CHAPTER 11
Prospects and Challenges of Postgraduate Education in the Diaspora: A Case of Ugandan Returnee Students from South Africa

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Abstract

The forces of global capital, cultural exchange, technological advancements and the free flow of information have necessitated a reconsideration of the African Diaspora and its evolving meanings. 'Diaspora' refers to a dispersed population with a shared heritage residing across the globe. Diasporas can have a significant impact on the economic development of their countries of origin, contributing through financial remittances, facilitating access to quality education, fostering networks, transferring technology, knowledge, and skills, fostering career development, promoting trade and foreign direct investment, establishing businesses, and stimulating entrepreneurship, among other factors. Research indicates a consistent increase in Ugandan students seeking to study in the Diaspora. However, those who have returned home face numerous challenges while living in the host country. This study aimed to examine the prospects and challenges of postgraduate education in South Africa for Ugandan students and propose strategies for improvement. The super-diversity theory served as the appropriate theoretical framework for this study. Utilising a phenomenological research design and employing a qualitative research approach, the researchers employed an interview schedule to gather data. The snowball sampling identified respondents, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive participant pool. The

findings revealed various challenges, including a lack of funding and inadequate support systems from both the host and the students' country of origin.

Keywords: Postgraduate Education, Diaspora, student mobility, South Africa, Uganda

1   Background

The African postgraduate student Diaspora is growing and helping the internationalisation of higher education (Tefera 2010; Zaleza 2013). Postgraduate students from Uganda seeking higher education in the Diaspora have an enormous role in creating bonds amongst universities and providing novel lifespans to advanced education through skills and technology transfer back home. Despite the growing mobility of postgraduate students from Uganda to the Diaspora, little is known of what is expected of them in the host country and when they return home. Countries like China, India and Germany are gradually tapping into their Diaspora to grow their skills base and technology transfer back home. Similarly, the Ugandan government should encourage its students to seek university education abroad by implementing strategies to support such students with finance and incentives to attract them back when they complete their studies. The Ugandan government should also appeal to the private sector to finance the university education of Ugandans who seek to study in the Diaspora.

2   Problem Statement

Postgraduate students from Uganda seek to study in the Diaspora for varied reasons (Twinoburyo & Talemwa 2010) but, more importantly, to access higher education opportunities that may not be available at home. Some may be offered scholarships to study abroad, while others may wish to remain and live abroad after their studies. Some individuals aim to enhance their job prospects by pursuing further studies after completing their education. In contrast, others seek to study abroad for the prestige and the opportunity to gain new experiences in multicultural and multi-diverse environments. However, despite the growing number of postgraduate students opting to study in foreign countries, Li, Olson, and Frieze (2013) argue that these students encounter various challenges along the way. This chapter focuses on Ugandan postgraduate stu-

dents seeking higher education in South Africa, their challenges while in the host country, and their prospects when returning to Uganda.

3   Objectives

The main objectives of this chapter are to:

1. Present the challenges and prospects of Ugandans pursuing postgraduate education in the Diaspora; and
2. Examine measures needed to address the challenges faced by Ugandan students seeking postgraduate students in the Diaspora.

The chapter further addresses the following specific objectives:

1 Examine the challenges and prospects for Ugandans pursuing post-graduate education in South Africa;
2 Assess measures needed to address the challenges faced by Ugandan students seeking postgraduate studies in South Africa; and
3 Understand the role of Uganda's government in supporting its citizens pursuing postgraduate education in South Africa.

4   Theoretical Framework

The super-diversity theory provided a framework for this study. This theory was coined by Steven Vertovec in 2007 (Kirwan 2022) and emphasised increased diversity among people of different ethnicities and cultures. 'Super-diversity' has been coined to describe a condition in cities where the arrival of migrants from many different countries, combined with longer-established minority populations, has resulted in an unprecedented variety of cultures, social conditions, identities, languages, and immigration statuses. This theory asserts that people perceive things differently and respond differently to the same circumstances. The theory emphasises the level and difficulty that a people or nation has previously experienced from the perspective of small and dispersed, multiple-origin, transnationally linked, socio-economically diverse people such as migrants (Freedland 2005).

5   Literature Review

5.1   *Benefits and Opportunities of Postgraduate Education in the Diaspora*

There are various benefits for Ugandans seeking higher education abroad. It has

been observed that some Ugandan postgraduate students in the Diaspora have completed their studies in record time (Bhatt, Bell, Rubin, Shiflet & Hodges 2022). It could be attributed to various factors such as host universities' enabling policies regarding research, a serene study environment, structural and organisational aspects of the programs and offered financial support to the postgradduate students (Geven, Skopek & Triventi 2018). However, some writers like Fowler (2015) have opined that some postgraduate students experience burnout, which can be witnessed through constant strain, depression, loss of sleep, and over-worrying, which can lead to mental health problems. This burnout would cause some students to lag in their studies. However, many institutions of higher education in the Diaspora, like the University of KwaZulu-Natal and UNISA, among others, provide their students with mental health care which results in students having less mental health issues, thereby improving their completion rate (Sverdlik Hall, McAlpine & Hubbard 2018).

Twinoburyo and Talemwa (2010) opined that education in the Diaspora, especially in South Africa, is cheaper than in Ugandan Universities. The lower cost may be attributed to some universities offering their postgraduate students waivers, bursaries, and full sponsorship. In contrast, Uganda's postgraduate education is perceived as expensive because of the cost levied upon postgraduate students (Mande & Nakayita 2015). Furthermore, these fees keep increasing annually, resulting in students at both public and private universities opposing such fee policies that have increased the cost of university education over time (Mande & Nakayita 2015).

Postgraduate students at South African Universities are offered extensive lectures on Research Methodology, theories and critical thinking (Lombard & Grosser 2008). This approach seems different for postgraduate students in Uganda, as Muriisa (2015) noted, who asked Ugandan universities to strengthen foundational courses in Methodology, theories and critical thinking because students who lacked the said skills could not adequately write their theses. This discrepancy may therefore be perceived as postgraduate students at South African universities having a competitive advantage compared to their Ugandan counterparts.

Marginson and van der Wende (2007) opine that the globalisation of education has opened doors to many students worldwide. This trend has resulted in students, including Ugandans, getting opportunities to study in the Diaspora, especially in South Africa. Globalisation has resulted in universities recruiting more international students (Asmar 2005).

5.2   The Challenges Faced in Acquiring Postgraduate Education in the Diaspora

Postgraduate students face numerous challenges, especially in the Diaspora (Khanal & Gaulee 2019). Notwithstanding this, there has also been an increaseing demand for higher education in the Diaspora by nationals from various nations (Waheed, Gilani & Shoukat 2019), including Uganda. These challenges can be categorised as pre-departure, post-departure and post-study challenges.

5.2.1 Pre-Departure Challenges

Durkin (2008) identified the pre-departure period as the stage of 'entry points' for studying abroad. These points help the person seeking to study abroad have an easy process. However, studies show that many students seeking graduate education in the Diaspora often have difficulty obtaining such accurate information. In a study by Chen (2017), he pointed out that the information lacked included: study abroad programs, choosing the best university, admission procedures, preparation of documents for visa acquisition and information concerning vaccinations.

5.2.2 Post-Departure

On arrival in the host country, international students can only hope for a positive educational experience. However, they are bound to face various challenges, like language barriers for those who, for example, do not have English as their first language (Andrade & Valtcheva 2009; Ravichandran *et al.* 2017), financial issues (Safipour, Wenneberg & Hadziabdic 2017) and cultural adjustment which causes feelings of discomfort, frustration, and confusion (Gardner 2013). However, to relieve these students from anxiety caused by the challenges, there is a need to provide them with relevant information.

5.2.3 Post-Study Challenges

Ugwu and Adamuti-Trache (2017) noted that postgraduate students faced various challenges after returning to their countries. Some challenges included re-adjusting to former cultures (Chen, Akpanudo & Hasler 2020; Le & Lacost 2017) hence being confronted with a reverse culture shock.

Additionally, Diaspora graduate returnee students face pressure after

graduating. Although they are perceived by family, friends and colleagues as having made an achievement, they may still struggle to obtain employment. If they get a university faculty placement, it is usually temporary (Moon 2018). It means that they may have to wait until such a time when these universities advertise for postings.

In order for postgraduate students in the Diaspora not to burden family and friends with financial support, it is paramount for them to look for payable internship opportunities while studying (Sverdlik *et al.* 2018). However, these internship opportunities should be critically analysed since the work involved may overrun the real reason why the student is in the Diaspora in the first place. Getting an internship opportunity while studying may also help the student gain more work experience, hence building their professional curriculum vitae, which may result in more work experience and employability skills upon returning to their countries (Helyer & Lee 2014).

Furthermore, Pipitone (2018) suggested that there was a need for students intending to study abroad to get all the required information for their desired country of destination. It would mean that the information could be gathered from various sources, especially from the relevant government ministries of the host country, such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the known alums of that particular university.

Additionally, Li and Lacost (2017) strongly advise that useful information could also be obtained from the agents employed by various universities. However, it may be difficult for persons seeking the much-desired information to ascertain the authenticity of these agents since there are currently some whose certification may not be known.

Concerning reversing the cultural shock, the researchers found very limited literature. However, Almutairi (2020) strongly advised that the Diaspora returnees should embrace open-mindedness and accept what is at hand in order for them to blend into the community.

6 Ugandan Government's Role in Supporting Postgraduate Education in the Diaspora

The authors found much information on how the Diaspora can help transform education but not how governments can support the Diaspora education. However, from the little literature gathered, governments can offer the following support.

Generally, consular services go a long way in easing postgraduate students' travel to study abroad. Naturally, these services may include information and services regarding immigration policies, student visa requirements and being the intermediary between the students and their governments while abroad (Leong 2015). Therefore, governments should ensure that their consular services are reachable, friendly and available.

Khanal and Gaulee (2019) observed that many postgraduate students enter the Diaspora without adequate preparations before departure. It, therefore, calls on governments through the relevant ministries to carry out some preparations for students with placement in the universities in the Diaspora. Studies have shown that some governments in the developed world have given scholarships to students, especially from developing countries. These scholarships could be tagged to a certain course or open if the candidate meets the requirements. However, developing countries like Uganda should prioritise sponsoring their postgraduate students since it is assumed that they would still bring back the knowledge gained in the Diaspora, as suggested (Lemay-Hébert, Marcelin, Pallage & Cela 2020).

6.1 Strengthen Diaspora Associations

Pescinski (2018), in his report, indicated that Diaspora associations go a long way to maintaining transnational ties with 'home' countries. Therefore, to ensure this happens, the Ugandan government should enact more engaging policies for their Diaspora regarding national politics and economic development (Ren & Liu 2021). Hence, governments should encourage the Diaspora to join and strengthen these associations by funding some of their activities.

7 Research Methodology

This chapter adopted a phenomenological research design. This qualitative research design focuses on the commonality of a lived experience (Creswell & Creswell 2018). This design and approach were used because the researchers intended to maximise the depth of information collected from the Ugandan postgraduate returnees. It enabled the researchers to use less structured interviews, allowing them to delve into the study participants' perceptions, understandings and feelings since they had lived and studied in South Africa.

Exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling was used to recruit

participants. The study involved fifteen participants in total. These participants had either attained a postgraduate diploma, a master's degree or a PhD and had returned to Uganda. In exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling, the first respondent is recruited, and then they provide multiple referrals (Kothari 2009). This approach was adopted because it was the most reliable method for identifying participants. The researchers purposefully identified the first respondent, who then provided the researcher with more referrals for the study. Interviews were conducted for three weeks, and data were collected until saturation was realised.

Participation in the study was voluntary, with individual permission sought and participants given all the required details regarding the study objectives. An assurance of the freedom to respond or not was emphasised, as well as the assurance of protection, confidentiality and ethical use of collected data.

Interviews were conducted through online video conferencing using Zoom due to its enormous advantages, such as security and cost-effectiveness. The responses were recorded, transcribed, sorted, and tabulated using an MS Excel sheet, categorised under various themes coined from the research objectives, creating the basis of the analysis.

8   Results and Analyses

The findings of the study are thematically presented based on the objectives, which included the benefits of postgraduate education in South Africa, challenges faced in acquiring postgraduate education in South Africa, mitigating measures to counter setbacks in attaining postgraduate education in South Africa and the Ugandan government's role in supporting postgraduate education in South Africa.

8.1   *Benefits of Studying in the Diaspora (South Africa)*

Most participants indicated that universities in South Africa had a holistic approach to academics. According to the participants, this enabled them to complete their graduate studies in the shortest period possible. Furthermore, most supervisors were fast and efficient with their work, as evident in the following responses:

The lecturers were more involved and truly invested in our education

> *and went above and beyond their call of duty sometimes and this was so amazing.*

The fact that some lecturers went beyond their call of duty to ensure that their students were catered for academically might have been useful. It may have encouraged students to work harder and helped keep stress at bay, thus maintaining their mental health. This view is supported by Sverdlik *et al.* (2018), who assert that part of the record time completion rate among students is attributable to the devotion shown by supervisors. This notion implies that supervisors in South Africa had time for their students.

> *I had a great supervisor who held my hand at every stage of my research as it was my first attempt at doing research. This made me feel that I had to do my best because I had the necessary help and in return, I was able to complete my course in record time.*

Another respondent added:

> *This meant that supervisors play a key role in students' completion in record time.*

In support of this, Muriisa (2015) urged that if the fundamental course in research methodology, theories and critical thinking were not adequately handled at a postgraduate level, students would have difficulties completing their thesis. Thus, it appears that the students in some South African universities had the fundamental courses in research catered for; hence their completion of the respective courses on time.

The high-end universities in sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, offer and adopt a holistic approach to education (Takyi-Amoako & Assié-Lumumba 2018). In return, this has seen many university professors use information communication technologies to reach out to their students (Ankiewicz 2021). As such, students enjoy the vast advantages that come with technology, and hence some of them can complete their education in record time, as one participant said:

> *Studying in South Africa exposed me to so much technology. I was introduced to the use of so many applications such as wiki's which greatly helped with assignments, cloud computing which helped*

majorly with research since I was able to create and distribute forms for research.

Participants also indicated that they could create networks with different students and lecturers. Some created networks have brought enormous benefits to the participants, which they still enjoy. As a result of the networks, participants could create international collaborations, which have helped some respondents to do collaborative academic writing.

One interviewee shared the following:

My supervisor gave me a job that paid me as well, so I did not lack finances at all which was great. This specific supervisor has also continued referring me to other opportunities which have come in handy. In fact, my current placement is as a result of one of the referrals.

This response emphasises that studying in Diaspora opens collaboration linkages with different people and organisations.

These findings are aligned with Wu, Garza and Guzman's (2015) study, which asserts that international students can create networks with students from other countries. Indeed, these networks may be useful, especially during international collaborations and referrals.

Furthermore, some participants indicated they got new exposure to education where tuition was waived, making the qualification cost less. However, Abdalla, Omar and Badr (2016) noted that this is a common practice by most international universities for those who qualify. This practice, in return, is advantageous for the students who benefit since the financial burden is reduced, and they can concentrate better on their academics. However, it is different for the students who opt to study in Uganda since many universities do not offer fee waivers nor reduced tuition fees, especially for postgraduate students (Mande & Nakayita 2015).

Respondents cited that they obtained additional skills, such as laboratory skills, project programme implementation skills and consultancy skills which they did not have prior to studying in South Africa, as noted in the following comments.

My undergraduate studies were majorly theoretical with minimum hands on time, this was due to the fact that our laboratories lacked

most desired tools for some tests and therefore we just learned theoretically, however, during the study in South Africa, I was able to get more hands on training which greatly improved my laboratory skills.

In one of the course units, the lecturer gave us assignments which we presented during the semester seminar presentations and these assignments were majorly supposed to help us understand and gain project programme implementation skills and consultancy skills.

The above results could be attributed to the fact that most world-class universities are now more practical and employ more hands-on skills. This switch has been done to meet market expectations, especially in information technology and artificial intelligence (Tannehill, Serapiglia, Guiler & Sharp 2018).

Some participants indicated that they were able to gain international exposure by studying in South Africa, as noted below:

I had never travelled or studied outside of Uganda, when the opportunity of studying in south Africa came I was glad because I would at least meet and mingle with other international students, we would be able to share experiences and hence gain international exposure.

The international exposure is attributed to many students from various nations studying in South Africa, bringing international experience since many have different backgrounds and cultures.

The results also revealed that the participants were able to get exposed to world-class seminars and conferences, which assisted in perfecting their research skills and research output as one participant responded:

My University would organise for its students' conferences and seminars and the students were expected to present papers which would go through a lot of scrutiny before being accepted.

The above results collaborate with the findings of Tannehill *et al.* (2018), who

assert that students got much exposure from academic seminars and conferences, which positively impacted their general performance.

8.2 Challenges Faced by Postgraduate Students from Uganda in the Diaspora

The study sought to determine whether the participants experienced any challenges while undertaking their studies in South Africa, and all participants agreed that they encountered challenges. The challenges ranged from feeling homesick, racism, insecurity, difficulty with relocating to South Africa, difficulty in getting the required clearance from the South Africa Foreign Qualification Authority, expensive accommodation, fatty foods causing discomfort, different weather patterns, language barrier, sophisticated laboratories, automated systems, the lack of class activities and cultural shock as illustrated by interviewee responses below and descriptions that follow.

Racism was a major challenge for most of the participants. Although it may be seen as a century-long practice, and there is no excuse for racism, it continues to happen just because some people are accustomed to being around people of the same backgrounds, culture, colour and language (Hunt, Folberg & Ryan 2021). It may cause this group of people to think they are better than others. Additionally, regardless of age, some people have learnt to believe what their society and cultures teach them about other cultures and races, which unfortunately promotes racism. One respondent had this to say:

> *Although many lecturers were good and friendly, a few were overtly racist and didn't care to hide it. For instance, if a black student raised their hand to answer a question, they would not be picked but instead the lecturer would still ask if anyone knew the answer yet when a white student raised their hand, they would be picked immediately.*

In line with Busey and Coleman-King (2020), sometimes people become racist just because that is what society has fed them.

Another challenge encountered by participants was insecurity, as noted in the following comment:

> *Many towns in South Africa are very beautiful but unfortunately most of them are quite insecure almost in equal measure. I was almost*

> *mugged three times in the almost three years that I was there, and all these events occurred near the university which is where most stories of mugging took place. This made it hard to enjoy this very scenic city as one always had to look over their shoulders.*

The insecurity could be due to reasons given by Lemanski (2004), who pointed out that crime has always been a major problem in South Africa and has worsened due to rising poverty levels (Cheteni, Mah & Yohane 2018).

Additionally, participants shared that they felt homesick during their study period, and some indicated that their stomachs could not accommodate food being offered in South Africa, as noted in the following comments:

> *I felt homesick especially in my first year as it was my first time to be so far away from home. This was made worse since I had a young family at that time.*

> *I was used to eating healthy boiled food but in South Africa I found that food was too fatty and overly spiced that it sometimes got me an upset stomach.*

These comments imply that most people feel homesick while away from home. It can be attributed to sudden separation from friends and family, resulting in anxiety. The same findings are reflected in (Rathakrishnan *et al.* 2021; Ugwu & Adamuti-Trache 2017).

The participants also indicated that getting visas was difficult for them. The visa fees were relatively high, and the paperwork was too much. Additionally, the relevant information required was not readily available for the participants, as indicated in the following comments:

> *Relocating to South Africa was such a cumbersome process for me. There was so much paper work involved and yet the information available was scarce. Furthermore, getting a visa was so challenging such that some people missed their chance to study in South Africa due to delayed visas.*

The above statement supports the opinion by González (2021), who alludes that visa policies discriminate in various ways, depending on the country. Some

countries have difficult administrative processes and procedures, which are often cumbersome for those desiring to travel to those countries.

Respondents also cited that getting clearance from the South Africa Foreign Qualification Authority (SAQA) was difficult, as noted by a particular respondent:

> *Getting clearance from the South Africa Foreign Qualification Authority (SAQA) was not easy. The process in itself is so long yet there is no way one can get admitted without the clearance certificate.*

The long process of SAQA certification may be because each country has its own clearance protocols for international students. South Africa may want to ensure that those admitted to their universities are qualified.

Participants also decried the extra fees they incurred, as indicated by one participant's response:

> *In as much as I had a fees waiver, the accommodation and insurance were very expensive.*

The situation above could have arisen due to students not understanding the various types of waivers provided by the various universities and how to apply for other avenues for financial aid, as Gurantz *et al.* (2021) note.

Additionally, participants shared that the different weather patterns in South Africa were a challenge since most of them were used to the weather in Uganda, as captured in the following response:

> *Uganda has a different weather pattern from that of South Africa, for example we don't have winter in Uganda yet it is experienced in South Africa. This had a very negative effect on my health since I already had asthma.*

The weather being a challenge, as indicated above, could be because Uganda is located in the savannah. Therefore, it is mostly warm and does not experience winter except at the mountain tops. Conversely, South Africa has the opposite weather pattern, as Graham (2020) reveals. The affected participants might have been unprepared for this change, which is a challenge. Additionally, the affected participants may not have gathered adequate information before studying in South Africa. Chen (2017) notes that many students often fail to

seek all the necessary information to study in the Diaspora.

Another challenge identified by the participants was the language barrier, as captured in this comment:

> S*ometimes Afrikaans was the language used on campus by many south African nationals which made socialising difficult and to make matters worse, some lecturers often used it in class as well.*

The language barrier could have arisen due to words having different meanings, different accents and differences in gestures, as opined by Abuarqoub (2019). Furthermore, the language barrier could have also been caused by an individual's fear of making grammar mistakes or being embarrassed by their accent or pronunciation of words.

Participants also shared that the universities had state-of-the-art facilities, such as laboratories and libraries, which were difficult to utilise, as captured in the following comment:

> *My University had very sophisticated laboratories, and automated systems and I had never used some of the technologies before.*

The above result could be attributed to some students' non-exposure to sophisticated systems used in institutions of higher learning, as observed by (Sheng, Goldie, Pulling & Luctkar-Flude 2019).

Additionally, participants shared that they encountered cultural shock, which in turn caused them anxiety, as indicated in the following comments:

> *When I reached S/A I was shocked that people had very minimal clothing's on them and it seemed very okay. This caused me disorientation and anxiety whenever I moved around.*

> *Some people would eat food and snacks while walking. This disturbed me a lot especially when I had just started my studies because back home, one has to find a place to sit then eat their food.*

These findings above support the opinions of Sharma and Shearman (2021); Wu, Garza, and Guzman (2015), who report that students in the Diaspora usually face cultural shock. Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping and Todman (2008),

who report that students attending universities away from their countries could not escape the cultural shock, support these findings.

8.3 Mitigation Strategies to Challenges Faced by Postgraduate Students in the Diaspora

Respondents confirmed that they overcame their challenges by employing various tactics. However, participants also indicated that some of the challenges were emotional, so there was nothing they could do other than persevere. Most participants could live with racism since they could not do anything about it. One respondent said:

> *I learned to live with racism because I couldn't do anything to change it. I was consoled by the fact that one day I would leave and return home to a more embracing environment.*

The above findings align with Park, Wang, Williams and Alegría (2018), who stressed that rather than doing nothing about racism, forming an ethnic and racial identity through groups would help to avert the negative impact of racism by creating the much-needed social support.

Technological advancement helped many participants overcome feeling lonely and homesick. Most participants indicated they occasionally connected with friends and family through phone and video calls. One respondent shared:

> *My family frequently called me through WhatsApp video conferencing, and this helped me to unwind, in return the loneliness kept reducing until I could feel it no more.*

Another respondent said:

> *I always called my children through Viber over the weekend. Their unending stories and laughter made me feel like I was not very far away from them and hence the homesickness I felt when I had just gone to South Africa reduced tremendously.*

From the above findings, it can be argued that technology, as noted by Kelly and Cheng (2021), is one of the best ways to avert homesickness because

technology is used to build co-presence and bring distant places closer. Additionally, some participants who were on scholarships shared that they were given annual tickets to go back home, as noted:

> *My scholarship allowed me an annual return ticket and so I was assured of seeing my family once a year hence reducing homesickness.*

To overcome insecurity, participants shared that they learned to move in groups and found out which were unsafe places to avoid that would make them vulnerable. One member said:

> *We tried to move in groups and avoid moving very late or very early. And we also soon learned what the unsafe places were, so we tried to avoid them. That being said, however, some unsafe places were unavoidable for example the shuttle stops as we had to take the shuttle between our student residences and campus.*

The findings corroborate with Dako-Gyeke and Adu (2017), who assert that people are likely to depend on one another for protection and support during heightened insecurity periods.

Many respondents indicated difficulty relocating to South Africa and obtaining clearance from the South Africa Foreign Qualification Authority (SAQA). They had to exercise patience and also tried to get all the required information before departure. The above strategy is generally applicable since the challenge of clearance delays may not be purely attributed to unexpected delays or momentary problems (Lee, Paulidor & Mpaga 2018.

Additionally, participants indicated that they had to take out loans or look for temporary employment to manage their expenses. In contrast, others opted for short visits of up to three months at a time in South Africa compared to staying for the whole duration of the course. The above findings align with Wu *et al.* (2015), who assert that for international students to finance themselves comfortably, they need a paid-up internship or temporary employment, also advising that international students could take short-term loans from family and friends.

Additionally, participants indicated that they had to learn and practise using sophisticated libraries and automated systems to understand them better. They also shared experiences that helped them to cope with their experience in libraries. One participant said:

> *The library was fully automated which I must confess gave me very hard time at the beginning, however, with the help of the librarians, I learned how to use the automated system.*

8.4 Government's Role in Supporting Postgraduate Education in The Diaspora

In describing what role the Ugandan government can play in supporting postgraduate education in the Diaspora, most participants indicated that the government could promote exchange programmes as indicated by a participant:

> *The government should promote exchange programs between countries that send many students to SA and various SA Universities to improve bilateral relationships. This would also remove the unspoken feeling that other countries especially Ugandans come to SA to only take away yet South Africans do not necessarily benefit in return.*

The above findings align with Mulvey (2020), who asserts that governments should explore exchange programmes to encourage international relations, which may also ease friendliness among students. In addition, participants indicated that the Ugandan government should consider offering financial support to postgraduate students to ease their financial burden. One participant indicated:

> *Countries that send students to foreign countries for education should offer some financial support to these students even if it is in form of students' loans.*

Another participant said:

> *Studying in the Diaspora is not for the fainthearted. One needs all the financial support they can get. Therefore, it would be a good thing for governments to offer some form of financial support say in Visa fees or even flight fees to these students.*

The above findings align with the recommendations of Khanal and Gaulee (2019), who suggest that governments should financially support postgraduate

education to ease the burden that postgraduates carry. This form of government support may go a long way in ensuring these students attain good grades since they would have fewer worries and financial troubles.

Some participants shared that they had to resign from their jobs before going to study further in South Africa, as shared by one participant below:

> *My employer did not grant me study leave and instead advised I chose between my job and to study. I felt this was not right and the government needed to protect people like me from our employers because choosing one of the two is difficult and eventually contributes to brain drain.*

From the above, it would be appropriate for governments to engage stake-holders, especially employers, to see how best they can maintain their staff who choose to further their education in the Diaspora and not impose unnecessary expenses on the employer. Li *et al.* (2017) point out that when an employee leaves an organisation for greener pastures, the organisation and government both lose skilled human capital to brain drain. Therefore, it is in the interest of these governments to encourage the organisations to retain human capital by enacting good policies (Chand 2016).

8.5   *Contribution to Relevant Body of Knowledge*

The chapter represents the experiences of Ugandan postgraduate returnees from South Africa. It includes the benefits of studying in South Africa, their challenges and how they overcame them, and finally, the Ugandan government's role in supporting them in the host country and once back in their home country.

This study makes a unique contribution to the body of knowledge, especially on Diaspora education for postgraduate students, as it attempts to present evidence based on their experiences while living in the Diaspora. Furthermore, the paper highlights how governments, particularly those in developing countries like Uganda, can support students in the Diaspora.

Importantly, the chapter aims to inform future students intending to study in the Diaspora of the benefits they stand to gain while highlighting some challenges they are bound to face.

9 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Ugandan Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should work hand in hand to ease the visa requirements for students seeking to study abroad.

2. Uganda's government and relevant stakeholders should devise ways to support students financially, especially the Diaspora postgraduate students, even if that means giving students loans.

3. The students interested in postgraduate studies in the Diaspora should gather all relevant information concerning the desired country of study. Such information could include aspects such as the weather, food, and language.

10 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the benefits and opportunities of postgraduate education in the Diaspora outweigh the education challenges. South Africa, as a country, appears to have good policies and programs that have attracted international students from Uganda, who confirm the competitive advantage higher education in South Africa has over their home country. However, the fact that students face racial discrimination cannot be downplayed in this era, more so from a country commonly referred to as a 'rainbow nation'.

While the returnees found various ways of mitigating the challenges encountered in the Diaspora, not all the identified challenges had solutions. It speaks to the need to be aware of the environment they can control and be cognisant that they may have no control over others. It is, therefore, imperative that the government of Uganda benchmarks good practices from the Diaspora and eases access to postgraduate education locally in Uganda.

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