

Examining Xenophobic Practices amongst University Students – A Case Study from Limpopo Province

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Abstract

In recent years, with the outbreak of xenophobic attacks in communities in South Africa, foreign students have encountered more direct xenophobic attacks. This article explores xenophobic practices at a rural university which has a large number of foreign students. These students come from neighbouring African countries in search of quality education. Over the last five to eight years the foreign student enrolment has increased due to political instability in these countries. This article examines the xenophobic experiences of foreign students from a social conflict perspective. Data was gathered using questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The data was both quantitatively and qualitatively analysed. The findings indicate that students are faced with a wide range of xenophobic experiences which include: name-calling using local African languages; exclusion from class discussions where a local language is used deliberately; cliques formed that exclude foreigners; difficulty in finding accommodation as they are not easily accepted in residences and; they are implicated whenever violent incidences occur. This article recommends that universities devise ways of protecting the rights of foreign students; practices of tolerance and respect be encouraged and practiced and; more research be conducted in different university environments on foreign students' experiences in South Africa.

Keywords: xenophobia, students, university, foreign, culture

Introduction

South Africa is a melting pot of cultures, religions, languages and ethnic groups. This multicultural and multiracial environment has formally existed for over three hundred years. For much of the twentieth century, apartheid laws segregated people along racial lines. One of the legacies of apartheid was racially segregated universities which continue to exist under the name of historically disadvantaged universities (HDUs). Since democracy in 1994, a 'rainbow nation' emerged as an example to the world that unity can exist in diversity. Given South Africa's history, the threat of xenophobia seemed unlikely. However, since 1994, incidents of xenophobia have been sporadically reported. The 2008 xenophobic attacks, which started in Alexandria in Gauteng spread rapidly to other communities resulting in the deaths of 62 foreigners and between 80 000 and 200 000 displaced persons (Igglesden *et al.* 2009; Seedat *et al.* 2010:16). It also shocked the South African government and the world at large, more especially given South Africa's past and the role that African countries had played in supporting South African freedom fighters that went into exile during the apartheid era. Whilst the xenophobic attacks of 2008 were immediately diffused, the tensions have been simmering since then. In July 2012, xenophobic attacks erupted in the Western Cape and Free State. This time the target was foreign *spaza* shop owners. *The Times* headline, *SA edges closer to xenophobic flare-up* (*The Times* 13 July 2012:1), reported that NGO's have blamed the attacks on the ANC's policy document 'Peace and Stability' in which the party calls for stringent laws against trading by foreigners.

However, xenophobia cannot be simply explained or reasoned according to political policies alone. It is a much more complex phenomenon that requires careful and deep investigation. In the South African context, high levels of crime and unemployment have been sighted as mitigating factors (Neocosmos 2008). The notion is that African migrants are here to take only and not to give, a belief that is also shared by professionals (Neocosmos 2008:590). Although xenophobia presents itself mainly in socio-economically deprived communities, it is found everywhere – 'even in institutions of higher learning where one expects a higher level of broadmindedness' (Mogekwu 2005:10). Here xenophobia may not be expressed in the same manner as in poor communities where outbreaks of physical violence and attacks on businesses occur, but in 'more subtle forms

of making the non-national feel so unwelcome and despised in an environment that is psychologically hostile' (Mogekwu 2005:10).

Although South Africa is a democratic country, racial divisions amongst South African students is very visible at higher education institutions. The policies of these institutions may contain democratic principles; however, the students' interactions with each other reflect racial divisions. Foreign students however, perceive these divisions differently. Cross and Johnson's (2008:311) study at Wits University revealed, amongst other things, that xenophobia 'has had serious repercussions' and that 'xenophobia is something that makes South Africa a very intimidating society'. Excerpts from one of the foreign students they interviewed indicated how foreign students experience xenophobia: 'They always feel like you are using their money to maybe develop yourself ... They still don't understand the concept of foreigners coming into their country ... Most students who are South African are still very much xenophobic' (Cross & Johnson 2008:311).

In South Africa, all universities enrol foreign students each year. Whilst at some universities, there is a deliberate policy to attract high calibre foreign students from all parts of the world; other universities attract foreign students for various reasons including location in relation to neighbouring countries, economic problems in neighbouring countries and programmes offered by the individual universities. For example, in Zimbabwe over the last five years, due to the economic and political challenges (Manik 2012: 82), lack of jobs, hyper-inflation and human rights violations (Bloch 2010: 235), many students and academic staff have crossed the border into South Africa to seek education and employment. Universities such as University of Limpopo and University of Venda located in the Limpopo province, by virtue of their close location to Zimbabwe, are natural choices for such students.

Unlike the xenophobic experiences in South African communities which are more violent in nature and openly hostile, xenophobia within the higher education context manifests in more subtle ways. The effect, however, is still the same. It leads to the foreign student being made to feel unwelcome and creates a sense of 'not belonging'. Cross and Johnson's (2008:310) findings at Wits University show that 'in real life, group identities on campus still reflect the apartheid legacy'. It has been sometimes been argued that

xenophobia is experienced by migrants in South Africa as a consequence of the isolation caused by apartheid (Crush *et al.* 2008:235). Whilst open acts of xenophobia within communities are widely reported and more 'visible', xenophobia amongst students is more subtle and can only be uncovered by establishing the individual experiences of students who are willing to share these experiences. Xenophobia as experienced by foreigners is rooted in constant fear of reprisals. By examining different theories of xenophobia and discussing it from a social conflict perspective, the aim of this article is to examine xenophobia from the perspective of foreign students at one historically black university in South Africa.

Theoretical Explanations of Xenophobia

Three theoretical approaches that contribute to the rise of hatred were identified by Pedahzur and Yishai (1999) in Mogeckwu (2005:9). The first which derives from the power theory relates to the socio-economic status of individuals and the perceived threat from foreigners that induce animosity. Often perpetrators of xenophobia state the following as reasons for their attack: 'They (foreigners) take our jobs', 'They take our business', 'They rob us of economic opportunities'. The second approach is related to cultural identity where the main issue is the fear of loss of social status and identity. People usually prefer to be surrounded by their own kind (race, religion, ethnic group) rather than exposure to people who are not like them. In many ways, the opposite is true in South African society where people work, live and study in multi-cultural settings. However, despite the openness of South African society, one still finds groupings of people who identify with each other. A typical example at a university is the close friendships that develop between foreigners or students coming from the same country. Another unique South African example is where students are in the minority from a particular race group, they tend to keep company with each other. The third approach called phenomenology attributes xenophobia to general attributes of society. This occurs especially when society experiences crisis, this leads to a crisis of collective identity.

Soyombo (2008) uses Economic Theory, Frustration-Aggression Theory, Conflict Theory and Socio-Biological Theory to explain causes of xenophobia and conditions under which it is likely to occur. Economic

theory (like Power Theory) attributes xenophobia to economic factors like poverty and unemployment where poor and unemployed people are more likely to engage in xenophobic practice compared to rich and employed people. A criticism of this theory is that rich and employed people are also xenophobic. What is crucial to this theory is that in reality, it is the poor and unemployed that are more likely to engage in xenophobia. At HDUs, where most of the poorer students are found, they display similar survival characteristics as that of the surrounding poor communities. Poverty and politics play a role in xenophobia in such an environment.

Frustration-Aggression theory attributes xenophobia to frustrations experienced or imagined by one group, for which another group is held responsible (Soyombe 2008:99). This usually happens when one group experiences problems attaining a goal, they want to take out their frustrations on another vulnerable group (usually a minority), using them as a scapegoat. This is usually when the agent of the frustration is too powerful to confront. A criticism of this theory is that not all situations of frustration produce aggressive behaviour. Linked to Frustration-Aggression theory is Conflict theory where xenophobia is explained in terms of conflict between working and ruling class. In this context, the working class is always dominated by the ruling class and often, out of frustration, they engage in deviant behaviour such as xenophobia. An explanation for xenophobia by the Socio-Biological theory put forward by Waller (2002) in Soyombe (2008:101), and Omoluabi (2008) where ‘all human beings have an innate, evolutionary tendency to seek proximity to familiar faces because what is unfamiliar is probably dangerous and should be avoided’.

Other theories of xenophobia as discussed by Omoluabi (2008) include Psychoanalytic Theory, Avoidance Conditioning Theory, Modelling Theory and Cognitive Theory.

Psychoanalytic Theory: Originally Sigmund Freud put forward that the ego defence mechanism used by individuals to protect themselves in high-level conflict situations is phobia. This theory was later expanded to explain how xenophobia originated in children and later in adults (Arieti 1979, in Omoluabi 2008:56).

Avoidance Conditioning Theory: Related to consistent pairing of a neutral stimulus with a painful or frightening event resulting in a fear of the stimulus as a result of classical conditioning. This phobia, when related to

interactions with strangers or foreigners, could elicit xenophobic responses (Omoluabi 2008).

Modelling Theory: Postulated by Bandura and Rosenthal in 1995; this theory posits that pain-eliciting situations involving modelled behaviour results in a phobia for the situation (Omoluabi 2008). If people are exposed to such models like the media or individual powerful figures, they are likely to engage in xenophobic behaviour.

Cognitive Theory: This theory is linked to avoidances created by cognitive phobias that people possess (Heinrichs & Hoffman 2002, in Omoluabi 2008). It is usually associated with negative situations and events. This sometimes manifests in xenophobic situations where pre-conceptions and perceptions of strangers exist.

Social Conflict Theory

This section examines how social issues and conflict intersperse especially in relation to xenophobic behaviour. 'From the conflict perspective, xenophobia can be explained in terms of the conflict between classes and groups of people in a capitalist system' (Soyombo 2008:101). Often, the working class is dominated by the bourgeoisie. This results in alienation, frustration and marginalisation. The poor, unemployed and isolated working class use xenophobic actions to vent their frustration; the foreigner is often an unsuspecting recipient of such deviant behaviour. Arogundade (2008:169,171) examined Carl Jung's perspective on xenophobia by looking at the psyche and its effect on the individual. He examined the psyche as 'a life processing energy that is a product of conflicts between the opposite forces within the individual' (Arogundade 2008:169). Friendship and enmity are seen as opposing forces. He goes on further to propose that the fear of the foreigner could be an innate way of life of a particular group of people or a nationality. Social psychology, argues Olowu (2008:11), examines individual behaviour; however, 'all behaviour takes place within a social content'. Social psychologists, in this sense, focus their attention on the effect of family background and environment on behaviour or attitudes of people towards a different race (Olowu 2008).

Henri Tajfel and John Turner posited social identity theory as an explanation to the psychology related to a range of prejudices and biases. This theory is used to understand how prejudices develop by pinpointing

identity and categorization as the main cause of social bias (Alarape 2008:78). Sometimes racial or ethnic groups are blamed for the problems experienced by the majority national group. This is attributed to the social psychology of nations which includes national identity that is the group's sense of belonging (Osuntokun 2008:25).

Social and cultural issues are related to each other and the interplay between them manifests in conflict situations where xenophobic behaviour erupts. Cross and Johnson (2008:304) argue that 'the effectiveness of any diversity initiative will certainly depend on its ability to integrate a theory of cultural recognition with a theory of social justice'. Race is also another factor that contributes to tension in the higher education environment. Not only is the foreigner a threat to local students, but students from different racial groups also poses a threat. However, race is 'sublimated' (Soudien 2008) in the university environment. This is because of the laws against the practice of racism. Whilst racism is more closely monitored by watchdog bodies, xenophobia does not enjoy the same protection. At universities, foreign students or international students (as they are commonly called) are further classified according to race, ethnicity and religious affiliation. According to Soudien (2008:305), 'students from different social backgrounds (race, gender, ethnicity, nationality) experience, and negotiate membership of campus life differently'. Clearly, university students are not exempt from the xenophobic behaviour that has been occurring in South African communities since 1998. As the tensions smoulder and erupt in different areas of the country periodically, these tensions are also felt by foreign students within universities. As already discussed, the tensions in an educational environment are of a more subtle nature. However, the effect created is still one of fear by the foreign student and a feeling of being unwanted.

Xenophobia Research

Xenophobia manifests in different contexts across a spectrum of people and places. Harrison and Peacock's (2010) study in England on the interaction between home and international students found that home students perceive threats to their academic success and group identity from the presence of international students on the campus and in the classroom. In relation to

classroom practice of xenophobia, Osman's (2009) study of immigrant learners in inner city schools of Johannesburg concluded that the level of prejudice and discrimination against immigrant learners is severe and persistent. She cited bio-cultural factors such as shade of the skin as an important determinant of prejudice (Osman 2009:73). This view was earlier identified by Harris (2001:71) as the bio-cultural hypothesis which states that because foreigners are easily identified by their visible differences, this triggers xenophobic behaviour. In the South African context, colour of the skin is classified under race. At university level, race has been identified as the most important determinant of discrimination amongst students (Jansen 2004; Makobela 2001; Woods 2001).

South Africa has been identified as one of the countries which have the harshest anti-immigrant sentiments, together with Namibia and Botswana (Crush & Pendleton SAMP 2004). International comparative studies have also shown SADC countries to be among the most xenophobic in the world (Crush & Pendleton SAMP 2004; Crush & Pendleton 2007; McDonald & Jacobs SAMP 2005). These empirical studies were carried out before the 2008 uprising of violent xenophobic acts in South Africa. Biekpe (2008:5) cautions that 'today it is the foreign Africans on the receiving end of xenophobic attacks ... tomorrow it will be the middle class black South Africans and other racial groupings'. Given these sentiments, the next section looks at the study that was conducted amongst foreign students at a historically disadvantaged university in South Africa.

The Study

This study was conducted at a historically black university which is situated in the Limpopo province. This university is a rural-based university which is situated in almost the centre of the province. The students at this campus are mainly from the provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga. The dominant home languages spoken by the student are Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda. The language of teaching and learning at the university is English. Foreign students communicate mostly in English. The university has a significant number of foreign students from African countries such as Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Cameroon. As Limpopo province borders Zimbabwe, many students from Zimbabwe choose to study in Limpopo.

A sample of fifty (n=50) students was selected from the foreign student component at the university using the snowball sampling technique. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The methods of data collection employed were questionnaires and interviews. The data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data is as follows.

Country of origin	Number of students	Male	Female	Time in SA (years)			
				1	2	3	4+
Botswana	1	1	-	-	-	-	1
Kenya	1	1	-	-	-	-	1
Nigeria	6	4	2	-	1	1	4
Swaziland	2	2	-	1	1	-	-
Zambia	6	3	3	-	1	2	3
Zimbabwe	34	20	14	7	15	2	10
Total	50	31	19				

Table 1 – Country of origin, gender and time in SA

Findings and Discussion

Majority of the students in the study (34) come from Zimbabwe. This represents 68% of the total sample. The most obvious reason for this representation is the closeness between the two countries in relation to distance. The distance to the nearest Zimbabwe border post is 200 kilometres. The university also lies close to the main route that links South Africa to Zimbabwe; this is the N1 national road. The other significant reason for this representation is the recent political instability in Zimbabwe. In the past five to eight years, Zimbabwe has been in political and economic turmoil. The higher education system almost ground to a halt, resulting in masses of students and professionals crossing the border into South Africa seeking asylum and opportunities to work and study. The South African population was unprepared for this mass exodus. Competition on the already strained job markets resulted in resentment by local South Africans and fear in the foreigners. Other significant figures of foreign students in the sample are from Zambia and Nigeria, both at 12%. It is expected that students from

Zambia would study in South Africa as it is a neighbouring country. With respect to the number of Nigerian students, this may be explained as a general trend in South Africa where, in recent years, there has been a migration of Nigerians into the country. The attitude of local people towards these foreigners is that they take away their employment opportunities and introduce elements of crime (drugs) into the country (pers.com). Although both Swaziland and Botswana are neighbouring countries, their populations are relatively small. In the case of Swaziland, the population is also very poor. This could possibly be the reason for the small representation in the sample.

A total of 42% (21 students) from the sample had personal experiences of xenophobia in South Africa. The major reason cited was around issues of language. These issues ranged from lecturers speaking in local languages and excluding foreign students; refusal of services because they could not speak a local language; name calling in public places, being labelled as '*MaKwere-Kwere*'; using local words and comments that are abusive and inhumane; poor service in cafeteria because foreigners do not speak the local language; hostility from staff because of an inability to speak Sepedi; local students deliberately speaking in their mother-tongue to exclude foreign students; people judging students based on their English accent and refusal to communicate with them; local students refusing to speak English when foreign students are present and teasing foreign students when they bring this to their attention; lecturers use of local languages in the class when they are aware that there are foreign students.

Students also experienced discrimination by service-staff of the university. These occurred in areas such as accommodation/residences and security. One student reported that he experienced problems gaining access to postgraduate accommodation: 'I could not secure postgraduate accommodation because I was told that some students were not willing to stay with a Zimbabwean'. Another student said that his residence application 'went missing' and the accommodation officer (who he claims was drunk), criticised international students by saying that 'we are given more attention than other students'. Another concern was that 'in their formulation of policies on residences, there is no consideration for international students ... for allocation of rooms at the beginning of the year'.

Some students’ experiences of xenophobia centred on issues of security, both on and off the campus. For foreign students, fear is a part of their daily experiences. One student cited an incident involving the local police who refused to assist a group of four girls after they indicated that they could not speak the local language. Foreign students also experienced discrimination by being called various names and by being teased. Name-calling was almost always associated with the language issue discussed previously. Local students often label foreign students. A name cited by students was ‘*kwere-kwere*’; this means ‘a foreigner’ in the local languages. Other studies have also cited the use of name-calling as a xenophobic act (Sookrajh *et al.* 2005:6; Tsai 2006:3). They have also cited ‘*kwere-kwere*’ as the name used. It seems to be a derogatory term used to invoke some sort of marginalisation. Name-calling can be demeaning, leaving the foreign student emotionally vulnerable. Language, in this context, is used to socially exclude foreign students from the ‘normal’ university experience. It also causes conflict during lectures where local languages are deliberately used to exclude students. This link to social conflict theory shows that students do not necessarily have to be separated into working and upper class to experience conflict; their social circumstances also contribute to xenophobia.

	Name-calling	Class discussions in local language	Local cliques	Accommodation	Non-inclusion in residences	Blamed for violence
Number of Yes responses (n=50)	26	21	22	29	9	10

Table 2 – Summary of xenophobic experiences

Table 2 shows a summary of the xenophobic experiences of the sampled students. Of the 50 students surveyed, 52% experienced name-calling in the local African languages. This implies that this practice is fairly widely used. It is important to note here that some of the respondents do not believe that

name calling constitutes xenophobia because in their initial response, only 42% stated that they experienced xenophobia. Whilst name-calling may seem less significant compared to violent acts of xenophobia, according to psycho-social theory, this has psycho-social effects on the foreign student, especially in an environment where intellectual capital is valued. It was also apparent from the foreign students' responses that a significant percentage (42%) was excluded from class discussions because they were conducted in a local language which was not understood by the foreign students. It is important to note that the local language is used deliberately here with the intention of excluding foreign students. Such behaviour alienates the foreign student, creating a sense of 'not belonging'. Through the formation of cliques, 44% of the sampled foreign students felt excluded from class discussions and social interactions. Cliques form when one group is usually trying to gain domination. Cliques are related to power struggles (Seedat *et al.* 2010). The target is usually someone who is in a position of 'weakness' or a minority group, in this case, the foreign student. Students who are in a 'position of weakness' within a social community may also experience power struggles as explained under social conflict theory.

A significant percentage (42%) of the sample also experienced some form of discrimination in relation to allocation of residences. The sentiment expressed by respondents was that postgraduate residence allocations favour local students. This allegation would need to be verified against the records of the university as postgraduate accommodation is usually in high demand. However, the findings indicated that students in residences felt a sense of acceptance in the residences with only 18% reporting feeling 'excluded' from the residences. Also, a small percentage (20%) indicated that they were implicated when incidents of violence occurred in the residences or the surrounding community.

From the interviews conducted, the data is presented and discussed under the following headings: personal xenophobic experiences; other foreign student's xenophobic experiences; safety concerns of foreign students; hostility towards foreign students; suggestions and comments from foreign students on xenophobia.

The following are some of the personal xenophobic experiences of selected students in the study:

- In first year, I wanted to get to know a female classmate so we could form a study group; she told me she can't befriend a kwere-kwere.
- Generally my South African classmates show a great dislike of my presence, which is often characterised by local comments and words which I have come to learn are abusive, inhumane to such an extent I can't write them let alone imagine them.
- Was once told to my face that Zimbabweans should be removed from activities of the international students because they are not international based on their appearance.
- I could not secure postgraduate accommodation because I was told some students were not willing to stay with a Zimbabwean.
- I had a hard time being registered in my first year, together with my colleagues from Zimbabwe and Nigeria, due to the fact that we were not South African citizens.
- The police station officers in town would not help us (myself and 3 other female students) even after we made it clear to them that we do not understand what they are saying.
- On campus, I once got stabbed mostly because I could not relate to 6 Shangani guys (identified by a passer-by).
- I have been told in a lecture hall to go back to my country.
- Reaction of certain people (especially vocally) based on their stereotype beliefs about Nigeria and Nigerians at large.

From the personal experiences cited above, it is clearly evident that foreign students experience mainly non-violent forms of xenophobia. Social conflict, as previously explained, may be subtle; however, the effect is still substantial on the foreign student. In an academic and intellectual environment, these

experiences are almost expected because violent forms of xenophobia are generally not tolerated in such an environment. However, Frustration-Aggression theory, as espoused by Soyombe (2008), is evident in such xenophobic practices. The perpetrators are aware of their environment and its policies, so they express their frustrations on unsuspecting foreign students. The foreign students, on the other hand, may not be physical victims of xenophobia but they bear the emotional and psychological scars of xenophobic encounters.

Sampled students also cited xenophobic experiences of other foreign students that they were aware of.

- She had an encounter with a residence manager when she went to her office consistently to complain about the sockets in her room which were out of order. She (residence manager) reached a point of uttering poignant words that this is not Mugabe's university and she should not bring her Zimbabwean tendencies in her office, but her complaint was justifiable.
- She was denied services at a public hospital simply because she could not speak Sepedi.
- South African colleagues refused to take food from her saying she'll poison them.
- A cousin had visitors from Zimbabwe who were brutally chucked out of her residence on allegations of co-letting regardless of them producing identification with the same surname as her.
- A group of guys had targeted a Zimbabwean student for a long time. One day when he was coming from studying, they attacked him. They did not even steal anything from him.
- Knife attack which happened last semester.
- Mostly asked why we are here in South Africa, don't you have universities?

- She was excluded from attending a conference in Eastern Cape (masters student).
- One guy was denied an affiliation form to join the soccer league by fellow students (South Africans).
- Students have been stereotyped as thieves because they come from Zim.
- Jokes are made about how poor, ugly or remote some of our countries of origin are.
- A student from Nigeria was called a crook and drug-dealer, just for being from Nigeria.
- A friend of mine has been imprisoned on campus twice with charges on both occasions being dropped after threats to take up a legal case.
- One of my houseboys, who was a lecturer, was not given a new contract because he was a foreigner. His job was given to a less qualified student.
- My friends experience resentment, in the residences trash/refuse is often dumped on your door.

From these quotations of xenophobic behaviour that foreign students experience, it is evident that foreign students and their friends experience such incidents on an on-going basis. What is also evident is that their general campus-life experience is marked with such incidents from time to time. It is also apparent that local students and service providers generally target them in relation to poor service delivery. This shows a broader picture of social conflict as it points to how the broader university community engages in xenophobia.

When foreign students were asked about their safety concerns, a very interesting scenario emerged; 42% felt unsafe as a foreign student in South Africa, 54% felt safe as a foreign student in South Africa and 4% felt both

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safe and unsafe. Of the students who felt unsafe, their explanations were as follows: they take precautionary measures, especially at night, as they are not sure about South African reactions to foreigners; locals have xenophobic mind-sets; the crime rate is high in the local community; students carry weapons with them; and negative discussions about Zimbabweans by locals.

Conversely, majority of the students felt safe as foreign students in South Africa. They gave the following reasons for feeling safe: locals are left alone because South Africa is their country; South Africans accept them and are eager to learn their languages; people are generally friendly; they get good reception at the international office; living on the university premises is safer than living outside; South Africa has laws that protect foreigners; permission in the form of a legal passport ensures freedom and safety; they have made friends with local students who have taught them the local culture; and they have defence skills in martial arts.

Of the two respondents who felt safe and unsafe, both stated that they felt safe within the campus, however, they felt unsafe outside the campus (On campus yes but out on the streets no because of the high rates of violence in this country). The safety concerns of the foreign students are linked to their experiences and perceptions of xenophobia. Personal attitudes towards safety and the precautions taken also affect their feeling of being safe. Interestingly, many students made specific mention of their feelings of safety within the confines of the campus as opposed to living and interacting with people outside the campus.

Foreign students were also asked to reflect on their experiences of hostility from South African students. Again, their responses were divided with 50% feeling that South African students were hostile towards foreign students and 42% felt that there was no hostility; 8% felt that some are hostile whilst others are not.

The final section contains suggestions and comments from foreign students on xenophobia. This section was included in the interview to allow respondents to raise issues on xenophobia that they felt were pertinent. It also allows for differing views to be considered from the experiences of the students. The following are selected suggestions and comments made by the students: the student population should be encouraged to find out, learn more or travel to other countries so that they get a clear perspective of different people before they stereotype international students; xenophobic attacks are

not only through violent attacks but also through words; there should be campaigns and mass education on highlighting how it is wrong to be hostile to foreigners; xenophobic experiences are mostly prevalent between uneducated and hostile students and staff; university by definition is a place of learning, the university students should co-exist irrespective of race, cultures, gender; locals must accept foreign students, since they are all Africans; South African students do not have knowledge about their foreign counterparts; some students/people should just accept that foreign students come to learn, not to cause trouble; South Africans at large should just accept the fact that the world has changed and even if they do not like to travel and explore other people's culture, the world and its populace is now global and people from other parts of the world will come to their country to experience South Africa; the university should craft policies which protect the foreign student; the staff (non-academic as well) should communicate with students in English as opposed to their native languages; students have to be taught/educated on how to co-live with internationals just like they would with locals from a different tribal group; administrators, housing staff and people in the finance department need particular attention; workshops and seminars should be organised to facilitate training; locals and foreigners should be mixed in the allocation of rooms so that they learn one others' lifestyle; campaigns and workshops of oneness should be hosted; and acceptance should be promoted.

The suggestions and comments by foreign students indicate a maturity in their views on this subject. Their suggestions indicated that they understood the nature of xenophobia as they experienced it. Their broader perspective on the issue also stems from the fact that they have had the experience of living in a foreign country. The review of the literature and associated theories, the experiences of xenophobia by students and the suggestions that they made are consolidated into the next section which makes recommendations.

Recommendations

- The entire university community needs to be educated about the presence and treatment of international students from a xenophobia perspective. This includes staff, students, non-academic departments

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(finance, accommodation, security, catering), community service providers (hospitals, clinics, police) and the general community (taxi industry, community leaders, religious leaders).

- Awareness must be created about the university's policies concerning international students and general policies on language, staff conduct, residences and complaints procedures. This awareness will enable better interaction and communication for all students at the university.
- Students must make use of the university hotline to report complaints anonymously. This allows students affected by xenophobic practices to make the university management aware so that measures can be put in place to prevent xenophobia amongst students.
- In order to recruit and retain international students, adequate accommodation should be made available for these students. The greater the number of international students at a university the more exposure the university receives on a global level. This creates positive spin-offs for the university (funding, students, international rating).

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