canada being a diverse, multicultural, anti-racist society, racism continues to exist in rather silent and subtle forms.

Secondly, the thesis highlights the need for the proper implementation of internationalization at the university. Although the students provided overall positive evaluations of their respective faculties and of their university as a whole, they shared concern for the limited opportunities for cross cultural learning, the lack of diversity in the teaching and learning process. The students made strong recommendations for the inclusion of minority students in the curriculum and the repositioning of the internationalization discourse. Rather than expanding all of the attention and focus on some categories of students from the more developed world, there needs to be recognition for every nation that makes up the university's pool of international students. Pat expressed this concern quite clearly in the following statement "they need to recognize that 'international' doesn't mean Asian, it must include all students." All three of the students described their professors and classmates as sufficiently supportive of them and that their relationships with their white professors and classmates were respectful and rewarding.

Such findings support the need for further research to corroborate these perspectives, given that other studies have documented experiences of racism for Black students in the academy (e.g. Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009).

Limitations of the Research

The diversity and levels of research that are admitted, as "evidence" is a crucial matter (Luke, Green & Kelly, 2010); certain research and evidence are valued over others. But, as Patton (1990) postulates, qualitative methods "typically produce a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases" (p. 14). This speaks to the strength of the case study method. One criticism of the case study method is that it provides limited basis for generalizing results (Yin, 2003). Although the purpose of this study was not to generalize the results but to provide an in-depth analysis of the students' experiences, as they perceive them, the study would have benefited from a larger sample. The use of a larger sample size would have generated further insight and knowledge into the experience of being a minority student from the Caribbean attending a Canadian university. Moreover, it would have allowed for further examination of the extent and nature of experiences of racism for other Caribbean students. In short, more participants would have enabled me to discover further similarities and differences and to establish the basis for some corroboration.

Another limitation of the case study method is drawn from the criticism that its use allows for high levels of subjectivity. This subjectivity may be drawn from my position as an 'insider' researcher in this study and may also constitute a bias in conducting the research. My status as a Black International Caribbean student and my personal experiences may be regarded as having biased my approach to conducting the research. This is telling because as Hickling-Hudson (2006) attests, every researcher brings some level of personal bias into the investigation.

To eliminate any possible researcher bias and subjectivity throughout the interviews, I remained conscious of the fact that both my 'outsider researcher' role and my 'insider researcher' role had positioned me in particularly distinct ways to ask questions and to listen to answers from my participants who shared similar characteristics with me. I endeavoured to avoid any projection of my own perspective on to the participants' perceived experiences. I constantly asked them when necessary, to clarify and expand on what they meant by terms that they used to describe their circumstances. I remained guided by the main interview questions and refrained from posing any questions that had the tendency to influence the students' responses to any of the main interview questions.

However, this is not to deny that my own background as a minority researcher, who was also from the Caribbean, may have had influence on my interactions during the research. My "cultural intuition" (Delgado-Bernal, 1998) enabled me to establish an initial rapport with the participants. It further facilitated the research in terms of the willingness of the participants to share their experiences with a researcher who also shared their particular cultural background and heritage. "I now realize that the way I asked my research questions, designed the methodology, collected the data, and arrived at conclusions was greatly influenced by my cultural intuition" (Delgado-Bernal, 1998, p. 568). It is compelling to note that every researcher comes into the research situation with some form of subjective reality. How that subjectivity influences the research process, however, is open for debate. As Lather (1991) suggests, it is of paramount importance for researchers to identify their subjectivity, reflect on their subjectivity and make that subjectivity known to their readers. The foregoing discussion demonstrates the significance and inevitable role that personal experience and intuitive knowledge play in empirical research. For this reason, I should not deny the existence and reality of my own

experiences. In fact, my own personal experiences as a Black International Caribbean student and as an 'insider researcher' in this case study, constitutes a strength rather than a limitation. It was my own experiences and the development of a rapport with the interviewees that assisted me in understanding the stories they shared.

Another limitation of the study was the participants' characteristics. Initially, I planned to interview four Black International Caribbean students-two female and two male, enrolled at varying levels of their program. Due to difficulty encountered during the recruitment process, I resorted to interviewing and studying only the three female Graduate students who remained committed to participating in the study. As cross-cultural experiences may vary depending on students' characteristics including gender and/or program level, a more diverse sample may have allowed for meaningful 'male-female' or 'program specific comparisons. Additionally, the presence of Caribbean 'dialects' or 'creoles' in the students' narratives, may limit some readers of this case study. However, changing the commentaries to 'Standard English' would compromise the uniqueness, richness and empirical nature of the raw data.

Finally, my inability to derive any known existing studies on the experiences of the specific category of International Caribbean students posed a challenge. This led me to depend on research conducted in the United States and Canada that dealt with other categories of Caribbean students. Although the characteristics like age, location, institutions and residency status varied among the students in these various studies, the fact that they were all Black students placed them in the same minoritized position and provided the impetus for examining and comparing their experiences with those Caribbean students who participated in my research.

Implications for Future Research

The main implication of my research is that it presents new literature in an area that has not been adequately explored. There is no known study on the cross-cultural experiences of students who have come from the Caribbean on a study permit to attend university in Canada. This research has also contributed to the current literature, which shows that Caribbean students attending Canadian education institutions encounter instances of racism in the classroom. The case study also attempted to broaden the understanding of the impact of racial discrimination on the cross-cultural experiences of the three students involved. Further, the thesis demonstrates the importance of continued research in the area of diversity and cross-cultural relations in the Canadian university, and has implications for educators mainly in areas of anti-racist education and internationalization. This research can benefit from being expanded to involve International Caribbean students from other universities in Ontario. Future research can also make comparisons between the category of Caribbean students operationalized in this study and other categories of Caribbean students attending universities in Ontario.

The thesis raises some pertinent questions about the need for understanding the experiences of all students irrespective of race, gender, status, class or country of origin. I argue that stakeholders in education should address the exclusion of marginalized groups of students and ensure the inclusion of all categories. It would be beneficial for the university to not only promote, but also foster a more diversified educational culture. "If discrimination is implicating one group, then all groups will be affected" (Glean, 2012, "Caribbean students look for their culture in curriculum," para.5). Studying the experiences of the three International Caribbean students was a broad topic and a closer examination of some of the issues and concerns raised by them during the interview would provide other perspectives. Therefore, future studies may be

beneficial to this emerging body of knowledge by examining questions in no specific order, such as: What are the factors that contribute to the high academic success among the three students? What factors contribute to the high level of support received from faculty and classmates? What strategies are being employed by university administrators and faculty to ensure diversity in teaching and cross-cultural learning? What are the measures put in place to counter and alleviate feelings of marginalization and racial discrimination on the university campus? What perceptions do "white" professors and students hold of Black international Caribbean students? What are the experiences of other categories of Caribbean students compared to that of the students in this study? How do white faculty and 'home' students view the university's equity and internationalization policies? What factors account for the small number of Black students, faculty and support staff at the university? What are the experiences of black faculty at the university?

A final note

The results from this research study have prompted some further concerns and it would be remiss of me not to conclude with some personal recommendations. While some studies have been conducted on Caribbean students in Canada, there is need for deeper and more extensive research, if progress is to be achieved in understanding the experiences of Black International Caribbean students. More extensively, there needs to be a greater awareness and sensitization of the existence of all minority groups on campus, including Caribbean students, and less focus on only a few more visible groups: "As university consumers, minority students, like their White counterparts deserve equally educational opportunities in accepting and appropriately challenging environment which is crucial for persistence in the [academic] process and the personal growth of these students" (Patterson-Stewart et. al., 1997, p. 497). There is also

concern for what constitutes the internationalization of higher education. The term 'international students' should represent all groups of students registered at the university and efforts to cater to the needs of international students should not target students from mainly Asia and Europe. If diversity is to be achieved in education, there must be recognition of all students identified as belonging to a minority group on campus must feel included. As Bennett (1992) rightly states:

> Promoting diversity among students and faculty and in the administration, helps universities rise above the specific differences of race, country of origin, language and religious affiliation. Doing so promotes the notion that we are living in a global village and should share and integrate ideas, material resources and technical knowledge. A global perspective will ensure that we value universal human rights, understand historical perspectives and develop intercultural capabilities. (p. 195)

Further, the term 'Caribbean' should not be used synonymously with 'Latin American' or 'South American as is characteristic of studies on Caribbean students conducted internationally. The Caribbean region should be allowed to maintain its own geographic representation and unique identity thus leading to a better awareness and appreciation of its peoples and cultures. Statistics on the origins of international students in Canada should be documented and/or updated and become more readily available. At the time of this case study, there was no available information regarding the specific distribution or the categories of international students enrolled at Canadian universities. The records of the International Students' Office at the university and other official websites providing information on international student enrolment in Canada should ensure that all nationalities are represented and accounted for. Echoing the same sentiments, Hamilton and Shang (1999) affirm that the time has come for Canadian educators and institutions of higher education to gather and document more information about students in

Canada and to begin to pay closer attention to the experiences of these students. During a feature address entitled, 'Creating an Inclusive Academy,' Birgeneau (2007) advised that being inclusive is a major facet of a university's mission and those universities cannot claim to be excellent unless they try to integrate all categories of students. In order for universities to handle diversity, they must develop an awareness of the needs of their diverse groups of students (Samuel, 2005).

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Appendix A

Exploring the Experiences of Black International Caribbean Students at a Canadian University

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Sir/Madam,

Introduction

My name is Francillia Paul. I am a Master's student. In partial fulfillment of the Master of Education Degree, I am currently conducting a Research Project that will investigate the experiences of Black International students from the Caribbean enrolled in any university program.

Purpose

The aims of this study are to learn about the positive and negative cross-cultural experiences of a group of Black International Caribbean students within the context of internationalization. In addition, the study will examine the effects of the experiences and better understand how internationalization has impacted on these students' decisions to study in Canada.

Participants

You are invited to participate in the study because you are enrolled as an International Student in a program of study at the university. Your eligibility is also dependent on your identity as a student of "Black" ethnic identity and a citizen of Caribbean island in which you were born, raised and resided at least one month before coming to Canada. A total of four students including you will participate in the study. You must agree to participate in the study by reading this Letter of Information as well as reading, signing and returning the Consent Form. This letter of Information is yours to keep.

Participation

If you agree to participate in the study, I will conduct a "one-on-one" interview with you in order to gather information regarding the purpose of this research. The interview will be a one-time session at such day and time chosen by you. The interview will last for approximately 45 minutes and will be conducted at a convenient and conducive location on the university campus. I propose to begin the session by first assigning you a participant number, which you will be required to use in place of your name. I will begin the interview by asking you questions about yourself. You will introduce yourself using the Pseudonym assigned to you and not your name. Before I begin to pose the actual interview questions, we will talk about the interview process and terms that are to be used throughout the interview. During the interview, I will be asking you questions related to my study/research questions and you will be required to respond to each question by providing information that is to the best of your knowledge. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed into written form for analyzing the results. The majority of the interview will ask you to share your opinions, views, perceptions about your experiences within the context of internationalization, inter cultural learning, cross-cultural adaptation, cross cultural transition, cross cultural communication as well as your ability to interact, your ability to integrate and the suitability of the curriculum. I would also like to know what are the main factors that have influenced your decision to study in Canada, more specifically at this institution.

Confidentiality & Anonymity

The information collected in this study will be used for research purposes only. Neither your name nor personal information which could identify you will be used in the presentation of the research findings and/or publication of the study. All information collected in this study will be kept confidential. Audio files and other data collection materials will not be associated with your identity in anyway. All electronic data and audio files will be stored on a password-protected hard disk on my personal computer. Hard copies of data collection materials including the Informed Consent Forms and Interview Transcription Notes will be kept in a locked storage facility at the Faculty for a period of two years after which they will be deleted and shredded.

Risks & Benefits

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study. However, it is possible that some level of emotion will arise while discussing negative aspects of your experience as a foreign/Black student in Canada. If this happens to you and you feel any discomfort with the interview, you can stop participating at anytime in the process. In addition, if you become distressed, resources for counseling will be made available to you upon request. Your participation in this study may help to create a greater awareness of the academic and social contributions and provide a clearer understanding of the needs of students like you.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at anytime in the process with no effect on your enrollment status.

Questions & Additional Information

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Manager, Office of Research Ethics. For any other questions you may have about this study, please contact me at …….You may also contact my Faculty Advisor and Research Supervisor.

Please keep this letter for your future reference. Thank you

Sincerely,

………………………………

Appendix B

Exploring the Experiences of Black International Caribbean Students at a Canadian University

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, I have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate in this study. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (Please Print) of Student Participating:

_____

Signature of Student Participating: _____

Date: _____

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

_____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

_____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Exploring the Experiences of Black International Caribbean Students at a Canadian University

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I am going to ask you questions about your cross cultural experiences in the context of globalization and internationalization. You can be as explicit as possible, giving examples or sharing personal experience along the way.

1. **Describe for me your experience as a university/college student.**
a. Classroom experiences
b. Other social experiences.
c. Are you involved in any activities on campus? Tell me more.
d. How would you describe interactions between you and
(i) your colleagues?

(ii) your professors?

(iii) administrative staff at your university/college?

Are they cordial, respectful, unfriendly, etc.

e. Describe your perception of how the various student services at your university respond to your needs.
f. Have you found your overall university experiences to have been rewarding? Explain.
g. Have you experienced any frustrations or so at your university? What two things worry you the most? Explain.

2. **What is your understanding of racial and/or ethnic discrimination?**
a. Do you think it exists at your university/college? Why or why not?
b. Have you had any direct or indirect experiences with racism or discrimination? Explain.
c. How did you deal with the situation? Explain.
d. Can you identify people or institutions associated with these kinds of discrimination?
e. To what do you attribute that type of behaviour displayed by these individuals/institutions?
f. To your knowledge, has your university/college taken steps to avoid or address situations like these? Explain
g. In what ways can the university as a whole improve on its ability to cater for the diversity among its students so they can feel more accepted?

3. **Do you think there is any connection between your identity as a Black, foreign Caribbean student on this campus and your personal experiences described earlier?**
a.   Describe your experiences as a Black, foreign Caribbean student at your university/college.
b.   Are there other Black students in your class? Does it feel strange that you are among the few?
c.   How often do you mingle with
       (i) Black students?

       (ii) White students?

       (iii) Students from other ethnic backgrounds?

       Tell me of those instances.

d.   How often do you interact with:
       (i) Black professors?

       (ii) White professors?

       (iii) Professors from other ethnic backgrounds?

       Tell me of those interactions.

e.   Please describe the ways you are able to express who you are in and out of the classroom.
f.   What do you think is most beneficial to your identity as a Black Caribbean student on campus/in Canada?
g.   What do you think is most detrimental to your identity as a Black Caribbean student on campus/in Canada?

4. **What is your understanding of intercultural understanding and cross-cultural learning?**
a.   Is there evidence of this at the institution you attend? What gives you that perception?
b.   Where at the university do you think you learned about intercultural understanding? E.g. classroom, curriculum, international programmes, interactions with others etc?
c.   Do you feel integrated/liked/accepted?
d.   Would you say that your institution, particularly administration and professors, is working to ensure diversity/intercultural learning?
e.   Tell me about an intercultural experience that was meaningful to you.
f.   Do you think that your classmates, professors and administrative staff been culturally adapting? What makes you think so?
g.   In what ways can the university as a whole be more culturally adapting?

5. **What is your understanding of globalization and internationalization?**
a.   Is there any evidence of this at the institution? What gives you that perception?
b.   Do you know if there is a globalization and/or internationalization policy at your university?
c.   Do you think that the university is meeting the mandate for such policy (ies)? Why or why not?
d.   What kind of visible support, formal or informal, have you experienced in relation to globalization and/or internationalization?
e.   Do you see evidence of an internationalization of the curricula? Explain.
f.   Could you tell me what exactly you are looking for in your academic programme/ curriculum?
g.   Do you think that the existing curriculum caters to your needs? Explain

6.   **What were the factors responsible for your decision to select Canada, and this university/college, as your choice for study?**
a.   Did you want to meet and/or live with students of your own racial background? Why or why not?
b.   When you entered the institution, what was your first impression of
(i) the student body

(ii) professors

(iii) administration

(iv) curricula

c.   Have your impressions changed over time? Why or why not?
d.   Do you think the university has done enough overtime to make attending it a worthwhile experience for you? Why?
e.   Can you describe, in the way of your university's relations with black students, any positive phenomena?
f.   If you were given an opportunity to change something about your institution with regards to internationalization, what would that be? Why?
g.   Would you encourage other Black Caribbean students to attend your institution? Why or why not?

Appendix D

Recruitment Advertisement

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Your participation is needed for a Research Study on the Experiences of Caribbean students at …….University.

The study will comprise of one 45-50 minutes one-on-one interview and will be conducted on the university's campus.

Participants can be male or female between the ages of 18 and 65 of Black ethnic background.

Participants must possess a Valid Study Permit and must be enrolled as an International Student in any program of study.

Participants must be a citizen of a Caribbean state and must have been residing in the Caribbean at least one month before commencing studies in Canada.

If you would like more information or wish to participate in this study please contact the researcher at …………to arrange an appointment.

Appendix E

Ethics Approval

Western ⚜ Education
WESTERN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number:	1202-5
Principal Investigator:	Goli Rezai-Rashti
Student Name:	Francillia Paul
Title:	*The Experiences of Black International Caribbean Students at a Canadian University*
Expiry Date:	June 30, 2012
Type:	M.Ed. Thesis
Ethics Approval Date:	March 21, 2012
Revision #:	
Documents Reviewed & Approved:	Western Protocol, Letter of Information & Consent, Advertisement

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2011-2012 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board

Dr. Alan Edmunds	Faculty of Education (Chair)
Dr. John Barnett	Faculty of Education
Dr. Farahnaz Faez	Faculty of Education
Dr. Wayne Martino	Faculty of Education
Dr. George Gadanidis	Faculty of Education
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki	Faculty of Education
Dr. Immaculate Namukasa	Faculty of Education
Dr. Kari Veblen	Faculty of Music
Dr. Ruth Wright	Faculty of Music
Dr. Kevin Watson	Faculty of Music
Dr. Jason Brown	Faculty of Education
	Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Research *(ex officio)*
Dr. Susan Rodger	Faculty of Education, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board *(ex officio)*

The Faculty of Education Research Officer
1137 Western Rd. Faculty of Education Building
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Copy: Office of Research Ethics

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Francillia Paul

Post Secondary Education:

- Certificate in Teacher Education: Issued 1991
  Cave Hill Campus, University of the West Indies

- Certificate in Education: Issued 1997
  Mona Campus, University of the West Indies

- Bachelor of Science: Psychology and Government   Double
  Major (Hons): Issued 2001
  St. Augustine Campus, University of the West Indies

Related Work Experience:

- Qualified Teacher: 1991-2003
  Ministry of Education, Saint Lucia

- Lecturer: 2003-2010
  Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, Saint Lucia

- Research Assistant: 2011-2012
  Western University, Canada

Awards

- OAS Academic Scholarship: 2010-2012