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Helping Students From Refugee Backgrounds Succeed In Higher Education Through Support Systems

Arinola Adebayo

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HELPING STUDENTS FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS SUCCEED IN HIGHER
EDUCATION THROUGH SUPPORT SYSTEMS

by

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of the

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For the Degree of

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Department: Teaching, Leadership, & Professional Practice

Degree: Doctor of Education

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Arinola Adebayo
July 14, 2022

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For Zoe, Alexa and Alexis—Continue in the Path to Learning

ABSTRACT

Like every student enrolled in a higher education institution, students from refugee backgrounds are not only concerned about how to get into college, but how to connect with the support systems available to them on campus. The purpose of this research was to examine the social support systems available to college students from refugee backgrounds while on campus, the resources these students engaged in to keep them connected to college, and how they tapped into available resources to be successful in achieving their higher educational career and goals.

Using qualitative methods, this research used an intrinsic-embedded, single-case design case study. Eight students from refugee backgrounds enrolled in higher education institutions were interviewed. Participants had different countries of origin and must have been in the United States for less than 10 years.

Results from the research qualitative interview revealed that students from refugee backgrounds did not take advantage of available services on their campus for various reasons. These reasons included not connecting to the system, lacking a sense of belonging to the institution, pressure from family members, understanding of the system, determination to be successful at all costs, situational barriers, community influence, and connection to the services. The findings led to proposing services available on campus to future students from refugee backgrounds and suggestions to higher education institutions.

Keywords: Refugee, Support Systems, Higher Education, Refugee Students, Higher Education Services, Refugee Students in Higher Education.

Introduction to Dissertation in Practice Format

There are essential components to a Dissertation in Practice (DIP). These include an Introduction to a Problem of Practice, Three Artifacts, and a Conclusion. The Introduction describes the three artifacts and an explanation of how they relate to each other. The three artifacts describe the study from start to finish and the conclusion provided a summary that ties the artifacts together. Further explanation is as follows:

Artifact 1

- Introduction to Problem of Practice
- Overview of the problem
- Review of relevant research and practitioner-based literature
- Common approaches to addressing the problem linking possible solutions and barriers to theoretical foundations

For this research, Artifact 1 explains the challenges refugee students bring into higher education, the need for study, why it is important, and the reason it is worth studying. It also includes the theoretical foundation, the purpose of the study, research and the researcher's reflexivity, motive, and bias.

Artifact 2

- Research Approach Narrative
- Description of the research approach/protocol
- Narrative that explains the results of implementation

For this research, Artifact 2 focuses on the research approach in detail and the interview questions. The results from the interview were grouped into patterns and themes to derive meaning. The section also explains the narrative of the students from refugee backgrounds interviews.

Artifact 3

- Implementation of Solution
- Final product that resulted from the research

For this research, Artifact 3 includes an introductory video for future students from refugee backgrounds talking about the available services on campus. This video explains the services and the benefits. The concluding section of this artifact highlights the recommendations the researcher is proposing to this higher education institution to better accommodate students from refugee backgrounds. For the final product, the first section includes the development of a pamphlet which shares suggestions for supporting students from refugee backgrounds aspiring to attend college. The second section is another pamphlet for higher education institutions on how to reach students from refugee backgrounds with the services they offer. The third section includes a video for students from refugee backgrounds that is presented in three languages.

INTRODUCTION TO PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

Higher education institutions are becoming a global village with student populations from all over the world (Francois, 2015; Marginson, 2010; Rumbley, Altbach, & Reisberg, 2012). This might seem like a positive thing, but the excitement is short lived as higher education institutions face an influx of diverse student bodies. Higher education institutions are scrambling for ways to understand and accommodate the commonalities among the students while also meeting individual student needs (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011; Sandell & Tupy, 2015). Among these emerging populations of students in higher education are students from refugee backgrounds.

Like every student enrolled in higher education institutions, students from refugee backgrounds are not only concerned about how to get into college, but also how to succeed within the higher education community (Harvey & Mallman, 2019). They want a better life for themselves in their new locations. They want to fit into the community and contribute to the growth of the society they now call home (Solorzano, 2018). These students from refugee backgrounds have questions and uncertainty about college and how people like them can attend and graduate. As such, it is important to understand how students from refugee backgrounds in higher education make connections to support their success throughout their college experiences. With this information, success in higher education would be more attainable for future students from refugee backgrounds. Higher

education institutions can also use the information to learn more about their students and how to provide relevant resources to meet the needs of the students.

The majority of American colleges and universities have no precise data available regarding the number of college students from refugee backgrounds in their institutions. Zepke (2015) reported that many higher education institutions do not have a category to identify this type of student body. This lack of information can make it difficult for colleges to identify college students from refugee backgrounds (Thomas, 2016). However, increases in the number of students from refugee backgrounds coming into the country, states, and communities can serve as an indicator of real and potential increases in the population of students from refugee backgrounds as college student body members. For example, during the 2015 fiscal year (USHCR, 2019), about 70,000 refugees were admitted into the country and the number keeps growing with the goal of having 150,000 refugees resettling by 2028. How can higher education institutions serve these students from refugee backgrounds when they do not have a number for them or know their struggles?

ARTIFACT 1

Refugee Background Information and Challenges

It is imperative to understand who refugees are and the issues behind the increase of refugees within our communities. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2000), refugees are persons who are forced to flee their home countries to escape serious human rights abuses and other causes of prolonged physical and emotional distress. Millions of refugees live in precarious conditions – in a limbo without knowing the way forward and too scared to return to their home countries.

This is one reason some students of refugee status pursue higher education and put an emphasis on succeeding, because it is perceived to be a way forward out of limbo. According to Zeus (2010), the majority of developing countries that initially house these refugees struggle to protect the rights of their own citizens. As such, it is difficult and almost impossible to provide higher learning education for the students from refugee backgrounds in their countries. Few refugees are fortunate enough to be relocated to developed countries, e.g., the United States of America, Canada, and Australia. These developed countries have the highest number of resettled refugees and provide educational support such as K-12 education, learning services, and adult education for refugees depending on their age at the time of entry (Appleby, & Bathmaker, 2006; James, & Busher, 2018; Hou, & Beiser, 2006).

Need for the Study

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' 2013 Global Trends Report explains that attending higher education is not a necessity for many students from refugee backgrounds. Some of the key barriers that students from refugee backgrounds face include competing family responsibilities that hinder them from focusing on education (McBrien, 2005), limited level of academic language skills (Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, & Suárez-Orozco, (2011), limited financial support, while having financial responsibilities to care for family members (Hirano, 2011; Shakya et al., 2012; Xiong, & Lam, 2013), and limited sense of self-efficacy to manage the requirements and expectations in higher education (Earnest, Joyce, De Mori, & Silvagni, 2010; Blanchard & Muller 2015).

Students from refugee backgrounds face challenges as they study in higher education institutions. These challenges have been found to fall into various categories. Earnest et al. (2010) finds that many students from refugee backgrounds do not get enough academic support from their American higher education institutions. These authors also suggest that this could be due to the institutions not knowing how to handle the issues students from refugee backgrounds face, and perhaps due to the prior sparse number of students from refugee backgrounds enrolled in higher education. However, due to the refugee population growing in higher education, schools must recognize the needs of this population, even if it is not seemingly large enough to compete with other priorities. This refugee population is still a valuable part of the academic community, enriching the institution through diversity (Joyce et al., 2010; Wong & Schweitzer (2017). As such, knowing how to respond to the needs of this population suggests the importance of being proactive and studying the needs and strategies to support a small but growing population in higher education (Joyce et al., 2010; Milner & Loescher, 2011; Silburn, Earnest, De Mori, & Butcher, 2010). Brown (2010) recommends that educators, as well as institutions, should explore ways to better accommodate differences in students. Despite these barriers, according to Earnest, et al. (2010), many students from refugee backgrounds have high aspirations to attend college to provide better lives for their families both within the country and in their home countries.

Higher education institutions are not just places for academic learning but also places to socially network and build relationships. These relationships are not only used in schools, but also in life after college. As such, it becomes eminent for institutions to explore how college students from refugee backgrounds network within their institutions.

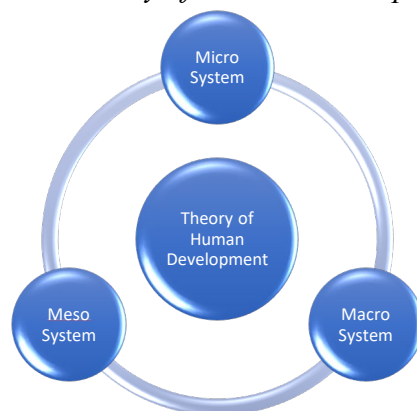
A social network is the primary source of information on how to understand the social world (Alesina & Giuliano, 2015; Quardokus & Henderson, 2015). Therefore, social networks can provide a way to frame, explain, and understand how students from refugee backgrounds work within the higher education system and with their social networks to gain access to higher education and to successfully negotiate paths.

Theoretical Foundation

This study is using the Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development to examine the impact of support areas at the Micro, Meso, and Macro systems on the academic success of students from refugee decedents in higher education institutions. The study aims to analyze each of the systems distinctly and independently. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of human development explains that an individual's environment has an impact on the individual's process of development. In other words, human development is shaped by the interaction between an individual and their environment. This study will focus on the Micro, Meso, and Macro Systems leaving out an individual look at the Exosystem as it is embedded in the others.

Figure 1

Bronfenbrenner's Theory of Human Development



Note: This figure is created based on the part of the theory the study focuses on.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) Microsystem is the most immediate of the systems. It entails an individual's human relationship, interpersonal interactions with the immediate surroundings. In relation to students from refugee backgrounds, the Micro system explains the student's relationship with their family members, friends, colleagues on campus, faculty, staff, and administrators in the institutional environment. The students relate individually with each of these bodies separately during their journey on campus.

Mesosystems include the activities and interactions that take place between an individual and their immediate environment. For example, this system examines the impact of the relationship that may exist between students from refugee backgrounds and college activities such as co-curricular or extra-curricular activities and the impact of this relationship on the student's academic success or overall higher education experience. The activities that students from refugee backgrounds engage in while at higher institutions are often at the Mesosystem level organized by the institutional bodies like the student organizations, campus engagement groups, or campus-wide events.

The final system is the Macrosystem which has an overall effect on the student. This system includes cultural and societal attitudes, beliefs, norms, and practices that impact an individual's development on campus. For example, the policies, programs, and support areas that are provided to students from refugee backgrounds by various supporting entities on campus, such as minority student associations, the federal, provincial/territorial, and local governments fundings. These higher authorities' policies have influences on student's performance and the way they experience higher education. Studies show that students are more committed to perform better when they have a sense

of belonging on campus (Boud & Cohen, 2014; DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2012; Earnest et al., 2010; Yu, Tian, Vogel, and Kwok, 2010).

Even though Exosystem will not be broadly focused on in this dissertation, it is worth mentioning. Bronfenbrenner (1979) identifies Exosystem as elements of the Micro system that do not affect an individual directly but may have an indirect effect. For example, a student from a refugee background may suddenly find themselves in a family financial hardship situation because of a change in their family structure, death in the family, or relocation to an unfamiliar environment. These changes are typically difficult for students, while not directly related, they may have a hidden effect on the student's academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the social support systems available to college students from refugee backgrounds while on campus, the resources these students engage in to keep themselves connected to college, and how they tap into available resources to be successful and achieve their higher educational career and goals.

Research Questions

1. What supporting services are available to students from refugee backgrounds in higher education institutions and are these students aware of these supports?
2. What is the relationship between the support systems available and academic success of students from refugee backgrounds on campus?
3. Which of these support systems did refugee students feel most connected to and how did these services increase their sense of belonging on campus?

Using a qualitative research method, these questions will guide the study in examining and understanding refugee students through Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development to understand the impact of the support systems available to students on campus, how accessible these resources are to students, and how these systems impact their college experience. More specifically, these questions will guide the research in exploring refugee students' backgrounds, involvement, anxieties, and networking tools. Additionally, these questions also aim to propose ways higher education institutions can better serve this population of students which ultimately may increase retention and graduation rates.

Benefits of the Study

This study aims to increase the knowledge base regarding students from refugee backgrounds in higher education, specifically, what social networks students from refugee backgrounds use to navigate higher education and how these social networks influence their higher education experience. A major goal of higher education institutions is to create a well-rounded campus experience for everyone. The ability to explore the diverse perspectives of instructors and students is necessary to create a learning community for everyone (Crea, & McFarland, 2015; Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2010). It is essential that the educational community understands students from refugee backgrounds on their campuses to better assist them as they pursue their studies. This study seeks to help refugee students entering college understand what social networks may benefit them in navigating higher education systems. Findings from this study will also serve as a mechanism to inform higher education on how to better understand the role of social networks for refugee students and to identify tools for higher institution

staff and faculty to assist students on how to access new social networks on campus that will support their higher educational experience.

Researcher's Reflexivity

Scheurich (1994) believed that who we are determines, to a significant extent, what we decide to study. In that spirit, it is important to voice my positionality which is related to my interest in working with minority populations in higher education. As an international student, during my first and second year of my doctoral program, I volunteered to work in an English Language Learner (ELL) classroom at a Midwestern high school. Most of these students were students from refugee backgrounds. One of my duties, as a volunteer, role model and mentor for students, was assuring them that college was attainable. Through this work, I became interested in ways to support such students once they have been admitted into higher education.

One of my potential biases might be due to my identity as a member of a minority group in higher education and also from being a woman from Nigeria and its communal culture. Learning to navigate higher education has been challenging. I came from a community where I always had people watching over me and a community that was open and supportive to all. Coming to college in the United States was different from all that that I have personally experienced in the past. To survive in higher education, I adopted my own social network by creating the major elements in a community for myself. I adopted an extended family, several siblings among my colleagues that I was accountable for and responsible to academically. These new family members provided comfort and support in navigating college. From this experience, I wanted to understand if college students from refugee backgrounds also created similar networks or if they had a

different system for navigating college. I wanted a deeper understanding in order to provide the needed tools, services, and benefits for future students from refugee backgrounds.

Literature Review

The literature on social networks among students from refugee backgrounds in higher education is growing. However, the literature on how students from refugee backgrounds navigate the social networks in higher education and the impact of these social networks on success is lacking. This section includes a deeper look at the various literature on previous studies on the use of social networks in higher education by college students, especially those studies related to minorities in college and the reasons why students need these social supports. To carry out this literature review, I used search engines from EBSCOhost such as Sage journals online, Dissertations and Theses, Academic Search Online, and ERIC. Various search words were used, including refugees, social networks, social networks in higher education, refugees in higher education, experiences of students from refugee backgrounds in higher education, and students from refugee backgrounds and social networks in higher education.

Students from Refugee Backgrounds in Higher Education

A significant goal in higher education is to offer equitable and inclusive options for quality lifelong learning for all students (Zeus, 2010). Dryden-Peterson and Giles (2010) point out that higher education for students from refugee backgrounds is not a luxury, but a necessity. According to Elwyn, Gladwell, and Lyall (2012) education of students from refugee backgrounds can be seen as a means to a more stable way of life and an increase in self-sufficiency. This stability can help students from refugee

backgrounds deal with hardships endured from past experiences and move toward self-sufficiency autonomy.

Students from refugee backgrounds may also be considered as non-traditional students (Baker, Irwin, Taiwo, Singh, Gower, & Dantas, 2019). According to Gilardi and Guglielmetti (2011) non-traditional students are students who have delayed enrollment (students do not enter postsecondary education in the same calendar year they finish high school), attend school part time, work full time, are financially independent, have dependents other than a spouse, are single parents, or do not have a high school diploma. College students from refugee backgrounds may fall into this category because according to Ernest et al. (2010), many students from refugee backgrounds have jobs to sustain and support their families. Some students from refugee backgrounds have college degrees from their previous countries, which might not be transferable in the United States (Morrice, 2013).

The study of students from refugee backgrounds and their education is a growing area of interest in higher education. Studies related to students from refugee backgrounds in higher education fall into several categories. Earnest, Joyce, De Mori, and Silvagni (2010) mentioned that one of the reasons students from refugee backgrounds go to college is to create a better life for themselves and their family. Other studies look at best practices on how to incorporate students from refugee backgrounds into the American schooling system (Brown, Miller, & Mitchell, 2006; McBrien, 2005), and the difficulties instructors experience when teaching students from refugee backgrounds (Morrice, 2013; Mangan & Winter, 2017), and specifically barriers students from refugee backgrounds may face in higher education.

For instance, according to Shakya et al. (2010) students from refugee backgrounds encounter many barriers related to financial support, proper documentation, and recognition of learning credentials as they aspire for higher learning. Moreover, psychosocial well-being and language acquisition are found to be additional barriers students from refugee backgrounds face. (McBrien, 2005; Crea & McFarland, 2015). Studies (Ferede, 2010; Aydin & Kaya, 2017) also show that students from refugee backgrounds come from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds that are significantly different from those of the mainstream in the host countries. As such, the way they perceive higher education tends to be different. Their culture and backgrounds could have either positive or negative influence on how they navigate college (Ferede, 2010; Aydin & Kaya, 2017).

Earnest, et al., (2010) and Ferede (2010) suggest the need for greater understanding of ways to provide academic and social support to students from refugee backgrounds in higher education. Earnest, et al. (2010) also pointed out that the difficulty of students coming from families with little educational background, and the pressure of supporting family in developed countries often made the completion of college difficult for students from refugee backgrounds. These authors also noted that social support for students from similar cultural backgrounds had a pivotal influence on the decision to attend college. Refugee communities view support within their societies as a crucial factor in achieving success and staying connected (Earnest, et al. 2010; Guo, Maitra, & Guo, 2019; McBrien, 2005).

It seems obvious that all students in higher education at some point during their studies may experience challenges, but for students from refugee backgrounds, these

challenges are compounded by their linguistic and cultural diversity, instability, possible trauma and disrupted schooling. (Baker et. al., 2019). These students tend to struggle more than typical college students and are expected to perform at the same standard as other students.

Lambrechts (2020) shared the disadvantages in higher education include barriers to access for refugee students and proposed the term “super-disadvantaged” that students from refugee backgrounds encounter in higher education. In this article Lambrechts (2020) further explained that students from refugee backgrounds are already at a disadvantage because of the struggles they bring to higher education with them. Some of the struggles include effects of their migration experience, status, and the socio-economic realities of living as a refugee. The author proposed that to overcome ‘super-disadvantage, higher education institutions must imbibe in a deliberate change to outreach and support the population of students. Connecting and creating partnership with the community (Baker et.al., 2019), their sector experts (Lambrechts, 2020), and the students themselves would reduce the stress on the students.

In North Dakota and Minnesota, many students from refugee backgrounds come from communal countries and as such, they are used to having strong social networks before leaving their countries (El-Shaarawi, 2015; Redko, Rogers, Bule, Siad, & Choh, 2015). Now that they have been in the United States for several years, they are learning to build new networks (Redko, Rogers, Bule, Siad, & Choh, 2015), which help navigate the American social system. Creating these new networks has its own barriers such as language, weather, and means of transportation (Baker et. al., 2019; McBrien, 2005). These refugee populations aspire to further their education because they see opportunities

in the U.S. to better themselves and their families. Higher education is an opportunity to increase career opportunities and an opportunity that many students strive towards (Shakya, Guruge, Hynie, Akbari, Malik, Htoo, & Alley, 2012; Stevenson, & Willott, 2007).

One of the issues noted was that students from refugee backgrounds are often concerned that instructors may hold preconceptions about their academic abilities due to their limited English language skills (Earnest et.al. 2010; McBrien, 2005). Many college students from refugee backgrounds struggle with the ability to academically speak and write the English language correctly. Cummins (2017) explained that it takes between five to seven years for a language learner to work academically at the level of a native speaker. It may take some students from refugee backgrounds longer than seven years to learn the academic language because they might not be using the language at home. Many of these students from refugee backgrounds are concerned regarding whether instructors would be willing to work with them on their language skills.

One other challenge students from refugee backgrounds encounter is a lack of engagement with other students and the college community at large (Venta, Bailey, Muñoz, Godinez, Colin, Arreola & Lawlace (2019). Some students from refugee backgrounds believe other students will look down on them because they are the minority, and as a result, they connect with people whose culture is similar to their cultures (Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011; Joyce, Earnest, De Mori, & Silvagni 2010). Therefore, networking within the college community becomes essential to the students from refugee backgrounds to ease some of the challenges and support their common goals.

Looking at students from refugee backgrounds in higher education, studies have found that the majority of students from refugee backgrounds come to college with high expectations (Naylor, Terry, Rizzo, Nguyen, & Mifsud, 2021; Museus & Saelua, 2017; Shakya et al., 2010; Soetan, 2019). These studies show that some students from refugee backgrounds expect that after completing college, they will find a job with a good salary and use their income and knowledge to help others, particularly their immediate family. Shakya et al. (2010) find that among students from refugee backgrounds not having a higher education degree often makes it difficult to get a suitable job. Consequently, students from refugee backgrounds enter or return to college desiring to support themselves and their extended families (Shakya et al., 2010; Stevenson & Willott, 2007; Strayhorn, 2018; Wong, & Schweitzer, 2017) regardless of the struggles they may encounter in college. Key factors in their success are the social networks to which they belong in college.

People rely on social networks for many reasons including information, friendship, support, and a sense of connection. These types of social networks are important because they form the path taken in life. The desired goals are influenced by the people who have helped and offered supported in a person's life. For instance, I personally have people such as family members, friends, and colleagues who helped support me as I pursued my university studies. Similarly, other college students have relied heavily on social networks to build relationships and interact within the campus community. According to Pike, Kuh, and McCormick (2011), college students gain friendship by connecting with others and making relationships. These relationships

shaped how they relate with others, explore college, and become informed about how to navigate within their social networks in their higher learning institution.

Social networks in higher education can affect how students connect with others within the institution through some form of interdependencies such as values, preferences, goals, ideas, or people (Kezar, 2014). Social networks serve many functions including social support, knowledge, and change. In higher education, there are also many social networks that go beyond organizational boundaries but have significant impact (Cheung & Phillimore, 2013; Kezar, 2014). For instance, college peer groups, sororities, clubs, and college work environments, among others. Many of these networks influence how relationships are formed and sustained. One then needs to wonder how college students from refugee backgrounds establish networks within the higher education institution. It would be important to explore how social networks impact college students from refugee backgrounds in order to become better informed on the ways to serve and connect refugee student populations to effective resources. One way to better serve this population is to understand how these students navigate social networks.

Many students from refugee backgrounds are not aware of the resources that are available to them in their institutions because they do not know whom to ask (Ferede, 2010; McBrien, 2005). Resources connect people to the networks that are available (Palmer & Gasman, 2008). Knowing who to ask and how to network within higher education can help college students from refugee backgrounds focus on helpful social networks as well as how to work around those networks that could have a detrimental influence on their academics. Knowing how to support college students from refugee

backgrounds by college staff can help on how to better understand and serve the refugee population.

One of the ways college students from refugee backgrounds network in higher education institutions, as mentioned by Earnest et al (2010), is to connect with people that are from similar cultural backgrounds to avoid isolation and discouragement. These shared cultural backgrounds create a sense of belonging and a connection to something they are familiar with in an institution. Typically, there are many other social networking tools within higher education that students from refugee backgrounds might not be aware of are also available to them. It becomes necessary to identify these other social networks and how and why students from refugee backgrounds are not aware of them.

In addition to resources, networking helps with study skills, emotional support, communal living and the overall social benefits of college (El-Shaarawi, 2015; Kaya, 2010). Kezar (2014) stated that students use social networks as a tool to voice their opinion about their institution. That is, social networks can bridge the gap between the school authorities and the students (El-Shaarawi, 2015; Cheung, & Phillimore, 2013). Therefore, this research explored the way social networks are used as support among college students from refugee backgrounds.

Students from Refugee Backgrounds and their Experiences in Higher Education as Related to Social Networks

Cheung and Phillimore, (2013) measure how students from refugee backgrounds frequently made contacts with friends, relatives, national or ethnic communities, religious groups, and other groups and organizations. In higher education, these contacts have the ability to influence how students from refugee backgrounds view their own college

experiences. Wong & Schweitzer (2017) suggested students from refugee backgrounds with close social networks attending a post-secondary institution are more likely to make contacts with campus organizations and use these networks to access resources to their advantage.

Lack of social support can contribute to students from refugee backgrounds' feelings of isolation (Chao, 2012; Tovar, 2015). According to Earnest et al., (2010) more specifically, college students from refugee backgrounds encounter barriers in accessing services because they have inadequate informal support in the first or two years. Thus, having no social network among students from refugee backgrounds can negatively affect their studies and performance in concrete ways (Ernest et al., 2010). For instance, students from refugee backgrounds who feel isolated can have poor health because they are unaware of where to seek help (Wong & Schweitzer, 2017). Similarly, not knowing where to go for academic help when they are struggling in class can lead to discouragement (Cheung & Phillimore, 2013) and loss of interest in school (Milner, & Loescher, 2011; Wong & Schweitzer, 2017). In addition, this isolation could extend after college. According to Cheung and Phillimore (2013) students from refugee backgrounds with few or no social networks in college are the least likely to be employed after graduation.

Social networks are important and can help students from refugee backgrounds have better college experience. However, there can be various competing forces to social networks that might serve as hindrances. Students from refugee backgrounds may place greater importance on other domains such as physical safety and housing rather than creating social networks. This is due to their previous experiences in which social

networks are not of immediate concern (Cheung & Phillimore, 2013; Quardokus, & Henderson, 2015). Others are scared to start new relationships in college because they see themselves as being different from the majority of the students around them (Milner, & Loescher, 2011), or because of their language skills (Cheung & Phillimore, 2013).

Challenges in College Success for Students

Students enter college with a wide range of goals and expectations (Goldrick-Rab, 2010). Institutions of higher education can measure college students' goals and expectations in three ways. (a) students' level of academic educational expectation, (b) retention rates, (c) time to complete their program. Goldrick-Rab (2010) in her study points out that one way to measure success is whether students increase or decrease their educational expectations after entering college. Barnett, (2015) mentioned that even though more students are entering college these days, many schools are struggling with keeping them in school after their first year. The persistent low retention rates are often linked to students' inability to merge their educational goals to the institutional needs (Barnett, 2015; Tovar, 2015). In addition, Thomas (2016), explained that retention rates help institutions to know how students are progressing academically based on students that return to college the following year and eventually graduate. Studies showed that integrating students into an institution's community and increasing students' involvement in campus activities predict higher retention rates (Barnett, 2015; Karp, Hughes, O'Gara, 2010; Mangan & Winter, 2017).

Time of completion may also be used to determine how successful students are in college. Mangan and Winter (2017) mentioned that the longer it takes a student to graduate from a program within a projected time frame, the more difficult it could be for

the student to complete the academic program. Factors such as work, family needs (Chao, 2012; Thomas, 2016), lack of motivation (Adams, Meyers, & Beidas, 2016), and lack of financial resources (Acharya, Jin, & Collins, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011) can lead to a student struggling to complete their program within the stipulated time. For instance, the process of getting financial support is stressful for college students (Britt, Ammerman, Barrett, & Jones, 2017; Goldrick-Rab, 2010). Studies also revealed that the rules and guidelines governing the distribution of financial aid make it difficult for college students to access and keep their financial aid (Acharya, Jin, & Collins, 2018; Barnett, 2015; Goldrick-Rab, 2010).

Social Networks in Higher Education

We can start by asking an important question: why are social networks important in higher education? Literature provided a range of answers. One of these answers was that social networks allow students to succeed academically (Brouwer, Jansen, Flache, & Hofman 2016; Palmer, & Gasman, 2008). According to Brouwer et al. (2016), people with greater social connections in college are more likely to succeed in their later years. Social networks foster support among peers, which can lead to student success (Brouwer et al., 2016; Gibbons, Rhinehart, & Hardin, 2019; Rosenfeld, Richman, & Bowen, 2000). Additionally, social networks are important because they help friends and families to stay connected to function as a support network (Palmer, & Gasman, 2008). Social networks also serve as a way for college students to get a well-rounded, holistic college experience by staying aware of what is happening on campus (Gibbons, Rhinehart, & Hardin, 2019).

In other words, social networks facilitate the flow of information within the college community (Lin, 2017). In addition, Lin explained that through social networks,

an individual's access to resources while in college is reflected through the networks and relationships they keep. To succeed, according to Crul (2015), most students need positive family support. In addition to a supportive home environment, studies have also shown that students likewise need the support of institutional agents, such as student organizations, student help and resource centers, social media, and non-college organizations such as churches and non-profit organizations (Brouwer et al., 2016; Crul 2015; DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2012; Palmer, & Gasman, 2008). Going back to the initial question, why are social networks important in higher education? The responses including academic peers, family, college resources, and social media will be unpacked in greater detail in the next section.

Academic Peers

The importance of networking among peers in college cannot be over-emphasized. Palmer and Gasman (2008) found that other students encouraged their peers to stay focused on their goals and persist academically. For example, they pushed them to complete assignments promptly. Echoing their ideas, Thomas (2012) suggests "those students with a proportion of ties to their peer group perform better academically and are more likely to persist" (p. 609). In addition, Brouwer et al., (2016) in their study on *the impact of social capital on self-efficacy and study success among first-year university students*, agree with Rausch and Hamilton's (2006) recommendation that "pairing students to work together, encouraging group work, and allowing peer tutoring during classes seemingly can foster students' social capital and enhance study success" (p. 116). Hence, promoting students' social networking skills and opportunities stands to benefit them academically (Brouwer et al., 2016). Some colleges have found that creating a peer-

learning community where students can live together based on their interest can promote student success. Students can create a sense of belonging among their peers, which can increase success and retention (Boud & Cohen, 2014). This learning community environment creates a communal social networking environment that enables students to build friendships (Pike, Kuh, & McCormick, 2011).

Brouwer et al., (2016) suggests that low-achieving students need help to find social networks, which can improve their academic performance. They suggest that university administrators should consider implementing peer-assisted learning within small group teaching contexts (Furmedge, Iwata, & Gill, 2014). If implemented, these programs might open more social networking opportunities for college students.

According to Palmer and Gasman (2008), college peers and mentors "provide guidance, nurturing, social networks, and encouragement, and help socially integrate students into the university's community" (p. 63). Universities must be proactive to reach out to low-achieving students, as these pupils can easily fall through the cracks

Family

Another influence on social networks among college students is the connections they have with their families. Among immigrant families, succeeding in college is a key step not only for the student but for the entire family. Studies have shown that migration is a family project in which the children must succeed as part of the 'bargain' with their parents, who sacrificed so much to move to another country" (Covarrubias, Valle, Laiduc, & Azmitia, 2019; Crul, 2015; Workman, 2015). According to Crul (2015) "To succeed, a positive education climate in the family is almost conditional for children of immigrants

from lower class families". He explains that parents migrated to provide a better future for their children, thus they often have upward mobility aspirations.

According to Chao (2012), positive family and social support is as essential to college students as good soil is to plants. Family support is an avenue that can help colleges manage their stress (Ben-Zur, 2009) and provide instrumental, informational, or emotional assistance (Chao, 2012). This type of familial support positively affects the overall well-being of students. In addition to the positive influence that family may have in the lives of college students, studies also show that unstable family issues are indicators of low social support that contributes to students' stress in college (Chao, 2012; Crul, 2015).

College Resources

The resources provided by institutions of higher learning could enhance the social networks possibilities of students. For instance, in their study Palmer and Gasman (2008) find that historically Black universities provide a rich source of social networks to students by fostering an empowering educational climate. They create an environment where the students feel welcomed and comfortable enough to learn. The authors also comment that higher institutions should create a family-like environment for students, which nurtures talent and develops potential.

Colleges provide avenues for college students to find resources available on campus. Not many students come into college having a connection with one or more resources available on campus, they may need those connections pointed out and encouraged. Some of the resources that could be available on campus are student success

centers, multicultural centers, international centers, writing centers, and counseling centers among others (Mattanah, Ayers, Brand, Brooks, Quimby, & McNary, 2010).

Social Media

In the past, many university programs have been used to help establish social support networks once students arrive on campus (Mattanah et al., 2010). These programs often focus on peer support groups. In more recent years, the rise in the use of social media has created opportunities to establish peer-support networks prior to students arriving on campus (DeAndrea, et al., 2012). Studies show that many college students are already interested in social media before coming to college (DeAndrea, et al., 2012; Selwyn, 2012). It then becomes important for college institutions to meet students where they are. DeAndrea, et al., (2012) in their study found that the use of social media increases students' perception of campus resources and events, which helps students diversify their social network support during their first semester in college. Institutions increase the use of social media to improve connection among students, faculty and staff across campus (Kaya, 2010). The use of social network sites offers students a unique opportunity to engage in socialization in the college environment (Yu, Tian, Vogel, and Kwok 2010). In addition, the use of social media helps students learn about their peers and college. This new knowledge can lead to increased satisfaction and affiliation with the university, as well as improving the students' sense of belonging to the college community (DeAndrea, et al., 2012; Yu, Tian, Vogel, and Kwok 2010).

In relating the diverse use of social media as a way college students' network, Kim, Sohn, & Choi (2011) explain that the ways and reason college students use social media differ depending on their social and cultural background. They further explain that

the fundamental values imposed on the use of social media are divergent from culture to culture. In their study, they found that American college students use social media more as a means for entertainment, compared to Korean college students who use social media to obtain social support from existing social relationships. There are some fundamental reasons why college students use social media to network, which cuts across cultures. These include seeking friends, social support, entertainment, information, and convenience (DeAndrea, et al., 2012; Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011). Social support that involves family members, peers, community, and even college resources provide well-being for college students (Chao, 2012).

In conclusion, Artifact 1 explained the problem of practice and the need for the research. It also explained the benefits of the study, the researcher's positionality, and the chosen theoretical frameworks. The section also looks at previous studies on refugees, students from refugee backgrounds and the social support system available to them on campus. Artifact 2 will explain the methodology used to carry out the research.

ARTIFACT 2

Research Approach

This section describes the study design, research methods, and the procedures used in data collection and analyses. The section also covers the participants in the study, variables of interest, data collection procedures, reliability measures, and data analysis procedures. Creswell (2017) retells in his research design book that “qualitative approach is an approach to understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problems” (p.4). This method advocates the researcher must choose the procedure and methods that best meet the purpose of the study. Qualitative research is compatible to explore, understand, and describe a social event, group, and interaction (Creswell, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As such, the purpose of this research was to examine the social support systems available to college students from refugee backgrounds while on campus, a qualitative approach was the appropriate methodology choice for conducting interviews with participants (Holstein, Gubrium, Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

Qualitative design uses thick description through multiple data collection, data analysis with the aim of building general themes; the research ends up making meaning and interpretations from the data. The goal of this method was to reach the desired outcome of understanding phenomena rather than predicting future outcomes (Johnson, Adkins, & Chauvin, 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This research examines the social support systems available to college students from refugee backgrounds while on college

campus. To understand the impact of social support systems for students from refugee background in higher education the three levels of Bronfenbrenner's theory were chosen to examine the significance of the support areas that were available to students from refugee backgrounds in higher education and how it affected their academic success, as well as how they tapped into the services available on campus.

To implement the research, an intrinsic-embedded, single-case design case study involved interviewing college students from refugee backgrounds at a higher education institution in the upper Midwestern part of the United States. According to Yin (2015), "the distinctive need for case study arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" (p. 4). A case study considers the behavior of those involved in the study but without attempting to manipulate research. Baxter and Jack (2008) recommended that there are many types of case study designs, and one must choose a particular type based on the overall study purpose. Additionally, a case study focuses on contemporary events and not historical events (Yin, 2015). Contextual conditions cannot be ignored because they are relevant to the phenomenon under study. In other words, the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clear (Baxter & Jack 2008; Yin, 2015). A case study focuses on answering "how" and "why" questions.

According to Baxter and Jack (2008), there are two key approaches that guide case study methodology with Stake (2010) discussing the intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case study, and Yin (2003), sharing the explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive case study. The study decided to use the intrinsic case study because it showed a genuine interest in the particularity and ordinariness of the case. This is not an abstract construct of a phenomenon (Stake, 2010). Stake (2010) and Yin (2003) both base

their approach on the constructivism paradigm. “Constructivism claims that trust is relative and that it is dependent on one’s perspective” (Baxter & Jack 2008, p. 545). Constructivism creates a close relationship between researcher and participants, which allows participants to tell their stories. Through these stories, participants can describe their views of reality, and this enables the researcher to better understand the participants’ actions (Baxter & Jack 2008; Yin, 2015).

Baxter and Jack (2008) explain that one also must determine the approach to use in analyzing the data as either single or multiple case studies. This study consists of a single case, and as such, a single-case study design was implemented. Furthermore, Baxter and Jack (2008) also mentioned that in choosing a single-case study design, one may decide to use “an embedded, single-case study design” (p. 550). An embedded design enables the researcher to explore the case while considering what influences the various situations within the case. With this understanding, the study used an intrinsic-embedded, single-case design case study because it demonstrated a genuine interest on the impact of social support systems on college students from refugee backgrounds. With the use of embedded units’ approach, the research looked at each sub-unit situated within a larger case as an individual subject, keeping in mind that the purpose was to better understand the role of social support systems among students from refugee backgrounds.

Recruitment Process

Due to the small numbers of refugees in the institution, there were two sampling methods used to recruit participants. These methods were snowball and purposive sampling. In snowball sampling, participants were asked to nominate other individuals who may be eligible candidates for participation in this research (Castillo, 2016). I

requested that participants nominate other students from refugee backgrounds who attend higher education institutions and might be interested in participating in the study. In purposive sampling, the sample was built to satisfy the researcher's specific needs based on the research questions (Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, & Walker, 2020). For the purpose of this research, I worked with Lutheran Social Services, Global Friends Coalition, and existing contacts I have from working, living, and volunteering in the same community to obtain referrals for prospective participants connected to higher education. Participants were recruited for a period of 12 months, using a variety of procedures such as word of mouth, telephone, and email correspondence.

Participants

After receiving approval from University of North Dakota Internal Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix A), eight participants who were first generation undergraduate students from refugee backgrounds in higher education were recruited. These students were enrolled in a higher education institution in the upper Midwestern and they agreed to participate in an interview. The students were all pursuing or just completed their bachelor degree. Their ages range from 18 to 32 years old. Participants were from different countries of origin and had been in the United States for less than 10 years (See Table 1).

Table 1*Demographic of the Participants*

Pseudonym	Country of Origin	Gender	Time in the US	Age	Years in Higher Education
Participant 1	Somalia	Female	6	25	3
Participant 2	Yemen	Female	8	32	5
Participant 3	Kenya	Female	8	24	4
Participant 4	Jordan	Female	6	28	3
Participant 5	Libya	Male	9	25	2
Participant 6	Nepal	Female	6	26	1
Participant 7	Somalia	Male	10	18	1
Participant 8	Nepal	Male	7	22	2

Note: Number of Participants = 8, Number of Male = 3, Female 5

Data Collection

According to Baxter and Jack (2008), “A hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources, a strategy which also enhances data credibility” (p. 554). Participation in this study was strictly voluntary. No participant was paid. The interview process took about 60 to 90 minutes. Before the interview, participants were emailed the consent form and responded by stating their interest to participate. We also discussed the consent form in detail when we met via zoom before continuing with the interview. I provided and read the consent form to participants and ensured they understood, and if they consented, their permission was documented by their signature. Those who chose to participate were provided with a copy of their consent form and I kept a copy for my records. To protect the participants’ identity, each participant was given a pseudonym see Table 1.

Interviews

This study involved one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. This technique was suited for working with small samples and was useful for studying specific populations (Au, 2019; Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). The semi-structured interview is often conducted with an open framework. According to Alshenqeti (2014), when using the semi-structured interview, the researcher can direct the questions to solicit specific information related to the research questions. As recommended by Brinkmann (2015), this type of interview gives the researcher the opportunity to be flexible and to add additional questions based on the participants' responses. The interviews with the participants were not recorded. Notes were taken during the interview to aid in the creation of effective follow-up questions. (See Appendix B) for the interview Questions.

The first few minutes of the interviews were used to get familiar with the participants and to ask broad questions about them, their current studies, and how they got to the United States. Even though this study did not cover their demographics, it was important to hear the stories of the students and make them feel comfortable to share their stories of how they got into higher education. Many shared that the admission process did not involve an admission representative reaching out to them as high school students to sell their schools to the students. All eight students claimed family, friends, and personal networks at work or in the community told them about higher education and the possibility of attending. Their drive or motivation to attend college was not fueled by admission counselors or representatives. Rather, they were motivated to attend higher education based on word of mouth by those they surrounded themselves with. One

participant shared “I talked to my aunt that already went to college. She told me to go to a community college first before going to university and that was the way I started.”

Another participant also mentioned “My cousins and my friends advised me to continue my education after high school. That is how I got to apply to college.”

Credibility

Credibility depends on the accuracy and richness of the information gathered from participants. Credibility also focuses on how accurately the researcher interprets the meaning of the data (Cope, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Various approaches to measuring credibility include member checks, triangulation, peer debriefing, and audit trail (Merriam, 2016). For the purpose of this study, I used Lincoln and Guba’s credibility to validate the study. In their study, to parallel the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) refined the concept of trustworthiness by introducing the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). To address credibility in this study, I conducted a member check, peer debriefing and audit trial.

Member Check

Member checks occurred when the researcher asked participants to review both the data collected by the interviewer and the researchers' interpretation of that interview data (Merriam, 2016). I asked each participant to review a summary of their narration and the researcher's interpretation of their interview for accuracy.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing is an opportunity for examination of the data and interpretation by colleagues, peers, and academics (Shenton, 2004). Two peer debriefers, who have knowledge of and experience in qualitative research methods, were used to provide additional perspectives to avoid misinterpretation and over-generalization of the themes.

Audit Trail

I diligently and carefully stored all data collected relating to this study. All data collected for this study were meticulously organized and stored. Field notes and memos used during the interview were stored and properly documented. Carefully implementing all data collected and analyzed resulted in credible audit trails.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was an on-going process, and it occurred simultaneously with the data collection process. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), to understand the overall case, data must be analyzed as a whole and not just in parts. When analyzing a case, a researcher cannot just focus on various parts of the case but must understand the underlying factors that influenced those parts and the case. The goal of analyzing the interviews was to understand the perceptions of the participants from their points of view.

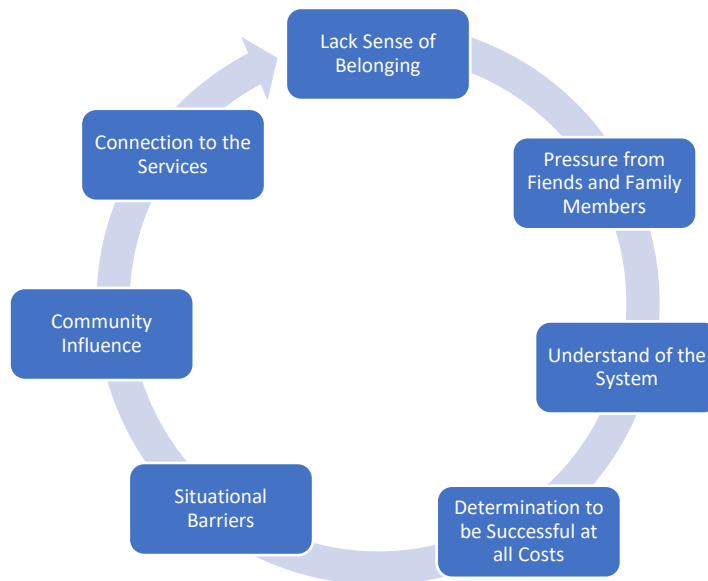
For this study, I used open coding data analysis to label concepts, define concepts, and develop categories to identify themes from the data. Stake (2010) described categorical aggregation and direct interpretation as a type of analysis. In this study, direct interpretation was used because according to Stake (2010), while conducting a direct interpretation analysis, the researcher looks at a single instance and draws meaning from

it without looking for multiple instances. In addition, direct interpretation was a process of pulling the data apart and putting them back together in more meaningful ways. I separately sorted data into sub-units by coding and creating themes that emerge from each interview. When the analyzed data was put back together, I suggested naturalistic generalizations in the form of a map to give a detailed description of the case. This included all the themes that appeared from the data analyzed.

During this study, the common themes derived from the interview can be grouped into the following: lack sense of belonging to the institution, pressure from family members, understanding of the system, determination to be successful at all costs, situational barriers, community influence, and connection to the services.

Figure 2

Themes Derived From the Study



Note: Themes formulated from the interview sections

Summary of Findings and Themes

These students were not drawn to the colleges they attended because of the mascot, nor did they have a strong connection to their colleges outside of their classes. They all showed the motivation to succeed in the community and it was not about having an affiliation with the institution. They all shared that they picked the schools they attended solely based on convenience and never about needing to have a sense of belonging. These initial conversations opened the door to research questions on how the support systems on campus helped them during their journey in higher education. The following section will discuss each of the themes derived from the interviews.

Lack Sense of Belonging

Based on the responses of the students needing a sense of belonging to the institution, most of the students did not stress this as high in importance to them. They saw higher education as a means to an end for their futures. This goes in line with Strayhorn (2018) explaining that the way college students identify sense of belonging differ by race, gender, sexual orientation, or their views of campus. Students from refugee backgrounds have no connection to their campus. These students did not care if they made use of the social support provided on campus. There was no strong sense of belonging to the campus among the students and their institution (Ahn, & Davis, 2020; Museus, & Saelua, 2017).

Participant 1: “Apart from the instructor, I do not have any ties to my college.” All the students also claimed that they did not know where to go for help. Participant 2: “I leave school after class, and I am not sure I know where to ask for help or support not related to my class.” There is a tone of students feeling “Out of place” in their institution

(Strayhorn, 2018). These students are not sure where they belong and what they need to do outside of their classroom settings. While researching the institutions these students attended, there were services all over their campus designed to support students. Why are these students not aware of these services? Why do they feel lost even amid a surplus of available student services and resources?

There is a huge passion and motivation to succeed among all the students interviewed. When asked what social network support has helped them to be successful, all the students interviewed mentioned that the social network support they often used in college were their family members, peers, and friends they created before attending college. This revealed an outside driving force (Beech, 2015) in this case family and friends had a huge influence in the students' decision making and success on campus even though college students were self-driven and individualistic (Workman, 2015).

Pressure from Friends and Family Members

From these interviews, it was discovered that peers and family had a strong influence on students from refugee backgrounds. There was a big tie to family. Participant 1: "My mummy always encourages me; she tells me every good thing often comes as difficult and she believes I can do it." Participant 2 mentioned: "I needed to prove to my family that I can be successful in engineering. Even though it is taking me so long, the desire to prove them wrong actually keeps me going."

Family played a huge role in the lives of students from refugee backgrounds. Participant 1: "I had to change my college so that I could be close to my mummy and also help drive my sister while I attend college." They are in refugee status because of their

family (Workman, 2015) as such, many of them had close ties to their family and all decisions were made with family at the center.

There was also a strong connection with existing friends made before attending college. Participant 3 shared: “A friend told me about college and helped me with the application. I did not know I could go to college since I came to the USA at the age of 19 and I finished high school in my previous country. My case worker told me I was above 18 and I could not go to high school, so I was just working until a friend at work who is also from my country told me about the community college in town.” The word-of-mouth system of communication was highly effective within the refugee community (Stephens, Brannon, Markus, & Nelson, 2015). To get exposed to the services on campus, the information must come from within; this was one reason many of the students did not know about the services even though they might have received information, posters, or email about the services. The information was considered worthy and valid if it came from someone trusted. How then can higher education systems make themselves trusted within the community?

Understanding the System

Regarding understanding the system, students from refugee backgrounds do not understand the system to use its services to their advantage in college. These students often felt they must work hard on their own, to get to where they need to be (Mangan & Winter 2017). Five of the eight students interviewed mentioned they have not used any services on campus. Participant 5 mentioned: “I have never been to the tutor center before.” In another instance, Participant 2 shared: “I don’t know where to go on campus, when I need information, I go to my community outside campus to seek help.”

Participant 3 explained religion also played an important part because he learned about what was going on on-campus when he met with his friends at the mosque.

As an advisor, when I visited the websites of the colleges these students attended, I realized there were services available, but these students were not taking advantage of them. This goes in line with students not trusting the system enough to believe everything they read (Luhmann, 2018). Students from refugee backgrounds often preferred their sources to be from trusted parties. Some of the trusted parties the participants mentioned were friends currently attending the same campus, faculty members they now saw as extended family members, peers in the same class, and faculty members currently teaching them. This explained that many university engagement activities would not reach the students if the information did not come from their friends and the few trusted institution staff. Participant 4 mentioned: “I never knew about the scholarship opportunity until my cousin, referring to a staff member in the university, asked if I applied for it. I never heard about the scholarship opportunity before then.” Even though the institution sent out four emails about the scholarship opportunity. Participant 6 bluntly explained: “If information is not shared in class or my instructor does not tell me about it in person, chances are I don’t know about it.” There are, however, cases of students trusting specific faculty members or staff to help them when they need help. In this case, the students claimed they saw the college staff more as a family and not as a member of the college.

Determination to be Successful at all Costs

All the students’ interviews had a high determination to be successful at all costs. They strived to find their own motivation and not wait to find one on campus. They

showed resilience and determination. Participant 8 explained that even though her journey has been long, she is incredibly positive and adamant to be successful no matter what. Three students identified that going to college was necessary for their futures. Two students mentioned they knew nothing about higher education until someone in the community pointed them to the opportunity and they grabbed it. Participant 6 explained “I don’t receive any financial aid grant. Many people or my friends do but for some reason, I do not qualify so I have to work hard every semester to pay my bills because I don’t want to get a loan.” There was an internal force to be successful coming from all the participants. They all tried to explain the reason they wanted to be successful was so that they didn’t have to rely on someone else before they did the things they wanted to do (Covarrubias, Valle, Laiduc, & Azmitia, 2019). They all strive for independence and a purposeful life.

Situational Barriers

Unlike institutional barriers which are the result of educational or employment policies and practices which prevented participation. Situational barriers are barriers related to the individual's broad circumstantial conditions (Osam, Bergman, & Cumberland, 2017). It could also be explained as deterrents that arose as adults tried to balance multiple roles in their lives or they dealt with health and other conditions. Higher education places responsibilities on students to figure things out themselves amid various resources on campus. When placing the responsibilities on students from refugee backgrounds to overcome such difficulties is setting them up for failure. Participant 4 mentioned “I did not know there is a daycare facility on campus I can register my kids at. I thought college is just for grown-ups.” There are ways those in higher education need to

better help students and be more empathetic to the barriers they bring with them to campus.

Community Influence

From this research, it was also observed that community influence also played an important part in helping students build connections to campus. Many of these relationships were often geared towards helping to solve specific problems. They also claimed that once they built a relationship, they stuck to that person and often went to them for all their problems. For instance, Participant 6 shared: “My advisor is now my mentor. We can talk about everything outside of advising, which connects me with resources on campus.”

Pendakur, Quaye, and Harper (2019) talked about the importance of higher education engaging their students. They emphasized shifting the onus for engagement from students to educators. Their article explained that as educators, we need to be “more proactive and be intentional about fostering conditions that compel students to make the most of their college both inside and outside of the classroom” (p. 4). In contrast to Pendakur, Quaye, and Harper (2019) many students talked about only building relationships that would help them to graduate. These students were not engaged in activities on campus or with anyone outside of their classroom.

Connection to the Services

Lack of connection to groups and organizations on campus led to students viewing college as another bridge they needed to cross. These students were not connected to any groups, clubs, or organizations on campus that were outside of their

class projects and assignments. Participant 3 mentioned: “I either go to work after class or I need to go home and take a nap before going for my evening shift. I really don’t have time for activity engagement on campus.” Participant 4 likewise explained: “After my Tuesday and Thursday class, I babysit my siblings and I have to go back home so that my parents can go to work.” Some students also mentioned that they were not here to create or build connections.” They saw higher education as a means to an end.

In conclusion, Artifact 2 described the methodology used to carry out the study. This section also explained the participants, their demographics, and the process used to carry out the research. This section shared the findings from the research and how they related back to the research questions.

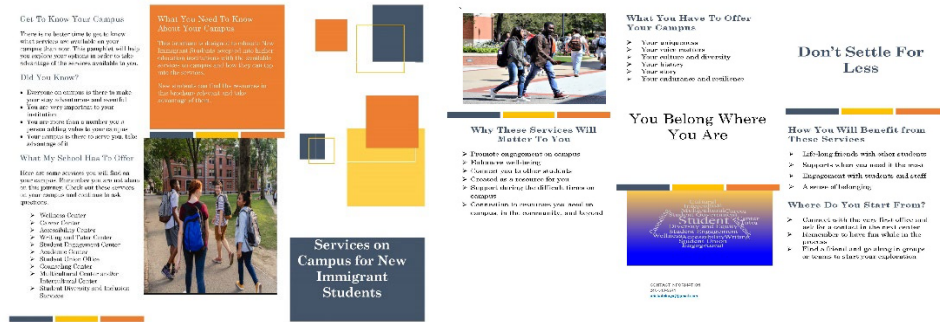
ARTIFACT 3

This section discusses implementation of the findings. The implementations are in four parts. The first section is a pamphlet for current and future students from refugee backgrounds. This pamphlet discusses suggestions for supporting students from refugee backgrounds aspiring to attend college. The second section is likewise a pamphlet. This pamphlet is for higher education institutions. It aims to explain to higher education faculty, advisors, and administration how to reach students from refugee backgrounds with available services. The third section is a video for students from refugee backgrounds that explains key pointers they should look for while in college. This video was recorded by the researcher and an interpreter in three different languages in order to meet the diversity of students enrolled in higher education. A write-up template is created for future language recordings. The fourth section explains specific recommendations for higher education faculty, advisors, and administration to better serve their students. Finally, the last section summarizes all four parts in a conclusion.

Pamphlet for Students from Refugee Background

Figure 3

Pamphlet for Students from Refugee Background



Note: The pamphlet is created as source students. See Appendix D

Description: Services on Campus for New Immigrant Students

This pamphlet is a tri-fold pamphlet (See Appendix D) with information relevant to students from refugee backgrounds. It is important to note that other minority students can benefit from the information in this pamphlet. Some of the key points mentioned in this pamphlet are what students need to know about their campus, what services the school has to offer, where to start, as well as why the services matter to the students.

This pamphlet is also designed to educate New Immigrants specifically students from refugee backgrounds accepted into higher education institutions with the hope of educating them of possible services available on their campus and how they can tap into the services. Any new student can find the resources in this pamphlet relevant and take advantage of the resources. The key point of this section is to assure students that the

material in their hand is relevant to them no matter where they are from or the school they are planning to attend.

Students Need To Get To Know Their Campus

There is no better time to get to know what services are available on your campus than now. This pamphlet helps students to explore options and take advantage of the services around them. The pamphlet is designed to be student friendly and approachable. The more students know about their campus, the better for them and the institution. Students learn better when they explore on their own as against being fed with information their first semester. When students are taught to research outside their classes, they take ownership of their surroundings.

Did You Know Information

The section creates a critical thinking environment for students. This allows them to ask themselves these questions and try to find answers to them. Here are some of the questions in the section.

- Everyone on campus is there to make your stay adventurous and eventful
- You are especially important to your institution
- You are more than just a number; you are a person adding value to your campus
- Your campus is there to serve you, take advantage of it

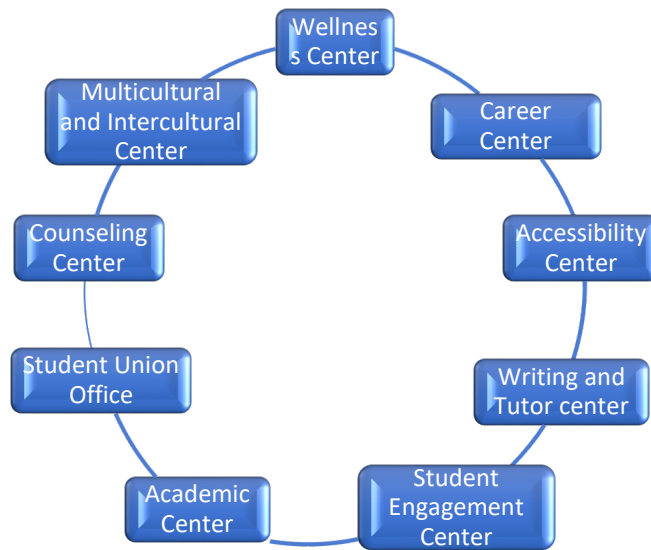
What This Institution Has To Offer Information

This section lists all the services that most higher education institutions have that are created to support students. Many times, higher education institutions can be overwhelming for new students especially for students from refugee backgrounds. These

students are not familiar with the services on their campus. This section also reminds students that they are not alone in their journey and as a result, these services are there to help them along the way. The section also encourages students to check out these services on their campus and to ask for more services not listed here.

Figure 4

Services on Campus



Note: Services students can have access to on their campuses

Why These Services Matter Information

This section explains why these services matter to the students and to their campus. It shows that the services promote student engagement on campus. The services enhance student well-being. These services are created to connect students to other students on campus outside their program. The services are created to support students during challenging times on campus. These services connect students to resources they

need on campus, in the community, and beyond. The essential point about the services is to let students know these services are created for them.

Why You Will Benefit From These Services Information

There are times where students are not sure why they need to attend programs or visit certain centers on campus. This section explains what students get to gain when they connect with other services on campus. Some of the things they get to gain are life-long friends with other students; support when they most need it; engagement with students and staff; and a sense of belonging. Students gain more from visiting these services and centers than they imagine, and it is important to explain the information they gain to them.

What You Have to Offer Your Campus Information

This section creates a sense of value and belonging in students. It elucidates how important the students are to their campus and the value they bring with them. This section is personalized and speaks directly to the students. It uses words that connect with the students and tell them of their uniqueness. Going further to explain the value of their culture and how their diversity enriches their campus. The key fact that these students have a rich history higher education institutions can tap into is vital for the students to know. It is especially important to let students know that others want to learn about them and their story, and their voices matter. The diversity of students from refugee backgrounds enriches the campus. These students need to know they are part of something big and they contribute to the value as well.

Where Do You Start Information

Many times, students want to try new things, explore services, be part of the institution community but they don't know where to start from, so they give up. This section points out diverse ways students can start this exploration. They can start by contacting the very first office and ask for a contact in the nearest center. It is always great to start this exploration with a friend. The saying two heads are better than one is true in higher education. When students go in groups or in teams, they get better results than when acting in isolation. It is essential to remind students to have fun while in the process as well.

In conclusion, this pamphlet would be offered to students from refugee backgrounds attempting to attend college. The goal is to introduce them to various activities and services they can use while on campus. The aim is also to assure them they are not alone and there are many services provided by their institution to help them to be successful. The success of these student populations is the success of their institutions as well. The purpose is also to assure students they belong to the college they are at, as such, they should not settle for less. As such, pointing students to the values they bring and adding to their institutions.

Pamphlet for Higher Education Institution

Figure 5

Pamphlet for Higher Education Institution



Note: The pamphlet is created as source for higher education. See Appendix E

Description: Ways to Reach Students from Refugee Backgrounds with Services on Campus

The goal of this pamphlet is to share with higher education faculty, advisors, and administrators ways to reach and connect with students from refugee backgrounds on their campuses (See Appendix E). The pamphlet is grouped into different sections. The first section talks about the support services provided and their importance. Another section talks about what higher education institutions must do to better connect with the students. In the “Let Us” section, key factors are suggested for higher education institutions to implement for recommended changes. The “Graphic Organizer Wordle” section lists out the themes derived from the research as to why college is important for students from refugee backgrounds and the hopes they have for their futures. There is also a “Qualities of Higher Education” section that describes the dynamics and expectations of higher education and what students will ultimately gain from it.

Support Services

Of course, the services higher education institutions provide students are highly important to the development of the students as well as the growth and advancement of the institution. Higher education is a bridge that connects students to their dreams. It is a tool of hope, aspiration, and fulfillment of those dreams. We cannot overemphasize the reasons why these services are created for students. They have the ability to make their stay on campus comfortable and friendly and are available for students to reach out to when they need help. What are the top 5 services students use and why do they not use the other services? These are questions worth researching on every campus. Do we know the number and demographics of students that use services on our campus? How can we reach all students with the services we are providing? What are ways we can maximize who our audiences are and how can we best serve in them all?

There are many research questions every service on campus needs to consider. Every higher education institution claims to be inclusive in their services. Are we making sure we are strategically being inclusive in all of our practices especially to the students that fall through the cracks or students that do not fit into the generalized statuesque? These questions would aid our thoughts as we start reconstructing better ways to serve the students currently on our campuses

What We Must Do to Connect Every Student the Way They Are

This section gives suggestions on various way higher education institutions can stay connected and relevant with their students

Address Assumptions: Do students know there are services offered at the institution?

Higher education should own up to what they can offer and be sure to have resources and services available when students need them.

Acknowledge the Need to Grow and Improve: The demographic in higher education keeps growing. The institution needs to work with the season and always aspire to grow.

Striving for Progress and Change: Higher education is fluid, we need to be in constant motion to know our students. Connect with them where they are and introduce our services to them

Support Change: We know change is the constant force. As an institution we need to constantly be changing as our environment and community needs are changing. What was right 50 years ago could be wrong today.

Actively promote student involvement: As an institution, we have to actively promote student services and involvement. We have to go beyond just creating services, we need to get students involved in all decision making. When creating events and support services, we should ask students what they want and how we can best serve them.

Enabling students to be part of the decision making and problem solving. Also remembering what works one year might not be successful the following year based on different student dynamics.

Let Us Section

This section focuses on areas every staff, administrators, and faculty on campus needs to know in order to help encourage students to find the resources and help (Hellmann, Miyazaki, Miranda, & Fiscus, 2016). As an institution, we need to meet the students where they are and show them what we want them to see (Pendakur, Quaye, & Harper (2019; Soetan, 2019). We need to find the students where they are and show them the support they can always use when needed.

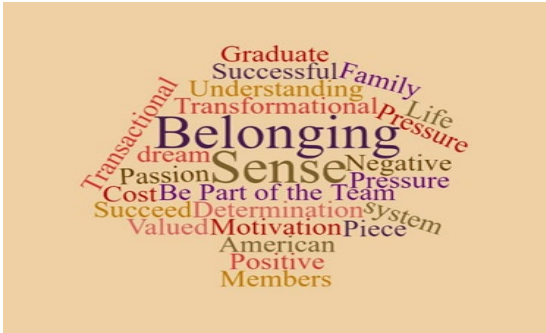
It is time for every higher education institution to empower more faculty and staff to be student focused so that students can see them more as family and can come to them to help and support. We need to create an atmosphere for our students so that when we need them after graduation, we will have created a lasting memory for them to give back as alumni.

We need to always look at the long-term effect of our decision. Every student is meant to grow to become an alum. Let us help students to graduate. Turn their experiences on our campus into a recruitment story.

What I Want from my Campus

Figure 6

Students Wants from College



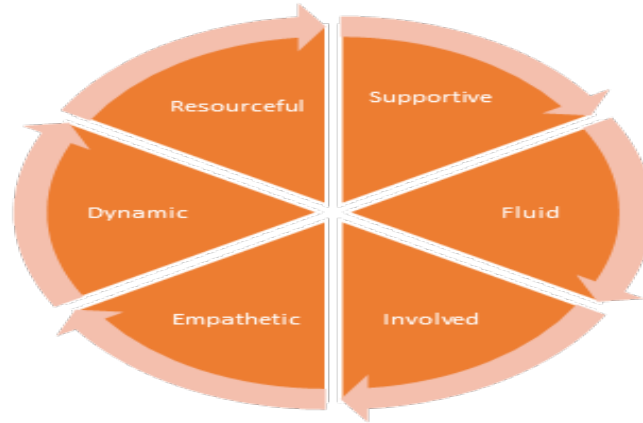
Note: The wordle shows key words from the interview what students wants from their college.

This graphic organizer wordle shows a vivid example of what these students want out of college. A sense of belonging, being part of a team, being motivated to learn, finding a place to grow that feels like home that can turn dreams into reality. Most college students want the same thing. The question becomes how we can make sure every student's wants and aspirations are met on our campus.

Higher education provides an avenue to create legends. The chart below shows some qualities of higher education institutions students want from their campuses. The six qualities frame a circle of needs students from refugee backgrounds encounter in college. As such, they want a system that would help them in the journey.

Figure 7

Qualities of Higher Education Institutions



Note: The qualities students want from their higher education institutions

Resourceful: They want a campus that is creative and supports them as they find themselves and discover the world.

Dynamic: They want a campus that is unique to them and their needs. They might have chosen the school because of close proximity, they still expect the campus that is unique to their needs.

Empathetic: They don't want a school that pities or feels sorry for them and their story. They however want a school that taps into their resources and strengths and then helps them to grow with it.

Involved: They want a school that is involved in their everyday life. A school that is more than the courses they are taking, a school they can physically and emotionally belong to.

Supportive: They want a school that would support them in times of mistakes. A school they can call part of their family.

Fluid: They want a school that is fluid. Always ready to change to their needs. They are changing, so they want a school that would change with them as they adjust to their new home.

Let Us Own Up Section

The section urges higher education to own up to areas there they need to work on to better serve our students. They need to own problems and find strategic solutions to them. They need to be realistic and be true to students and stakeholders. They need to be more transformational and not transactional. Higher education is an institute for learning, to equip the community. It is not a business with the goal of making profit. They need to seek to respect, inform, educate, involve, and entertain students. They are created to ignite dialogue, support strategic thinking and agency toward transformational change, which ultimately creates a sense of belonging and hope.

In conclusion, this pamphlet serves as a pointer to higher education institutions on the importance of knowing the student demographic on campus, as a result finding ways to appropriately serve them. We need to do a better job in understanding our student population, tends to their needs and how they want to be served. This pamphlet would be made available and sent to the higher education faculty, advisors, and administrators in all the colleges.

Videos to Students from Refugee Backgrounds: What to Look for in College

English: <https://flipgrid.com/s/jGFNMcu6Krrmm>

French: <https://flipgrid.com/s/WfzuNa7mBXCQ>

The video explains five of the student services centers available on campus. (See Appendix C) for video content template.

- Student Union Center
- Career Center
- Wellness Center
- Writing Center
- Accessibility Center

Recommendation for Higher Education Institutions

The section provides four recommendations to higher education institutions on ways to better support students from refugee backgrounds. These include collecting specific information about the students from refugee backgrounds on campus and then using this information intentionally and thoughtfully. It is also vital to create collaborative in learning and gathering spaces for students from refugee backgrounds on campus. This venture would help the population of students be cared for, seen, and valued by their school. By creating a free space, these students would be able to foster relationships with other students like themselves. This opportunity also creates a sense of belonging on campus and strengthens the experience they gain on campus.

During this research, I came to the realization during student interviews, that the colleges/ universities as well as my own institution did not have any data of students from refugee backgrounds on campuses. This is an opportunity for change. I highly recommend higher education institutions collect specific information about the students from refugees on their campus and use it. This information would lead to getting to know their student body and to appropriately allocate accommodations and resources to this population.

Since it is impossible to recognize who refugee students are currently on most campuses, it would be advantageous to assume all students are students from refugee backgrounds. These students could be from anywhere and they have been infused into our community. I would also recommend higher education institutions to recognize, understand, and be flexible in helping students. These students have many variables they bring with them. Higher education needs to understand that at times schoolwork might not be a priority with these students and be ready to offer support when needed.

Helping students from refugee backgrounds succeed in higher education through support systems is the job of every higher education faculty, advisor, and administrator. Higher education institutions should encourage active collaboration with all stakeholders to better reach students with refugee backgrounds. This collaboration requires learning new information, build, and enhance exiting information to improve retention and graduation.

Future Research

Like in every research study, there are limitations, I interviewed eight students from refugee backgrounds who were descendants from six different countries. I did not have the opportunity to compare if students from the same countries had similar experiences. This study gave a general overview of the support systems students from refugee backgrounds may have available on a campus. Further study would be needed to explore the social support of students from refugee backgrounds from a specific country experience in higher education.

In future research, I would also recommend a two-phase interview and/or a focus group to source for more information. For instance, including questions on what

motivated the student population to attempt or complete their degree? I would like to see what the findings would be if the research was carried out in quantitative methods.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion to my research and implementation, I believe it is important to consider how my research has changed my own practice as an academic advisor. Throughout my research, interview and analysis, I have become more personable with my students. I am more passionate about my students getting to know a little about me as a person while I get to know more about their lives outside of my campus. I have learned that more questions have arisen when students feel comfortable with me as a person. I have likewise volunteered to be a resource for my colleagues in instances when they do not feel comfortable discussing topics or situations with students, especially minority students. One thing I am taking away from this research is that higher education has a lot to do, I also as an educator have a lot to do, and we cannot do it alone. We need students to help us support them.

From the research, it was important to point out that higher education institutions play an enormous role in helping students build connections on campus. Many of these relationships are often geared towards helping students solve specific problems. Students from refugee backgrounds from this study claimed that once they built a relationship with someone on campus, they stuck to the person and often went to them for all their problems. For instance, Student 7 explained that “my advisor is now my mentor. We can talk about everything outside of advising, which connects me with resources on campus.”

Helping students find this connection would help with retention and an overall successful college experience for our students.

As educators, we need to start looking at problems in higher education systematically by engaging and honoring students as we address the root of the problems and not the symptoms. In this case, it is easy for us to blame the students for not reading their emails about all the services provided on our campus. We can also blame them for not asking questions or reaching out for help when they need it. It is time to shift focus to what we can do to help encourage students to know where to find the resources and help them to integrate into our institution (Hellmann, Miyazaki, Miranda, & Fiscus, 2016).

Higher education needs to meet the students where they are and show them what we want them to see (Pendakur, Quaye, & Harper (2019; Soetan, 2019). Empower more faculty and staff so that students can see them more as family and can come to them to help and support. Higher education institutions need to do something for the community of these students and to learn about their ways. Educators are encouraged to ignite dialogue, agency, and strategic thinking and actions to increase a sense of belonging and hope in their students. Higher education institutions also need to improve on understanding the demographics of our students to adequately serve them.

Even though students from refugee backgrounds have common issues and concerns as many minorities, it is important to bring these students' individual voices and needs to higher education. Higher education is rewarded with providing individualistic services and support. This research revealed that even in the services provided in higher education, we are far from supporting the individual needs of the students if we do not know who our students are and how drastically the demographic is changing.

APPENDICES

Appendix A



UND.edu

**Division of Research & Economic Development
Office of Research Compliance & Ethics**

Principal Investigator: *Bonni Schmiess Gourneau*

Project Title: *The Impact of Support Systems on Students from Refugee Backgrounds in Higher Education*

IRB Project Number: *IRB0004098*

Project Review Level: *Expedited 6, 7*

Approval Date: *01/28/2022*

Expiration Date: *01/27/2023*

Consent Form Approval Date: *01/28/2022*

The application form and all included documentation for the above-referenced project have been reviewed and approved via the procedures of the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Attached is your original consent form that has been stamped with the UND IRB approval and expiration dates. Please maintain this original on file. **You must use this original, stamped consent form to make copies for participant enrollment. No other consent form should be used.** The consent form must be signed by each participant prior to initiation of any research procedures. In addition, each participant must be given a copy of the consent form. Prior to implementation, submit any changes to or departures from the protocol or consent form to the IRB for approval. No changes to approved research may take place without prior IRB approval.

You have approval for this project through the above-listed expiration date. When this research is completed, please submit a termination form to the IRB. If the research will last longer than one year, an annual review and progress report must be submitted to the IRB prior to the submission deadline to ensure adequate time for IRB review.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Bowles, M.P.A., CIP

she/her/hers

Director of Research Assurance & Ethics

Office of Research Compliance & Ethics

Division of Research & Economic Development

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<https://und.edu/research/resources/index.html>

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Appendix B

Interview Questions

Demographic Questions

1. Name
2. Pseudonym:
3. Gender:
4. Age
5. Program / Profession:
6. Career Goals:
7. Country of Origin
8. How long have you stayed in the United States:

Interview Questions

1. What was your experience finding out about college and the application process?
2. How is your college experience meeting your needs (Needs could be: Emotional, Socio-economical, Psychological, and so on)
3. How is college helping you meet your career goals?
4. What are some of the support systems you have found in college (Such as Teacher, Administration, and peer)?
5. What are some of the challenges that you have faced in college?
6. Can you give examples of teachers that give you extra help / support when you need it or ask for it?
7. Can you give examples of teachers or settings that were not very helpful when you needed help?
8. Do you see yourself needing more assistance than other students? How?
9. What factors or people have helped in going to college?
10. What factors or people have created challenges for you in going to college?
11. How do you feel mainstream students perceive you?
12. What advice would you give to your instructors and peers about you and other refugees?
13. What would you expect your higher institution to do for you that would help you to be successful

Appendix C

Video Slide What to look for in College

First Slide:

Introduce the title and welcome everyone.

Hope you will find the information in this presentation relevant to you as you prepare to go to college

Slide 2: Introduction

In this slide we would talk about 5 student service centers on campus and why you should visit them. Please keep in mind that no matter the college or university you plan to attend, all these services would be available. They might have customized names for them, but they still serve the same purpose. I will end this presentation explaining why you should visit these centers your very first semester to know more about them.

Slide 3: Student Union Center

This is the heart of every higher education institutions. Some schools refer to this center as Memorial Union or other customized names. This is the place where you would find information about student union organizations, Intercultural or multicultural center, entertainment groups, and lactation and medication place. It is a great place to connect and meet up with other students. There are always fun events and activities around this building. It is a great resource for you when you need to find out what is going on on-campus.

Slide 4: Career Development Center

You might be interested in working on-campus or off-campus. This is a great place to look for jobs. A place that can connect you with internships and other job shadowing opportunities. They help you here to write and review your resume. On some campuses, they would conduct mock interview with you if you have an upcoming job interview coming up. They guide you as you explore career choices, prepare you will all you need and launch you into real life situations. Most universities still keep in touch with you even after you have graduated. You can still you them for resume review.

Slide 5: Wellness Center

This is where the workout and physical activities are housed. It is a place to make friends and have a workout buddy. They offer recreation sports. Some schools have a massage and relaxation room. While most schools have a yoga and aerobics sections. You can also train to be a CPR certified in some institution. Explore your wellness center to see what more you can do.

Slide 6: Writing Center:

When you have an assignment and you want someone to take a second look at it before you submit, the writing center is the place for you. They offer various subject tutoring. They also help you to learn how to study in higher institution. You will find this might be a little different from what you are used to coming from high school. They also connect you to other tutor possibilities. You can also bring your resume and cover letter to them as well to take a look at it for you.

Slide 7: Accessibility Center

IF you think you need extra accommodation in college. Please reach out to the accessibility center on your campus. They are there to help you to make your campus experience manageable. They can support you in parking, Note taking if you cannot make it to class for medical reasons, house accommodation. If you need or have emotional support Animal, this office would help you as you and your support animal navigate college. They also support with providing alternative textbook format when needed. You are not alone. Please use these services.

Slide 8: Why you should visit

These services cost nothing extra. You already paid for them as part of your student fees. Take advantage of them.

You get to meet other students along the way. You start learning how to connect with people outside of your classes.

Networking Opportunity: you start to feel you are part of something bigger. You learn to network with others as you discover yourself

You build a life-long engagement with other students on your campus.

Remember, these services are created for you. Take advantage of them.

Appendix D

Get To Know Your Campus

There is no better time to get to know what services are available on your campus than now. This pamphlet will help you explore your options in order to take advantage of the services available to you.

Did You Know?

- Everyone on campus is there to make your stay adventurous and eventful
- You are very important to your institution
- You are more than a number you a person adding value to your campus
- Your campus is there to serve you, take advantage of it

What My School Has To Offer

Here are some services you will find on your campus. Remember you are not alone on this journey. Check out these services on your campus and continue to ask questions.

- Wellness Center
- Career Center
- Accessibility Center
- Writing and Tutor Center
- Student Engagement Center
- Academic Center
- Student Union Office
- Counseling Center
- Multicultural Center and/or Intercultural Center
- Student Diversity and Inclusion Services

What You Need To Know About Your Campus

This brochure is designed to educate New Immigrant Students accepted into higher education institutions with the available services on campus and how they can tap into the services.

New students can find the resources in this brochure relevant and take advantage of them.



Services on
Campus for New
Immigrant
Students



What You Have To Offer Your Campus

- Your uniqueness
- Your voice matters
- Your culture and diversity
- Your history
- Your story
- Your endurance and resilience

Don't Settle For Less

Why These Services Will Matter To You

- Promote engagement on campus
- Enhances well-being
- Connect you to other students
- Created as a resource for you
- Support during the difficult times on campus
- Connection to resources you need on campus, in the community, and beyond

You Belong Where You Are



How You Will Benefit from These Services

- Life-long friends with other students
- Supports when you need it the most
- Engagement with students and staff
- A sense of belonging

Where Do You Start From?

- Connect with the very first office and ask for a contact in the next center
- Remember to have fun while in the process
- Find a friend and go along in groups or teams to start your exploration

CONTACT INFORMATION
 240-310-5571
student@uomd.edu

Appendix E

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

SUPPORT SERVICES

Services higher education institutions provide students are highly important to the development of the students as well as the growth and advancement of the institution. It is essential to keep in mind that students need these supports. How can we reach all students with the services we are providing? What are ways we can maximize who our audiences are and how can we best serve them.

Every higher education institution claims to be inclusive in their services. Are we making sure we are strategically being inclusive in all of our practices? This is especially critical to the students that fall through the cracks or students that do not fit into the generalized status quo.



Ways to Reach and Connect Students from Refugee Backgrounds with Services on Campus

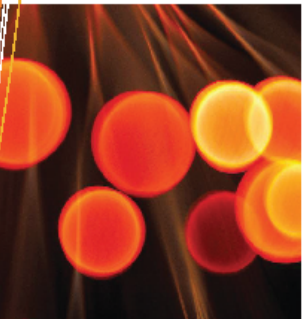
Student Support Services

 Arin Adebayo

720 4th Ave S,
St Cloud, MN 56301
240-310-5571
arinadebayo@gmail.com



HIGHER EDUCATION SOLUTIONS



What We Must Do

CONNECT WITH EVERY STUDENT

- Address Assumptions
- Acknowledge the Need to Grow and Improve
- Striving for Progress and Change
- Support Change
- Actively Promote Student Involvement

Every Student Is More Than Just A Number

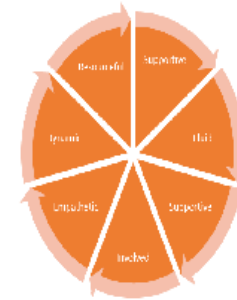
LET US

Shift focus to what we can do to help encourage students to know where to find the resources, and helping them to integrate into our institution (Hellmann, Miyazaki, Miranda, & Fiscus, 2016).

Meet the students where they are at and show them what we want them to know, understand, see, and do (Pendakur, Quaye, & Harper (2019; Soetan, 2019).

Empower more faculty and staff so that students can see them more as family and can come to them for help and support.

Create an atmosphere for our students so that when we need them after graduation, we would have created a lasting memory in them to want to give back to others.



HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDES AN AVENUE TO CREATE LEGENDS.

PROBING QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES

- What value are our students getting from our programs and courses?
- How many students are making use of our campus services?
- Are we involving students in decision-making?
- How are making advancements equity and inclusion on our campus?



LET US OWN UP

To our problems and find strategic solution to them

To Being More Transformational and Not Transactional

To Seeking to Respect, Inform, Educate, Involve, and Entertain Students



Know your students
Higher education institutions need to improve on understanding the demographics of our students to adequately serve them.



Different Lenses
Every Student is more than just a number, they are an investment into the future.

Students create a robust alumni community to continue building the future they envision.

Every student is part of a network tool that can help with recruitment of the next generation of students.



Key Notes

Educators are made to ignite dialogue, support strategic thinking and agency toward transformational change, which ultimately creates a sense of belonging and hope.

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