

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



**LEARNING CHALLENGES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE RURAL UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NIGERIA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this study, ‘Learning Challenges among undergraduate rural university students in South Africa and Nigeria’ is my original research work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other university for the award of any other degree. All data and information used in this research work has been duly acknowledged in the text, references and appendixes.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Almighty God for His inestimable love, grace, care and support to every member of my family. Despite all constraints and short comings in life, He has enabled me to trail this path of doctoral study at the University of Zululand in KwaDlangezwa, South Africa, and successfully complete the programme in good health and life.

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ABSTRACT

Learning challenges seem to persist in different ways in rural based universities. These challenges have led to increase in drop-out rates, as well as several menaces in the society. Hence, this study explored the learning challenges among undergraduate students in two selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this study. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used respectively for data collection. Systematic sampling technique was used to select the student respondents, while purposive sampling was used to select the academic staff respondents for the study. The questionnaires were administered to student participants, while lecturers were interviewed. Data for the quantitative study were analysed using descriptive statistics and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 24) while the qualitative data were collected analysed thematically. The study revealed that undergraduates in the two selected rural universities experience common learning challenges which include: cognitive learning challenge, poor academic foundation, academic malpractice amongst academic staff and students, as well as lecturer-students' relationship. These are caused by lack of facilities, students' family socio-economic background, amongst others. The study therefore recommends that the necessary facilities and structures needed to facilitate teaching and learning practices should be provided. More lecturers should be recruited. Cordial student-lecturer relationships should be encouraged and promoted. In addition, policies that will ensure safety on campus, adoption and use of the most suitable language of instruction amongst others should be established. The study suggests the need for addition of quality to university in developing learning in South African and Nigerian universities.

Key words: learning, learning challenges, undergraduate, university students, rural university, resilience, motivation, South Africa and Nigeria.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The long history of colonialism, with its many injustices such as deprivation to education, healthcare, economic development, security and many other services has highly influenced the quality of life currently experienced in many African countries. The movement for freedom or liberation in most African countries was characterized by the agitation for access and inclusion of African people in all sectors of their societies, including the educational sector. Many African countries such as Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, among others have recognized the need to give access to tertiary education as one of the major successes of their liberation. However, research has shown that on its own, access to tertiary education is not adequate. Statistics indicate that newly liberated African countries have recorded significant drop-out rates within the first and second year of study at tertiary level (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008).

The State of Education in Africa report by the Africa-America Institute (2015) indicates that enrolment rate into tertiary institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa has been the lowest (due to finance, structure, interest, among others) compared to other parts of the world, yet the drop-out rate is still alarming. For instance, according to the South African Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2014) about 50% drop-out rate is experienced in South Africa. Another report by the Council of Higher Education (2013) that tracked students over a period of five years, shows that 41% drop-out rate is experienced annually in South African higher institutions. This suggests that the annual rate of drop-out in South Africa is quite high. Ironically, South Africa remains top in Africa on the list of African and world ranking of universities.

Similarly, the Western African region has experienced high drop-out rates in a number of Universities. Santa, Hartnett and Strassner (2003) state that Nigeria experiences 20% drop-out rate annually. In 2002, the National Universities Commission (NUC) declared that 50 percent

rate of dropout was discovered in six state universities in Nigeria while 10 percent drop-out rate was experienced in three federal universities in places such as Kano, Maiduguri and Owerri (NUC 2002). More recently, a report by the International Organization for Migration (2014) suggests that Nigeria still experiences a high drop-out rate of approximately 17%. The reason for the increased drop-out rate has been attributed to various learning challenges encountered by students while undertaking one programme or the other at the institution of higher learning. The reports of Akoojee and Nkomo (2008); NUC (2002b) and International Organization for Migration (2014) suggest that the high rates of drop-outs are experienced more in rural based or black dominated universities. Suffice to state that; experiences in rural based and black dominated universities in Africa differ from urban and white dominated universities. These experiences are possibly traceable to the causes of learning challenges encountered by students, consequently, the reason for the increase in the rate of drop-outs.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Nigeria and South Africa are described as the two leading nations in Africa in terms of economy (IMF 2015). These countries were once British colonies and seem to have similar experiences, especially in the area of education. Statistically, there are learning challenges experienced by students which eventually lead to high rate of dropouts from tertiary institutions in the two countries. For instance, owing to learning challenges encountered by students, Nigeria experiences a 20% annual rate of dropouts, while South Africa experiences about 40% (Macgregor 2007). This can be attributed to a series of factors such as language and academic literacy skills, institutional cultures, and lack of infrastructural resources (Sawir, 2005; Glew, Dixon & Salamonson, 2015, Meier & Hartell 2009, Wellman & Fallon 2012). University pedagogical systems and student-lecturer relationship are also described as attributive reasons for some learning challenges experienced amongst students at the tertiary level of education (Abrantes, Seabra & Lages, 2007; Kuzhumannil & Fehring, 2009; and Postareff, Lindblom-Ylne & Nevgi, 2008).

Sequel to the argument of the factors attributed to the causes of challenges in learning, some scholars (Kemp, Smith, & Segal, 2016) opine that learning disorders or disabilities should rather

be reflected. Learning challenges, learning disorders, learning disabilities, learning deficiencies, are generally used interchangeably to mean challenges that hamper the learning abilities of individuals. In the context of this study, learning challenges and learning disorders are understood as having distinct definitions. Black (2013), Holly and Sharp (2014) and McConkey, Taggart, and Kane, (2015) posit that learning disabilities include health challenges that can be characterised by a lack of potential capability to comprehend new or complex pieces of information and to acquire new skills; and lack of capability to function independently. McCarron, Swinburne, Burke, McGlinchey, Mulryan, Andrews, Foran and McCallion (2011) assert that usually, these may be health impairment that started before adulthood, with an enduring consequence on the individual's development. Learning challenges, on the other hand, will strictly refer to learning difficulties emanating from physical, social and environmental factors. According to Caschera (2013) and Fook and Sidhu (2015), learning challenges are characterised by socioeconomic factors, environmental factors, parental factors, peer factors, lecturer related factors, cultural factors, and educational policies which influence the learning abilities of students.

Having understood the distinction between learning challenges and learning disorders; it is important to understand that learning challenges in the higher education context is considered an issue of access (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008). Access to higher education for black students in African countries such as South Africa and Nigeria has been defined to mean participatory access (Akoojee & Nkomo 2008). Participatory access as defined in Akoojee and Nkomo (2008) refers to allowing students to enroll at higher education institutions with little or no concern over their success and the quality of education received; therefore, their presence in these institutions is considered as mere participation. In recent studies, particularly since the dawn of the massive 2015 'fee must fall' campaign by the university students in South Africa; the participatory access has been seen to be even more undesirable (Lewin & Mawoyo, 2014). A new understanding of what access to higher education should mean has been coined as access with success, meaning allowing students to enroll in higher learning institutions and to put measures in place to enable them to succeed (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008).

The statistics on the rate of drop out of undergraduate university students in Nigeria and South Africa suggests that there are prevailing learning challenges amongst undergraduate students of these tertiary institutions (NUC, 2002, Macgregor, 2007 and CHE, 2013). According to Adeyemi (2001) access to institutions of higher learning remains participatory despite all efforts put in place. It is imperative to explore learning challenges in higher learning institutions from the undergraduate students' perspectives as they experience these challenges.

According to Schoole and Nkomo (2007) universities are described as rural-based when they are intentionally and advantageously positioned in strategic locations of a nation and possess different features which empower them to contribute effectively to various forms of sustainable development in local and underdeveloped areas. Schoole and Nkomo (2007) further aver that peculiarities of such universities include: strategic location amidst rural based communities; reinvention of mission orientation in order to enrich their research capability and output; expansion of their intellectual, social and entrepreneurial resources; and the establishment of durable collaborative relationships with other institutions towards the enhancement of development. In the context of this study, rural based universities are described as institutions strategically established in underdeveloped environments of a nation with the hope of bringing sustainable development to such areas.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Some undergraduate university students with previously disadvantaged racial and economic backgrounds have been unable to succeed in obtaining degrees even after being admitted into higher education; most of them struggle to learn, some drop out before the end of the first year, while some fail to finish in record time (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008). The reasons for such experiences in rural universities of South Africa and Nigeria seem to be attributive to learning challenges encountered by students. However, this seems not to have been established in the context of the selected African nations. Furthermore, several countermeasures have been put in place by both students and academic staff. However, these counter measures seem inadequate.

Hence, the reason for this study which aims at exploring the learning experiences of undergraduates and counter measure put-up by students and lecturers in combatting learning challenges in the selected rural based universities in South Africa and Nigeria.

Additionally, there seems to be paucity of literature on learning challenges experienced by undergraduate students in rural based universities of South Africa and Nigeria, as the focus has always been on urban based institutions. This study therefore, seeks to address the issue of paucity by identifying learning challenges experienced by undergraduate students in selected rural based universities in South Africa and Nigeria.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- What are the learning challenges of undergraduate students in selected rural universities of South Africa and Nigeria?
- What are the causes of learning challenges among undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria?
- What measures can be used to alleviate undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria from learning challenges?

1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

- To investigate the learning challenges of undergraduate students in selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria.
- To find out the causes of learning challenges among undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria.

- To explore the measures that can be used to alleviate undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria from learning challenges.

1.6. SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to the learning challenges amongst undergraduate students in selected rural based universities in South Africa and Nigeria. The selected South African based rural university consists four faculties, sixty-four departments and approximately sixteen thousand students. Similarly, the selected rural Nigerian based university consists six faculties, sixty-eight (68) departments and approximately sixteen thousand students.

1.6.1. SUBJECT COVERAGE

Learning is a continuous act performed by different individuals from all walks of life at different pace. However, challenges are encountered as people progress in their pursuit to learn. Therefore, this study explores the learning challenges amongst undergraduate university students. It examines the different types of learning challenges experienced by undergraduate university students, the causes, effects and countermeasures put against the challenges by the undergraduate university students and possibly lecturers. The purpose is to possibly design a model that can aid learning amongst undergraduate university students in rural based universities against all odds.

1.7. DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

The definitions of operational terms for the study are as explained below:

1.7.1. Learning Challenges: Learning challenges refer to potential factors that can hamper the learning abilities of students. These factors include: cognitive state of students, language of

instruction, student-lecturer association, among others (Fook & Sidhu, 2015). In this study, it will refer to the various physical, social, socio-economic, cultural and political factors militating against the success of undergraduate university students in rural universities. Learning challenges will also be used interchangeably with learning difficulties.

1.7.2. Rural Based universities: these include universities that are established in strategic local communities and strive to reinvent the mission of orientation in order to enrich their research capability and output; expand their intellectual, social and entrepreneurial resources; and establish durable collaborative relationships with other institutions towards the enhancement of development (Council on Higher Education, 2016). In this study, rural based universities will mean universities that are strategically positioned at less advantageous local communities with the aim of bringing sustainable development to such areas through empowerment, support and collaboration with different education stakeholders. It will be an institution of higher learning where the curriculum is expected to be geared towards meeting the local demand and needs of the host community.

1.8. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

Chapter one: Introduction. Chapter one deals with the motivation for the study undertaken, problem statement, study objectives, research questions, scope of the study as well as operational definition of terms.

Chapter two: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review. This chapter focuses on the discussion of relevant concepts that are relevant to the study and as they relate to the study as well as review of related literature.

Chapter three: Research methodology and design. This chapter is devoted to the systematic approach or procedural steps taken in carrying out this research. It explores the route of positivism and post positivism as well as the rationale for the selection of the paradigm selected for this study.

Chapter four: Data collection, analysis, presentation and interpretation of results. Formulated research questions are fully discussed in line with the aims of the study. Chapter four presents the results of the data analysis.

Chapter five: Conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further study.

1.9. SUMMARY

This chapter introduces the entire study on learning challenges amongst undergraduate students in two selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. The problem statement, research objectives, research questions, intended contribution to the body of knowledge, scope and delimitation of the study (scope of subject coverage area, literature and methodology) were all identified and discussed.

The succeeding chapter is the literature review, which gives detailed information about conceptualization of terms using relevant literatures and the theoretical framework. The conceptual framework gives detail information and clarification of the subject matter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The first chapter gave a general background to the study, stating the research problem as well as the research questions that the study aims to answer. The objectives to be achieved were also stated. In this chapter, the conceptual framework that guides this study is presented as well as a review of related literatures. The reviewed related literatures focus on a historical background of poor quality (participatory access) to university education in Africa, South Africa and Nigeria, as well as the experiences and causes of learning challenges in universities across the globe. However, emphasis is on rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Learning is a social phenomenon that operates within the societal spectrum in a given environment, by implication learning challenges are constituted by social and environmental factors. Hence, a proper review of appropriate perspectives of learning as a social and societal phenomenon will help to properly evaluate predict the possible future of the academic system and society.

Social learning theorists and psychologists, describe learning as a relative permanent change in behaviour or knowledge (Weinstein & Mayer 1986). Weinstein and Mayer (1986) further enunciate that the change is based on the individual's exposure and experience in the environment. Shuell (1986:47) clarifies that learning is "an enduring change in behaviour or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience". Learning is "a persisting change in human performance or performance potential as a result of the learner's interaction with the environment" (Driscoll, 1994; 8). From the

definitions above, learning theorists consider the ‘environment as the main premise upon which learning takes place’.

Learning challenges are described as neurological variances in handling, manipulating, controlling and using information that severely limit an individual's ability to acquire, study, understand and learn in a particular skill area (Vakil, Blachstein, Wertman-Elad, & Greenstein, 2012). The skills area can include reading, writing, drawing, calculation and so on. Meanwhile, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (2015) describes learning challenges as disorders which may affect the way and manner pieces of information are acquired, organised, retained, understood and put to use verbally or nonverbally. According to the association, the individuals with learning challenges demonstrate average abilities necessary for thinking and/or reasoning. Thus, they state that learning challenges differ from the normal universal intellectual dearth. Siegel (2015) consents to this opinion when he states that IQ tests scores are not significant and essential when learning challenges are to be defined. In other words, learning challenges are different from intellectual and intelligence dearth. LDAC (2015) avers that learning challenges emanate from deficiencies in different processes related to the way individuals perceive, think, remember or learn about different subject matters. These include language processing; phonological processing; processing speed; memory and retention, amongst others. Kemp et al. (2016) describe learning challenges as a variety of learning problems which make students unable to comprehend properly in relation to their peers. Kemp et al. (2016) further argue that students with learning challenges can be as brilliant as their counterparts, not necessarily lazy, however, due to some reasons they find it difficult to process information appropriately as and when due. Thus, Kemp et al. (2016) as well as Cavendish (2013), Dednam (2011), Nel, Nel and Hugo (2012), Van Niekerk et al. (2014) and Vermoter (2011) characterize learning challenges by the following: tussle in the use of cognitive schemes, poor attention, retention, and logical skills, auditory impediment, visual perceptual impediment, poor sensory assimilation.

Learning challenges according to Caschera (2013) can be environmental, social, and socio-economic based, not necessarily psychological or health based. In other words, learning challenges emanate from lack of response to some visible and physical factors (Cortiella, 2009). According to Grisham-Brown and Hemmeter (2017) curriculum development and

implementation is a phenomenon that can constitute learning challenges, while Caschera (2013) opine that fund, class size, lecturer, among others are factors that constitute learning challenges. However, according to Fook and Sidhu (2015) learning challenge experiences are characterised by the following: cognitive learning challenges, poor time management, inability to cope with reading materials, assignment burden, instructional challenge, inactive student participation, language of instruction challenge, and cultural differences. Thus, in this study, learning challenges are characterised from different perspectives: personal, family, university and the government.

2.3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Many African countries gained political independence before 1960, however, independence over foreign institutions of learning was difficult initially (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). The inherited foreign institutions lacked the support of the public due to lack of trust. They were still considered as tools for operation and colonization to be used by the colonial masters (Eicher, 1973). During the period of independence, Africa lacked indigenous trained personnel who could control and direct the affairs of the institutions of learning, including tertiary institutions. Hence, shortly after independence, focus was placed on higher education and it was saddled with a significant responsibility to function as agent of growth in nation building, economic development, and creation of reputable and respected African identity. Thus, post independent African tertiary education policies in the late 1960s and early 1970s focused on designing and developing policies that aimed at amending colonial prejudices, and undertaking operative means towards ensuring that socio-economic development was achieved (World Bank, 1998). Hence, decolonization was fought against through the policies. Tertiary institutions were considered as bedrock and instrument for transformation both politically and economically. These institutions therefore became responsible for training and raising professionals in different fields, imparting and transferring knowledge, and promoting tertiary education by allowing impartial participation.

During this era (1960s/70s), education received full attention based on the needs of the continent in relation to the prominence of the theory of Adams Smith which shows the interconnection between the level of education of a person and output (Bloom, David, & Chan 2005). Also, the declaration of the United Nations on the decade being a period of development cum the importance of education to the development of Africa gave education much recognition. This led to a meeting of heads of government and state in Addis Ababa on tertiary education matters in May 1961. In 1962, all leaders of universities in Africa held a conference in Tananarive, Madagascar, where it was established that all leaders must see tertiary institutions as the basis for economic growth. The need arose to determine and set Africa's priority and objectives to enable the continent enjoy social reconstruction and global economic affluence. Hence, several other conferences were held in Khartoum, Ethiopia and Ghana. The outcome of these conferences made tertiary institutions to receive better attention, based on the idea that it was the premise upon which economic growth was to be achieved (Aina, 1994).

Tertiary institutions were therefore made to help in nation building as well as making the people appreciate and accept their culture. Thus, tertiary institutions functioned as agents of africanisation (defining, interpreting, transmitting and promoting African thoughts, identity, philosophies, and culture Msila (2009). This was done due to the paradigm shift aimed at creating better awareness and self-consciousness on African students. Moreover, these institutions were products of colonial settings, most of the academic staff members were non-Africans and there was a change in the curricula since the content was not in harmony with the demands of the African continent (Ki-Zerbo, 1973). In 1973, a workshop was held for African University leaders and policy makers in Accra, Ghana by the Association of African Universities (AAU) in order to deliberate on how a true African identity can be built through tertiary institutions. The outcome of this workshop was the production of a paper on "Creating the African University: Emerging issues in the 1970s" (Yesufu, 1973). During the workshop, it was agreed that dependence on foreign academic members of staff must be eradicated through curriculum reform, establishment of indigenous universities and raising the number of indigenous members of staff who understand the African tenet. Sequel to this, the following

universities was established in some African countries: University of Science and Technology, Ghana; Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria, University of Nairobi, Kenya; and University of Dares Salaam (Aina, 1994). Also, curricula were revised and the number of indigenous African academic members of staff increased by 20 percent between 1979 and 1987 (Saint, 1992). Having achieved this fleet, the next port of call was to integrate researches into the teaching process in African Universities considering peculiar African challenges (Eicher, 1973).

In addition, African tertiary institutions served as agents of nation building (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Yesufu (1973) states that knowing the importance of professionals, these institutions helped in producing teachers, engineers, accountants, medical practitioners, lawyers, among others, who were sent to the work force of the African society to help raise the continent to standard. Also, in an attempt to fulfil the task of nation building, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was launched on 25th May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by African leaders and African educated elites. The aim for inaugurating the organization was to promote African nations and nationalism.

From the fore going, the policy of tertiary education in Africa was a great success in the 1960s and 70s. Social reconstruction, economic growth, africanization of students and institutions of learning aimed at nation building were achieved. However, in the 1980s, the economic and socio-political conditions of African nations began to experience deterioration which affected the universities negatively. Nevertheless, the rate of enrolment into tertiary institutions continued to increase. For instance, enrolment of undergraduate students into African tertiary institutions in 1975 was 181,000 but by 1980, the number increased to over 600,000 and by 1995, the number of enrolment had increased to 1,750,000 (World Bank, 2009). The mismatch in the state of the economy and the population growth in enrolment led to poor and unequal infrastructures, poor quality in teaching and research, great brain drain. This made African leaders to seek interventions by borrowing and pursuing foreign aids (Rena, 2013). Consequently, African nations became indebted, even up to the tone of about \$300 billion, with 45 percent of debt servicing in the 1980s (World Bank, 1999). The debt made many African governments to yield to the demand of the foreign aiders. For instance, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the

World Bank (WB) which had their principles and conditions when giving loans eventually meddled with the educational policy of these African nations by introducing Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Focus was then moved from tertiary education to primary and secondary education based on the idea that primary and secondary education was more profiting and rewarding than tertiary education. Other foreign international aiders followed after the World Bank and this made African tertiary institutions to suffer in the 1980s lacking global and local support (World Bank, 1998). This caused an adjustment in the role performed by African tertiary institutions in the 1990s. However, around the 1990s, the economy of the African continent improved with raw materials being exported to other parts of the world. According to the report of World Bank (2009) the GDP of Africa had risen from around \$9 billion in 1990s to \$62 billion in 2000s through a yearly flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Thus, with this improvement tertiary education received attention once again, however, with a shift in the demand. It became an agent of knowledge based economy in a progressively global knowledge demanding economic system. The shift made it profitable and it earned the support of the World Bank, foreign financial bodies and various governments. For instance, by year 2000, 20 percent of the average budget on education in the Sub-Saharan African region was for tertiary education (World Bank 2009). Several researches and collaborations with foreign institutions of learning and professional organizations have been taking place in different fields. Various improvements have been experienced in economic growth and development in the continent. Suffice therefore to state that tertiary institutions in Africa have been assuming their positions gradually in different areas ranging from training of professionals, conducting of researches, leadership, transfer of entrepreneurial skills, governance, finance management, agriculture, technology among others (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013).

With all the experiences and support received by African higher education system, coupled with the relevance of the programmes offered, tertiary institutions in Africa have successfully been positioned as having inestimable values and continue to experience high rate of enrolment (Varghese, 2009). Enrolment into tertiary institutions is now being sort by individuals of different level, stratum and capability (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013).

Tertiary education in Africa still remains a challenge (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008). They posit that enrolment rate is relatively high compared to the provisions made available. Thus, this poses some sorts of learning challenges to the undergraduate university students and have led to dropouts in some instances (Abubakar & Adebayo, 2014). Mahmood, Dangi and Ali (2014) conducted a study with the aim of exploring the correlation between the number of undergraduate students and available infrastructures. The result shows that the rate of enrolment into tertiary institutions should correspond with the available infrastructures. Contrary to this, learning process will be hampered and increase in annual drop-out rate will be experienced (Zyl Andre Van, 2015). This possibly explains the experience in African universities.

2.3.1. LEARNING CHALLENGES IN THE SUB-SAHARA AFRICAN CONTEXT

Learning challenges vary amongst students. In the same vein, they vary from one country to another. For instance, based on the availability and quality of certain materials, personnel, among others in certain institutions in some continents of the world, the level and type of learning challenges experienced may differ from the experiences amongst undergraduate students in African based universities (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008). Four major learning challenges peculiar to undergraduate university students in Africa are identified by Biggs (1999). These are: quality of higher education, type of transferred knowledge, transferred skills, laboratory skills as well as assessment and monitoring.

According to Biggs (1999), quality is a major challenge. Students in African tertiary institutions are not taught for and with quality. Lecturers teach regardless of quality. In other words, while students in institutions based in some other continents are taught with quality in view, ensuring that they comprehend and receive quality education, African based institutions fail to monitor and ensure high quality of delivery to students (Biggs 1999). Thus, this leads to learning challenges amongst these students. Lee (2012) corroborates Biggs (1999) when he states based on the submission of the British Council's Student Decision Making Survey that students prefer to study abroad due to the quality of education they tend to receive. Meanwhile, Fraser and

Killen (2005) had earlier stated that the quality of education received in African tertiary institutions sometimes lead to increase in the rate of drop outs within the continent.

Furthermore, the type of knowledge transferred to students is another challenge experienced amongst students in tertiary institutions in Africa. Gibbs (1989) and Boud (1995) state that the type of knowledge transferred to students is of paramount interest and concern. They aver that in African tertiary institutions, the workability and functionality of the knowledge transferred is not well considered. Whereas practical learning is considered in institutions across other continents, theory seems to be given more attention in African institutions (Boud, 1995). Biggs (1999) holds the opinion that the knowledge transferred in other institutions abroad is functional, as such is useable and productive. Lee (2012) explains that Africans travel abroad to study in order to improve their career. In other words, they experience transfer of functional knowledge which they apply to career in order to be more productive compared to their counterparts in African institutions.

Laboratory skills tend to be limited in African institutions. Thus, according to Biggs (1999), limited laboratory skills constitute part of the learning challenges amongst students in tertiary institutions in Africa. This implies that students abroad get to enjoy and handle laboratory skills and equipment while their counterparts at home lag same due to limitations in the availability of the equipment as well as personnel (lab scientists). Boud (1995) affirms the importance of the use of laboratory skills and equipment for quality knowledge. However, this is quite impossible in most African based institutions of learning.

Assessment and monitoring is another area of challenge in the African learning context (Biggs 1999). He opines that the way students are assessed, monitored and evaluated in African institutions differ from what is obtainable in other tertiary institutions abroad. He avers that the prerequisite to be followed when assessing students are not usually followed in African tertiary institutions. Hence, the rate at which feedback is given to students is hampered since there seems to be deficiency in the area of assessment. Meanwhile, Boud (1995) disapproves of the level of

monitoring given to students in African tertiary institutions. He opines that better monitoring is to be put in place for better results to be experienced. Thus, Boud (1995), and Biggs (1999) concur that learning challenges amongst students in tertiary institutions in Africa is constituted by the kind of assessment and monitoring given to them.

Internet supply is important in promoting learning and consequently knowledge (Olson, Codde, DeMaagd, Tarkleson, Sinclair, Yook & Egidio, 2011). Rohleder Bozalek, Carolissen, Leibowitz and Swar (2008) aver that the level of internet awareness and supply in African institutions constitutes part of the learning challenges amongst students. Dysthe (2002); Johns (2003); Johnston and Olekalns (2002); McConnell (2006); Salmon (2003); as well as Sharkey (2000) hold the view that poor internet supply affects learning processes in African institutions. This possibly accounts for the low rate of enrolment experienced in distance learning programmes despite the increase in the population of admission seekers.

According to Fraser and Killen (2005), the factors constituting learning challenges amongst students in tertiary institutions in the African context include: personal motivation of students, the study approach adopted by the student, the cultural expectations of the students, skills in time management as earlier posited by Lahmers and Zulauf, (2000), as well as the academic literacy (Strauss, Goodsir & Ferguson, 2011). They further explain that psychosocial factors as earlier explained by McKenzie and Schweitzer (2001) and peer culture discussed by Gainen (1995) constitute learning challenges amongst undergraduate university students in the African context. In support of Tinto (1975), academic and social systems of any university affect the way and rate with which students in African institutions will learn (Meier & Hartell, 2009). The interaction and relationship that exist between the students and lecturers will also determine the kind of learning challenges experienced in the African context. Meanwhile, Kleemann (1994) and McKenzie and Schweitzer, (2001) contest that the beliefs of student in their own ability and the support structures obtainable by the students from the institution of learning explains the African context of learning challenges experienced by the students. Surmise therefore, that factors that constitute learning challenges amongst tertiary institution students in Africa vary from the perception and experiences amongst tertiary institution students.

The experiences of learning challenges are considered to be dependent on certain factors which tend to make it more pronounced amongst certain undergraduate students than others (Lewin & Mawoyo, 2014). These factors include: socio-economic background, previous learning experience, infrastructural facilities among others (Souriyavongsa et. al. 2013).

2.4. LEARNING CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NIGERIA

Learning challenges of university students are prevalent in various countries and parts of the world; developed, developing and less developed nations (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008 and Fook & Sidhu, 2015). This section focuses on the trends in learning challenges with particular reference to rural universities of South African and Nigerian. A brief historical perspective of tertiary education in the two nations will help to unpack the challenges, their causes and the possible effects on learning.

2.4.1. LEARNING CHALLENGES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is rated best in terms of university system of education in Africa (World University Ranking, 2017). In the area of research, South Africa ranks top in Africa and is well reckoned with across the globe (WUR, 2017). However, in spite of the global recognition, Leefon, Jacobs, Roux and de Wet (2013) Serfortein and Waal (2015) explain that students in South African institutions of learning still experience different forms of learning challenges. Leddy and Gazette (2013) and Sundheim (2013) opine that the learning challenges include: loss of academic session, language of instruction, student-lecturer relationship, feedback, amongst others. The challenges are caused by varying reasons. Hence, it is needful to explore some of the learning challenges experienced by undergraduate university students.

2.4.1.1. Language of Instruction

The language of instruction is a vital tool that promotes or hinders learning. The language of instruction employed by any instructor during teaching and learning processes determines how well the job will be fulfilled. Of course, it is commonly believed that communication is incomplete until the decoder has been able to decode the message and there is a feedback. In the lecturing process, the lecturer will be considered to have done nothing if the students fail to understand what is being said by the lecturer. South Africa has nine indigenous languages with two foreign languages (English and Afrikaans). All these languages function as official languages (Department of Basic Education, 2010). However, Webb (2006) explains that the importance of the adoption of English language as medium of instruction in South Africa includes the following:

- It is a constitutionally a requirement for equity and accessibility to tertiary institutions.
- It is believed by the government that it will foster national integration and bilingual educational institutions.
- Preference of English language as medium of instruction in tertiary institutions over Afrikaans.
- The belief and preference of South African government on the English language.
- The demotivation of policy makers to develop and implement an entirely new language policy in education.

Hellsten and Prescott (2004) state that information is best processed in the language in which individuals have the highest proficiency. Meanwhile, South African students are most likely to have less proficiency in English language and Afrikaans. This implies that the adopted languages of instruction in South African institutions of learning will likely pose learning challenge to the students who probably have more proficiency and think better in their indigenous languages. This probably accounts for the reason for the use of an indigenous language as medium of instruction at the early stages of learning in primary school. This is probably to help mould the child properly in the language before introducing either of the foreign languages as medium of instruction. Unfortunately, this does not stop the child from thinking in his/her mother tongue (MT).

2.4.1.2. Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity has been argued to be one of the factors that pose learning challenges to students (Marteleto & Dondero, 2016 and Molina, Plascak, Patrick, Bishop, Coronado & Beresford, 2017). South Africa has nine provinces with each having its own unique culture as well as language. Thus, as students are admitted from different parts of the country and world, they come with their different culture and cultural beliefs. This affects the rate at which they learn certain subject matters, especially those that are in contrast with their cultural beliefs. Hence, Bala, Arshad and Noh (2017) aver that the curriculum should be designed in a manner that it caters for cultural diversities of the students, especially when international students are expected to be involved.

2.4.1.3. Availability of Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Shortage of Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities affects the rate at which students learn Akomolafe and Adesua (2016) opine that ICT facilities are very important in teaching and learning processes. In the South African context, Bialobrzaska and Cohen (2005) explain that ICT facilities, when low in supply and not adequately utilized because lecturers fail to use them appropriately as and when due, will constitute part of the learning challenges for students. They further stress that the world is changing fast and information that enhances learning is increasingly needed. Thus, ICT facilities are needed in high volume. Meanwhile, the population of the students compared to the available ICT resources makes it difficult for all the students to be accommodated. Additionally, sometimes when ICT facilities are eventually provided, students fail in harnessing the usefulness of the provided ICT facilities to achieve their aim when they eventually have access to the limited ICT facilities (Vakil, Blachstein, Wertman-Elad, & Greenstein, 2012,). All these amount to learning challenges.

2.4.1.4. Assessment and Feedback

In addition, in the area of assessment various forms of both the lecturers and students are lagging in different ways. Assessment of students is basically meant to be a source of feedback from the lecturers to the students. Unfortunately, South African universities are not different from other universities across the continent. Students get involved in different forms of malpractices such as plagiarism, taking micro-chips in for examinations, among others (Memory & Memory, 2013 and Petters & Okon, 2014) in order to attain good academic grades, thereby making it difficult for the lecturer to know their academic level. According to Samford, Shacklock, Connors and Galtung (2016) lecturers, on the other hand, tend to aid and abet this criminal offence by intentionally allowing leakages and this increases the rate of learning challenges amidst the students. In South African universities, assessment has been organized in a manner that seems to be known by both the lecturers and students. For instance, the students are aware that they will be assessed on an individual basis and group basis. At the level of group base assessment, some students tend to abscond, leaving it into the hands of few who try as much as they can to ensure maximum production, yet sometimes they all end up scoring the same grades. This will definitely affect those students who chose to abscond. Thus, all tasks given to students at any level are to be carried out under the supervision of a lecturer (Daniels & McBride, 2001).

2.4.1.5. Loss of Academic Session

Lectures are important to students and enhance their learning abilities (Selepe, 2015). However, the loss of academic session which deters students from engaging in learning activities with lecturers constitute learning challenge (Nkosi, 2012, Makoni, 2014 and Serino, 2015). According to Holgate (2012) loss of academic session can be caused by different factors, nevertheless, as long as the factors hinder students from experiencing and engaging in teaching and learning activities, learning challenges would be said to have been constituted. This implies that failure to have sessions and consult with lecturers is described as learning challenge, as it has the ability to hamper the learning abilities of students.

2.4.1.6. Lecture Style of Lecturer

The lecture style of lecturers constitutes learning challenges for students (Sikhwari, Maphosa, Masehela & Ndebele, 2015). Students comprehend faster and better when active teaching and learning approaches are adopted by the lecturer (Clay & Breslow, 2006). According to Mlambo (2011) in the South African context, regardless of the availability of instructional teaching support materials, lecturers' styles of lecturing determine the rate at which students comprehend. This implies that the lecture style of lecturers can constitute learning challenges for students if not well handled.

2.4.2. CAUSES OF LEARNING CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Statistics show that South Africa with its reputation in university education still experiences about the highest rate of drop outs (40%) annually in African tertiary institutions compared to other nations due to level of learning challenges experienced by students (Akojee and Nkomo 2008). Suffice therefore that an exploration be made on the likely causes of some of the learning challenges experienced amongst students in South African tertiary institutions. Appointment and recruitment of members of staff, population of students, availability of ICT and social infrastructures, poor staff welfare, insecurity, language of instruction, orientation, cultural diversity, student unrest, socio-economic status of students among others, are various identified causes of learning challenges in the nation (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2014). The section below highlights some of the perceived reviewed causes of learning challenges experienced by undergraduate rural based university students as opined by different scholars.

2.4.2.1. Perception of Lecturers by Undergraduate University Students

Every institution is established with the sole aim of imparting and transferring knowledge from one person (usually the lecturer) to another (the undergraduate university student). Fraser and Killen (2005) conducted a study reviewing literatures on the factors that affect learning. Perception of lecturers by students is identified as a major factor. Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) conducted a study on the same subject matter (factors that affect learning by students) in South African universities. Using convenience sampling technique, the study adopted the use of a mixed method. The participants were drawn from 3 universities in South Africa. The result of the study indicates that absenteeism of students to lectures constitutes learning challenge and one of the major reasons for absenteeism is the nature of the lecturer and his or her teaching strategies. From the study, it is deduced that undergraduate university students abscond from classes due to their perception of the lecturer and his or her nature. This suggests that the way undergraduate university students perceive their lecturers will determine their level of attendance to classes as well as participation in class. This consequently affects the learning abilities of South African undergraduate university students.

2.4.2.2. Population of Undergraduate University Students (Student-Lecturer Ratio)

Every institution of learning is established to train and equip students to become better people in life. Hence, an academic institution without students is not worth being called an institution. However, the population ratio between lecturers and students is important. Franklin (2013) avers that if the population of students in any institution of learning is outrageous when compared to the number of lecturers available to instruct, learning challenges are inevitable. The number of enrolment of undergraduate students into South African universities has been on the increase (Council of Higher Education, 2013). Table.2.3 below shows the population increase in South African universities as well as the population of academic staff members between 2009 and 2014.

Table 2.1: Academic Staff and Student Population in South African universities from 2009-2014

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Population of Students	837,779	892,943	938,200	953,373	983,698	968,890
Academic Staff	16,320	16,684	16,935	17,452	17,838	18,192

Source: South African Higher Education, 2014:309

Table 2.1 shows that there has been great increase on the enrolment rate into universities in South Africa. Meanwhile, though the population of academic staff members increases, it is not commensurate to the population of the students. Table 2.2 above indicates that the ratio of lecturer to undergraduate student is 1:50+. In other words, one lecturer is expected to be responsible for over 50 students in normal circumstance based on the figure represented in the table above. However, this may not be applicable in some cases, as the rate of enrolment and employment varies from faculties. Hence, the fewer the lecturers in relation to the number of students, the more the difficulty that may be experienced during teaching and learning exercises. Thus, learning challenges may become inevitable.

2.4.2.3. Poor Staff Welfare

It is generally known and accepted that people work better when they are motivated. Workers are motivated to work due to different reasons ranging from intrinsic to extrinsic factors (Chamorro-Premuzic2013). One major factor that motivates workers to discharge their duties is the attractiveness of their remuneration or salary package. Lecturers, however, believe that they are poorly remunerated, therefore sometimes fail to put in their best. It is commonly said that ‘the rewards of lecturers are in heaven’, however, in the African context this is not an acceptable notion as lecturers wish to be rewarded here on earth in form of good salaries. Lecturers believe that they produce successful and well remunerated professionals in different fields, politicians inclusive; therefore, they should be well remunerated just like their products and counterparts in

other professions. The remuneration of educators determines the level of input and consequently output that will be experienced in the tasks to be accomplished and profession in which they find themselves (Gazette & Leddy 2013 and Sundheim 2013). On the contrary, Ku, Tseng and Akarasriworn (2013) and Maina (2013) explain that the attitude of lecturers towards their lecturing profession is a determining factor towards the rate of learning challenges. Some lecturers are lazy in the discharge of their duties irrespective of the level of motivation they receive. Some of them are majorly after their salaries, not the work they are employed to do. According to Bala, Arshad and Noh (2017) the moment a lecturer begins to act lazy in discharging his or her duties, the students are bound to experience some forms of learning challenges, except for students who will attempt to undertake self-development. Thus, the laziness of the lecturers and students determines the level of learning challenges that will be experienced by students. Moreover, Dessler (2008) and Naluwemba, Sekiwu and Okwenje (2016) state that good staff welfare provision enhances the performance of lecturers. Suffice to state that staff motivation is therefore considered a prerogative in ensuring quality teaching upon which the learning abilities of students seem to be greatly dependent. This implies that lecturers need to be motivated to discharge their duties in order to ensure that they deliver and students benefit from the good teaching and learning processes.

2.4.2.4. Insecurity

The issue of security is a major subject matter that hampers proper learning in tertiary institutions. In the South African context, insecurity is mainly experienced based on internal factors. This could be student unrest caused by a disagreement between the students and the members of staff or administrative body of the school who probably fails to meet certain demands of the students. Azikiwe (2016) reports recently that three South African universities were shut down due to student protests. Patta (2016) explains that sometimes the protests in these institutions are as a result of racial discrimination between the black South African citizens and the coloured citizens or foreign students. Espinoza (2016) adds that the issue of fee increment and denial of certain insensitivities needed by students can lead to student violence within the institution, hampering learning. From the work of Azikiwe (2016) it can be deduced that

sometimes crises on campus are escalated due to the influence of national political parties on the political parties represented on campus. This may lead to crises on campus and distort teaching and learning activities.

2.4.2.5. Inadequate Orientation

The way students position themselves to learn sometimes determines the extent to which they will learn. Hence, orientation is important. According to Wu, Garza and Guzman (2015) and Davis (2013), students are expected to be given good and proper orientation. He further explains that such exercise will keep them abreast of the necessary and needed information that will aid learning and promote success. It is expected to be done periodically, not just at the commencement of their programmes. On the contrary, according to the Department of Actuarial Science, South Africa report (2017), orientation is done once for all first year students in South African universities at the beginning of their programmes. This implies that insufficient orientation may be one of the causes of learning challenges experienced among undergraduate university students. Orientation programmes help to furnish students with adequate information which enable them to avoid or overcome specific challenges.

2.4.2.6. Social Activities

Social activities such as cultural presentations to encourage unity in diversity, team building and group performance, drama presentations among others on campuses tend to affect the rate at which students get to comprehend and learn what they are expected to learn. They sometimes constitute distraction for students, especially when they are not organized timeously. Students are easily distracted and may find it difficult to focus (Umar, Yakubu and Bada (2010). Hence, social activities organized by the institution may need to be properly and timeously planned, otherwise the essence of such activities may be lost.

2.4.2.7. Campus Unrest

Campus unrest is one of the factors that constitute learning challenge amongst university undergraduate students in South African. The moment chaos is experienced on campuses, learning becomes a challenge (Serino, 2015). The learning environment should be made conducive by education stakeholders for proper learning to take place (Mokoena, 2014). He further avers that in the South African context, learning has been disrupted, posing learning challenges amongst the students in different campuses. Table 2.4 below shows the different forms of unrest that have been experienced in different campuses of higher learning. The identified campus unrests have overtime led to loss of learning sessions and consequently caused learning challenges for students.

Table 2.2: Causes and Consequences of Campus Unrest in South Africa from 2004-2016

Year	Institution	Cause(s) of Unrest	Consequence(s)
2004	University of Witwatersrand	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and lack of accommodation	Loss of learning sessions
2009	University of Limpopo	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and poor provision of accommodation	Loss of learning sessions, properties and insecurity of lives.
2009	Mangosuthu University of Technology	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and poor provision of accommodation	Loss of properties, learning sessions and insecurity
2011	University of	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme	Loss of properties, insecurity of lives and loss of learning

	Limpopo	and poor provision of accommodation	sessions
2012	University of Limpopo	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and poor provision of accommodation	Insecurity of lives and properties, and loss of learning sessions
2012	Tshwane University of Technology	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and poor provision of accommodation	Insecurity of lives and properties, and loss of learning sessions
2012	Walter Sisulu University of Technology	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and poor provision of accommodation	Loss of learning sessions
2012	False Bay College	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and poor provision of accommodation	Loss of learning sessions
2012	College of Cape Town	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and poor provision of accommodation	Loss of learning sessions
2014	University of Technology, Pretoria	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)	Destruction of properties and loss of learning sessions
2014	Vaal University of	Poor funding by the National	Loss of learning sessions

	Technology	Student Financial Aid Scheme and poor provision of accommodation	
2015	University of Witwatersrand	Poor funding by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and lack of accommodation	Loss of learning sessions
2015	University of Cape Town	Demand for the removal of Cecil John Rhodes' statue, slow transformation of the institution and racial discrimination	Removal of statue, destruction of structures, and loss of learning sessions
2015	Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET), Richards Bay	Poor funding and ignorance to demand of students	Destruction of institution and public properties, arrest of students and loss of learning sessions
2016	Most Universities	Demand for reduction of tuition	Destruction of public facilities, loss of lives, arrest of students and loss of learning sessions

Source: Nkosi (2012); Holgate (2012); Makoni (2014)

Table 2.2 shows the identified causes and effects of campus unrest in South African tertiary institutions. Poor funding and neglect of students' demand are identified as the major causes of campus unrest in South Africa. This leads to loss of learning session which cause learning challenges for students. For instance, the more the loss of learning sessions, the more the challenges learners will experience.

2.4.2.8. Poor Infrastructure

The available facilities in institutions of learning are expected to be commensurate to the population of users (Souriyavongsa, Rany, Abidin & Mei, 2013). In some South African universities, participatory access occurs due to limited resources (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008). They further explain that it contributes to high rate of drop-out from tertiary institutions within the nation. This implies that learning challenges amongst undergraduate university students in South Africa occurs due to poor or less availability of infrastructures such as classrooms, residences for students, dining halls, water and power supply, among others.

2.4.2.9. Lackadaisical attitude of lecturers to work

The attitude of lecturers towards their profession and their students influence the academic performance of the students (Sikhwari; et al. 2015). Suffice to state that students who are lectured by hardworking lecturers who put up positive attitude are likely to experience good academic performance, compared to students lectured by lecturers with negative attitude towards work and their students.

2.4.2.10. Poor Funding and Mismanagement

The reduction in the funding of university education in South Africa is a major cause of poor quality of education received (Mabelebele, 2015). According to Akooje and Nkomo (2008) the poor quality education received in universities causes learning challenges for students. The 2009 report of Higher Education South Africa (HESA) suggests that due to poor funding university education in South Africa has been unable to achieve the desired goal. According to the report, universities in South Africa are experiencing crisis in retaining quality and knowledgeable members of staff. However, Serfontein and Waal (2015) opine that university education in South Africa suffers due to corrupt practices in the application of allocated funds. In other words, the

allocated funds are mismanaged by authorities responsible for the universities. Surmise to state that poor funding and mismanagement of funds in the university system of education in South Africa affects the quality of education received. This hampers the learning abilities of students and hinders their academic success and progress in various ways ranging from class activities to research works amongst others.

Having considered the trend of learning challenges among undergraduate university students in South Africa, the trend of such challenges will be explored as applicable to the Nigerian context.

2.5. REFLECTIONS OF LEARNING CHALLENGES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Nigeria is commonly described as a nation with several universities. However, with about 200 universities, learning challenges are experienced amongst students in its tertiary institutions (Memory & Memory, 2013 and Petters & Okon, 2014). The case of Nigeria seems to be similar to South Africa. Learning challenges seem to be experienced in various ways by different students. Anzene (2014) as well as Nwoke, Osuji and Agi (2017) stress the point that learning challenges are caused in different forms ranging from the activities of the lecturer to actions and inactions of the students. Some of the causes of learning challenges amongst undergraduate university students in rural universities in Nigeria are explained below.

2.5.1. EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING CHALLENGES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Undergraduate university students experience learning challenges in different ways (Dimkpa, 2011). These learning challenges comprise the language of instruction, assignment and feedback challenges, information and communication technology challenges amongst others.

2.5.1.1. Language of Instruction

Nigeria practices multi-language system and this has led to the struggle of the language to be adopted as language of instruction in the nation (Aguiyi, 2012). According to Ukwuoma (2015) the use of Nigerian creole in lecturing will enhance the learning abilities of students. On the contrary, Igbojinwaekwu and Dorgu (2015) opine that an indigenous language should be adopted as the language of instruction. This is based on the belief that students learn faster and better in their mother tongue (Sawir, 2005). However, the English language remains the adopted language of instruction in Nigerian universities (Okudo, 2013). According to Igbojinwaekwu and Nneji (2012) the adoption of English language as language of instruction in Nigerian institutions of learning has constituted learning challenges for students and has affected the academic performance of the students. Surmise to state that the adoption of English language as language of instruction constitutes learning challenges for students in Nigerian universities. Thus, the adoption of an indigenous language is envisaged; however, this seems problematic due to the multi-language system practiced in the nation.

2.5.1.2. Cultural Diversity of Students

Nigeria practices multi-cultural ethnicity (Abamba, 2015). According to Doris and Doris (2011) cultural diversity constitutes learning challenges for students in Nigeria. They opine that when students fail to understand the effect of their cultural beliefs, perceptions and norms as well as those of their lecturers, they encounter different learning challenges. Contrarily, Aydin (2013) avers that cultural diversity is an important tool that can enhance the learning performance of students. However, Jensen (2004) asserts that for successful outcome and effectiveness of cultural diversity in Nigerian institutions of learning, the curriculum should be designed in such a manner that it would make provision for the cultural diversity of students. Henze et al. (in Evans 2007) in support of Jansen, explains that there should be cultural integration in every learning situation. In other words, in a multi ethnic society like Nigeria, learning challenges will abound if the curriculum fails to accommodate different cultures both within and outside the nation. This

implies that cultural diversity can remain a learning challenge for Nigerian students until it is well managed and handled based on the provision of the curriculum.

2.5.1.3. Availability of Information Communication Technology

Information Communication Technology (ICT) is vital and necessary in the 21st century classroom. The low availability of ICT facilities hinders high level of teaching and learning tertiary institutions. Hamilton-Ekeke and Mbachu (2015) and Karamti (2016) support the need for ICT facilities in universities. According to them, they aid and improve academic output within the nation and world at large. Quite unfortunate, Kigotho and Lloyd (2004) explain that it is below standard in the Nigerian society; hence, the desired result is not seen as expected. Amuchie (2015) and Karamti (2016) explain that poor supply of ICT facilities in tertiary institutions affect the pace of learning of the students. In support of this, Wallet and Melgar (2015) hold the view that paucity of electricity and internet facilities in Nigerian universities hinder good delivery in teaching and learning process. This implies that poor availability of Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities constitute learning challenges for students in Nigerian universities.

2.5.1.4. Assessment in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Assessment of students in tertiary institutions is considered important. It is on this premise that students can be permitted to move to other forward. Most importantly, it helps a lecturer to know the extent to which he/she has performed and has been understood by the students. In addition, it is expected to act as feedback to the students to know the level of their performance. However, in Nigerian higher institutions of learning, this seems not to be carried out properly. Anzene (2014) argues that in the first place students are majorly interested in getting certificates, not the knowledge. This is based on the demand and expectation of the society. In most cases when

people go for job interviews, they are firstly asked to tender their certificates not to prove their skills. Thus, in Nigeria, the emphasis is on acquisition of certificates. Students are sometimes assessed wrongly due to population and focus on meeting the target set by the administrative body of the institution. Sometimes, multiple choice question style is adopted in place of essay form. Similarly, theory is used at some instances in place of practical. In other situations, scripts are transferred to students to assess their fellow students. In such situations, it becomes difficult for the lecturer to give a proper feedback to the students. Anzene (2014) argues that assessment of students must be appropriately carried out.

2.5.1.5. Loss of Academic Session

Zakaria (2014) as well as Davies, Ekwere and Uyanga (2015) state that loss of academic session constitutes learning challenges for university students in Nigeria. According to Etadon (2013) and Albar and Onye (2016) this is majorly caused by unrest experienced on campuses. However, Adeogun and Osifila (2009) and Ajayi (2014) explain that loss of academic session in Nigerian universities can be due to disagreement between the government and university staff association. Such disagreement they explain disrupts the school calendar and that leads to loss of academic session which eventually constitutes learning challenges for the students. Suffice to state that strike actions on campuses as well as all forms of unrests which lead to loss academic sessions in Nigerian universities constitute learning challenges for students.

2.5.2. CAUSES OF LEARNING CHALLENGES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Several factors are responsible for learning challenges in Nigerian rural universities (Dimkpa, 2011). According to Umar, Yakubu and Bada (2010) the challenges hamper development in different areas and parts of the nation. Ajala (2012) explains that several factors are responsible for learning challenges experienced amongst students in the rural tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Some of these factors include: appointment of members of staff, population of students,

availability of ICT and social infrastructures, poor staff welfare, insecurity, language of instruction, orientation, cultural diversity, student unrest, socio-economic status of students among others.

2.5.2.1. Perception of Lecturers by Students

The manner in which students perceive their lecturers determines the level of deference they will show to such lecturers (Asare & Adzrolo, 2013). According to Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010) Dimkpa (2011) and Memory and Memory (2013), students in Nigerian universities experience learning challenges because they sometimes perceive their lecturers as people who can be bribed, threatened or maneuvered to get the desired result in different courses. Surmise to state that students cause learning challenges for themselves by perceiving their lecturers wrongly and failing to relate with them appropriately.

2.5.2.2. Population (Student-Lecturer Ratio)

Overpopulation in Nigerian universities has become the order (Petters & Okon, 2014). Lecturers continuously express displeasure in the population growth of the institutions (Okebukola, 2002). The National Universities Commission (NUC) also continues to fight against the ratio of lecturers to students in Nigerian universities, yet all seem to no avail (Agboola & Adeyemi, 2017). Anzene (2014) aver that large population size is a major factor affecting the learning abilities of undergraduate university students in Nigerian universities.

According to the National University Commission (NUC), the guidelines for lecturer-student ratio are as stated in the table 2.3 below

Table 2.3: NUC Lecturer-Student Ratio Guideline per faculty

Faculty	NUC Guidelines
Agricultural Science	1:15
Arts	1:30
Education	1:30
Engineering	1:15
Law	1:30
Management Sciences	1:30
Science	1:20
Social Sciences	1:30

Source: National University Commission (2006:19)

Fatunde (2013) avers that due to the increase in the rate of enrolment into public universities and decrease or stagnancy in the employment rate of staff members, the ratio of lecturers to students is not commensurate compared to the guidelines of NUC, as identified in table 2.5 above. Fatunde, (2013) further opines that the lowest ratio of lecturers to students in public universities in Nigeria is approximately; 1:122. Ikegulu and Oranusi (2014) commenting on the effects of large population size of students' state that increase in enrolment into Nigerian universities drastically affects the population size of the institutions and this in turn affects the level of quality of professionalism displayed by lecturers and experienced by students. Mukhanji, Ndiku and Obaki (2016) argue that as long as the infrastructures are still the same, the rate of enrolment must be checkmated, otherwise, learning challenges will be experienced continuously.

2.5.2.3. Poor Staff Welfare

According to Dimkpa (2011) lecturers in Nigerian universities get involved in several other businesses, forgetting their primary assignments in order to make money. This implies that lecturers seem to experience poor staff welfare, which is capable of constituting learning challenges for students. Additionally, Ajala (2012) explains that job satisfaction is a factor upon which staff welfare is predicated. One of the effects of job dissatisfaction is the quality of job delivery which will negatively affect students.

2.5.2.4. Insecurity

Insecurity in Nigerian university environments is a threat that poses learning challenges to the undergraduate university students (Obijulu, 2012). According to Aina and Ogundele (2014) the state of insecurity in relation to university education in Nigeria is caused majorly by two forces, classified into: external and internal forces. The external forces include the Boko Haram crises, Niger Delta saga and Fulani Herdsmen crises amongst others, while the internal forces include cultism and hooliganism. These forces hinder students from accessing the libraries, laboratories and sometimes campus (Aina & Ogundele, 2014). Learning challenges are inevitable for students when deprived accessibility to these study areas due to insecurity emanating from restricted movement (Isokpan & Durojaye, 2016). This implies that students who are unable to move freely due to insecurity on or outside campus and cannot access relevant study materials are most likely to experience learning challenges.

2.5.2.5. Orientation

The orientation given to students in tertiary institutions serves as guide to the students all through their stay in the institution. Kember and Gow (1994) are of the opinion that one of the major causes of learning challenges experienced by students in tertiary institutions is the level and kind of orientation they are given, especially at their debut in the institution. This is applicable in the Nigerian situation where students act as novice for a long time before they get acclimatized to the trend in such institution. In fact, sometimes, they only get to understand the system in operation when they have wasted a good part of their stay on campus. However, if the reverse

were to be the case, they would have been able to make positive impacts and progress in their studies.

2.5.2.6. Social Activities

Social activities on campus are factors that pose learning challenges. Zhu, Kaplan, Dersheimer and Bergom (2011) consider this in light of how students relate with their peers. They further aver that the job of a lecturer can be rendered useless and of no effect if the activities of peer groups are not put to check. Kuznekoff, Munz and Titsworth (2015) in explaining the issue of social factor being a cause of learning challenges in universities explains that the use of ICT facilities by students must be controlled where possible; otherwise, ICT gadgets remain major forms of distraction to students. This is applicable to the Nigerian society where almost all students have access to an Ipad, sophisticated handset, Tablet, etc. According to Kirkup and Kirkwood (2005) and Wagner, (2001) ICT gadgets are of great use especially at that level, however in the absence of proper control, they become instruments of distraction.

2.5.2.7. Campus Unrest

Student unrest is a factor in the Nigerian tertiary education system that affects learning (Aluede, Jimoh, Agwinede & Omoregie, 2005). Adeyemi (2009) conducted a study to investigate the causes of student unrest in Nigerian tertiary institutions and the correlation with learning. 1,460 participants were used for the study; this included 850 members of staff and 610 final year students. Questionnaires were distributed across nine universities, thereafter analysis was done. The result shows that there is correlation between student unrest and learning. Finding of the study also shows that student unrest is caused by certain factors ranging from large population, insensitivity of top administrative members of staff to the demand of students. Similar study was

carried out by Akeusola, Viatonu and Asikhia (2012) who used a descriptive survey. Questionnaires were administered to 954 sample of the study who included students, members of staff, union leaders, and heads of tertiary institutions who were drawn using stratified sampling technique. The data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 20.0 software package. The result shows that in addition to poor attention to student welfare, tuition fee also causes student unrest. They submit that the learning abilities of Nigerian students are affected by ‘student unrest’. Following similar trend, Odu (2014) conducted a descriptive survey using quantitative design. The study was aimed at investigating the causes and consequences of student unrest in Nigerian universities. Simple stratified random technique was used to select the 6,800 participants of the study. Questionnaires were administered to the sample and analysed using t test. The result indicates that cultism, inadequate facilities, attitude of some members of staff at the helm of affairs cause student unrest which in turn affects learning. The study of Davies, Ekwere, and Uyanga, (2015) corroborates the findings of Odu (2014) on the causes of student unrest and its effect on the learning abilities of students. The study of Davies et al. (2015) employed the use of questionnaires which were administered to 367 participants. The result indicates that while cultism, periodic strike actions, breakage of institution laws and orders, and poor social infrastructures cause student unrest in a very high manner, student union activities cause student unrest in a low manner. However, like other studies, the study also shows that learning challenges is predicated on student unrest. The table below shows different student unrest in various Nigerian universities and the consequences.

Table 2.4: Causes and Consequences of Campus Unrest in Nigeria from 1960-2005

Year	Institution	Cause(s) of Unrest	Consequence(s)
1960	Many Nigerian universities	Signing of military treaty by the federal government	Cancellation of treaty and loss of learning session
1970	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	poor feeding and accommodation	Loss of teaching sessions
1971	University of Ibadan	students request for the removal of welfare officer	Death of a student and loss of learning sessions

1974	University of Ibadan	Student request for the removal of catering officer	Loss of lives of students and learning sessions
1978	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	Increase of tuition fee	nationwide demonstration by University students
1981	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	Religious crisis and conflict with Vice Chancellor	Removal of Vice chancellor and losses of lives
1981	Obafemi Awolowo University	Cultism Activities	Loss of lives and learning sessions
1981	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Insufficient social infrastructures	Loss of learning sessions
1984	Many Nigerian Universities	Introduction of Tuition fees	Loss of academic sessions
1986	Ahmadu Bello University	Insensitivity of university authority	Loss of learning sessions and expulsion of students
1987	University of Lagos	Threat of expulsion of student union leader	Loss of learning sessions
1988	University of Jos	Government removal of fuel subsidy	Loss of learning sessions and six months close down of institution.
1989	Many universities in Nigeria	Introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) by the federal government of Nigeria	Shut down of many Nigerian institutions and loss of lives
1991	Obafemi Awolowo, Ife, Ilorin, Abeokuta Universities	Failure to yield to students' demand	Loss of learning sessions
1992	Many Nigerian	Deregulation of Nigerian	Loss of lives, shut down of

	Universities	currency, and inflation	many universities
1998	Ambrose Ali University	Cult activities	Loss of live and closure of institution
2002	Lagos State University	Killing of student union leader	Loss of lives and learning sessions
2003	Many Nigerian Universities	Increase in fuel price	loss of learning sessions
2004	Ebonyi State University	Poor social infrastructure	Loss of learning sessions
2005	OlabisiOnabanjo University	Killing of students by community members	Loss of lives, 50 vehicles, palace of the monarch and academic sessions
2005	OlabisiOnabanjo University	Clash between the police force and students	Burning of branch of WEMA bank and police divisional headquarters office

Sources: Akinade (1993);Aluede, ,Jimoh, Agwinede and Omoregie (2005); The Punch Newspaper June 17, 2005; The Guardian Newspaper June 17, 2005

Table 2.4 shows the causes of campus unrest in Nigerian universities from 1960 to 2005 involving different institutions: urban and rural inclusive. Cultism and poor funding are considered as the major causes of campus unrest in Nigerian universities, while loss of academic sessions and properties are the consequences of these unrests.

2.5.2.8. Poor Infrastructure

Lecturers claim to have too many undergraduate students, with limited facilities to lecture, therefore, they find it difficult to impact knowledge as they have been employed to do. However,

they seem to be lagging behind pedagogically when compared to their counterparts in other nations of the world. According to Glewwe and Muralidharan (2015) the reason for the establishment of an institution of higher learning is to impart knowledge, hence anything short of that is tantamount to malpractice and aids learning challenges. If an admitted patient in a given hospital dies due to negligence on the part of the doctor who forgets to perform a specific task or performed the task wrongly probably due to power failure which seems to be a tenable excuse. The doctor will still be blamed and charged for professional malpractice. Such is the case with a lecturer who fails in applying the appropriate pedagogical skills, yet continues to give excuses. Wall and Sarver (2014) further opine that lecturers can be described as the root cause of learning challenges experienced amongst undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in any nation due to their failure to do what is expected of them, which is the premise upon which the institution has been established and they have been employed. As a matter of practice in most circumstances, an undergraduate university student who is not well taught and does not understand what has been taught will most likely experience some forms of challenges in attempting to acquire knowledge (Wall & Sarver, 2014). Dusu, Gotan, Deshi and Gambo (2016) explain that in the Nigerian university system, several lecturers possess various certificates that enabled them to get employed, unfortunately, they lack the pedagogical skills needed in the delivery of the subject matter they are expected to teach the students. Meanwhile, accessibility to library, availability of up to date books, stress of lack of electricity, transportation among others constitute poor infrastructures which pose learning challenges to undergraduate university students in Nigeria (Salako, 2014).

2.5.2.9. Lackadaisical attitude of lecturers to work

Lecturers' lazy attitude to work is considered as factor that causes learning challenges for students. Essiam, Mensah, Kudu and Gyamfi (2015) and Masum, Azad and Beh (2015) consent that lack of job satisfaction sometimes cause lecturers to put-up lazy and negative attitude to work. According to Ajala (2012) lazy and negative attitude of lecturers to work contribute to learning challenges experienced by students. This attitude from lecturers lead to non-completion of course outlines, poor feedbacks and consequently poor academic performance of students

(Dimkpa, 2011). Surmise to state that lackadaisical attitude from lecturers will cause learning challenges for undergraduate rural university students who find it difficult to read and understand on their own accord, let alone being left to study without the guidance of lecturers as required.

2.5.2.10. Poor Funding and Mismanagement

Poor funding is attributed as the cause of the low quality of education received in Nigerian universities (Odia & Omofonmwan, 2007). The low quality of university education received causes learning challenges for the students (Ololube, 2016). According to Asiyai (2013) in support of poor funding and quality in Nigerian university education explains that the nation needs good funding in order for quality education which will attract global standard to be provided. However, Udoma, the minister for budget in Nigeria (2017) avers that huge amount of money is invested in the educational sector. He avers that the sector gets the highest budget allocation after the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Contrarily, Nwakpa (2015) states that there is huge investment made in education in Nigeria to ensure quality, however, due to high level of corruption, the desired result is not achieved. Ololube (2016) in support of corruption being the cause of poor quality in education, states that there is high rate of mismanagement and misappropriation of public fund in education. This implies that lack of proper monitoring of fund in university education in Nigeria leads to poor quality education and that causes learning challenges for the students.

Learning challenges are not peculiar to South Africa and Nigeria, they are experienced across African universities. Thus, the historical background of tertiary education and causes of learning challenges across African universities in general are discussed below.

2.6. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the conceptual framework for the study. Related literatures which were reviewed in accordance to trends of learning challenges in South Africa and Nigeria were also presented in this chapter. The reviewed literature involved the past and contemporary learning

challenge issues, with emphasis on the clarification of the concept, types of learning challenges, its causes and countermeasures However, majority of the reviewed literature were in accordance with the practice in urban based universities due to paucity of literature in the subject in relation to rural universities. Hence, the reason for this study which aims at exploring the experiences of learning challenges among undergraduate students in two rural universities South Africa and Nigeria.

The next chapter deals with the research methods which includes sample population, techniques, instruments, amongst others, adopted for the collection of data for the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the review of related literature on learning challenges among undergraduate university students with respect to sub-Sahara Africa. Trends of such experiences of learning challenges and their causes were explored with focus on South African and Nigerian university students. This chapter presents the philosophical paradigm, research design, research methods which includes population, sampling techniques and sample, instrumentation, procedure for data collection and data analysis.

3.2. PHILOSOPHICAL PARADIGM

This study employs post pragmatism paradigm. The paradigm supports the ideology of the use of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection in a single study. Based on the nature of the study, large data sample size was needed as well as in-depth information. Hence, post pragmatism paradigm was adopted for the study. Bertram and Christiansen (2015) state that in a study where large sample size is needed and an in-depth understanding of the subject matter is needed, post positivism paradigm can be adopted. According to Kumar (2014), some participants will be selected using quantitative sampling approach while others will be selected through the use of qualitative sampling approach. He further describes this approach as mixed method: a process whereby quantitative and qualitative research methods are used for collecting data in a single study. Creswell (2014) states that it enhances the quality of data collected and gives room for triangulation.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Kumar (2014), mixed methods design is a design which employs the use of quantitative and qualitative methods in collecting data for a particular study. This is usually done to enhance triangulation and validation of data (Teddlie & Yu, 2007 and Brink, Walt & Rensburg 2013).

In this study, the mixed method research design was adopted; quantitative approach using survey method and qualitative approach using interviews for data collection. This was done using questionnaires which were administered to student respondents, while interviews were conducted with selected lecturers to enhance triangulation of data.

3.4. RESEARCH APPROACH

The study used mixed method approach in the collection of data. According to Kumar (2014), quantitative paradigm can be used to collect data from a large sample size, while qualitative paradigm can be adopted in the collection of in-depth quality information from a small sample size. In this study, the researcher collected large quantitative data from the student participants through the use of questionnaire, while in-depth qualitative data was collected from academic staff members through semi-structured interviews. The adoption of mixed method approach in this study was to enable triangulation and validation of the sets of data collected from both students and lecturers. The two approaches were used to collect data which helped to provide answers to the three research questions stated in chapter one.

3.5. TARGET POPULATION

The target population in a study includes the entire population from which the participants of the study are drawn and used for generalization (Burns & Grove, 2011 and Brink et al., 2013). The target population for this study was undergraduate students in two selected rural based universities in South Africa and Nigeria. This target population was drawn based on the high drop-out rates experienced due to various factors as alluded by reviewed literature. Also, this population of students are more involved in course work compared to post-graduate students who are more involved with research. Additionally, though, not all undergraduates in the two selected rural universities are from disadvantaged racial and socio-economic backgrounds, however majority of them belong to this category. Moreover, they are all exposed to similar experiences while at the university. Hence, they all formed the target population for the study.

3.6. THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

The sample, sampling procedure, sampling technique and data collection tool and method adopted for the quantitative study is discussed below:

3.6.1 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Creswell (2014) and Kumar (2014) aver that several techniques and procedures are to be taken into consideration before the selection of samples for a study. Hence, the sampling techniques, sample frame and sample size adopted in the quantitative study are discussed in this section.

3.6.1.1 Sampling Technique

Systematic sampling technique was used in obtaining quantitative data for the study due to its ability to combine both probability technique and non-probability technique. This technique allowed the researcher to prepare a list of all who qualify to participate in the study, decide on the sample size, and thereafter determine the width of the interval (Kumar, 2014). Hence, the formula applied to get the width of the interval is $K = N \div n$. Where K stands for width of the interval, N stands for total population and n stands for sample size.

For this study, 10 percent of the total population of third year students of each faculty was sampled. This was done using systematic technique. The researcher visited each faculty office, retrieved a list of third year students in order to know the total population of the third year students. As soon as their population was ascertained, the researcher worked out the 10% by multiplying the total population by 10 and divided by 100. This is in accordance with Kumar (2014) who states that a sample size of the entire population should be selected. Additionally, Banerjee and Chaudhury (2012) state that selecting sample size of 10% helps the researcher in assessing the degree of bias. Below is the result of the calculation for the South African and Nigerian based universities in their faculties.

Table 3.1: Population and Sample Size

Faculties in South African based university	Total population (N)	10% (Sample size (n))	Interval (K)
Arts	1577	158	4
Commerce, Law and Administration	1175	118	4
Education	1392	139	4

Science	750	75	4
Total	4894	490	
Faculties in Nigerian based university	Total population (N)	10% (Sample size (n))	Interval (K)
Arts	1244	124	4
Law	1120	112	4
Education	1400	140	4
Science	680	68	4
Total	4444	444	

The figures of the total population of the universities were retrieved through the university data base. The interval (K) for all faculties was 4. This was done by dividing the total population (N) by the sample size (n). Therefore, every student after the fourth count was selected from each faculty

The adoption of systematic technique in selecting the sample for the study is supported by Kumar (2014) who opines the usefulness of the design in quantitative data collection with special reference to cases of cause and effects. In this study, systematic technique was used to retrieve quantitative data on the experiences of learning challenges, causes, effects and countermeasures.

Also, purposive technique was adopted in selecting the two institutions for the study. The researcher ensured that the two selected institutions are similar by considering the location, faculties, courses, population size of the institutions, mode of funding among other similar

characteristics possessed by the institutions. For instance, below are the similar faculties that were chosen for the study.

Table 3.2: List of Similar Faculties in the two selected Universities

SN	Nigerian Based University	South African Based University
1.	Education	Education
2.	Science	Agriculture and Science
3.	Law	Commerce, Law and Administration
4.	Arts	Arts

3.6.2. DATA COLLECTION TOOL FOR THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Data collection instruments devices are tools used for the collection of data while conducting any research. Examples of data collection instruments include: questionnaires, tests, checklists, rating scales and observation. Existing instruments are sometimes adopted and used by researchers. These existing instruments are sometimes modified and where the need arise new instruments are designed. Researchers are expected to adopt the tool(s) suitable for collection of data in their studies. The data collection tool adopted for the quantitative study is a self-designed questionnaire details of which discussed below

3.6.2.1 Questionnaire

Data for this study was collected through the use of a self-designed questionnaire. Kumar (2014) suggests the use of self-designed questionnaire to meet the need of the research. It comprised a

series of questions in statement form in which respondents were expected to give their responses based on their opinions or perceptions regarding learning challenges experienced by them. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) opine that it is cheap, fast, convenient, easy to administer and very useful in gathering data when a large population size is involved.

The questionnaire designed for this study had four sections. The first section aimed at retrieving demographic data such as: gender, age group, marital status, religion, race and faculty from the respondents, while the second section sought to find out the learning challenges experienced by undergraduate rural university students using a 4 point Likert scale.

The third section sought to find out some causes of the identified learning challenges experienced by the respondents using a 3 point Likert scale of Yes (3), Unsure (2) and No (1) and the fourth section sought for some countermeasures put up by the student participants of the study. Each section comprised five questions. Moreover, section two adopted the 4 point Likert scale based on questions which needed 'agree or disagree' and in order to know the extent of their approval or disapproval 'strongly agree and strongly disagree' were included. However, the third section adopted the 'yes, unsure, no' option. This was due to the type of questions that were asked. The questions were constructed in such a manner that expected respondents to be neutral.

3.7. QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher followed different procedures in collecting data. These procedures include: administration of questionnaire.

3.7.1. ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher visited the institutions, obtained permission from the administrative office, and then proceeded to the various faculties one after the other, booked appointment with lecturers handling core modules for third year students. On the set day, the researcher went to the respective lecture rooms one after the other to administer the questionnaires to the students who were first briefed about the study and its purpose. With the assistance and support of two research assistants who were previously trained on ways of administering questionnaires to students and the lecturers of the third year students 1235 questionnaires were administered in the eight faculties. However, 85% (1049) were retrieved and sorted by the researcher who discarded some due to unanswered questions and roughness of the retrieved paper. The exercise took four different days, two faculties per day, while the students were given 20 minutes to fill the questionnaires. The time was strictly adhered to due to the lecture that was to take place that same day. Hence, 10 minutes was used to brief the students on what was expected of them, distribution and collection of the questionnaire after the exercise. In the end, the researcher was able to get and use the desired number (934).

3.7.2. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative and qualitative data were differently analysed using different analytic systems.

3.7.2.1. **Quantitative Data Analysis**

To determine the statistical analysis of the study, SPSS 2015 version which is a computer statistical software program specifically designed for the social science research was used. The importance of using SPSS in the study is to select the correct statistical tests that will be used to analyse the retrieved data.

For the purpose of this research both descriptive and inferential statistics was used. This is because descriptive statistics are used in researches to describe and summarise the data and inform what the data set looks like. These statistics convert and condense a collection of data into an organised, visual representation or picture, in a variety of ways in order for the data to be meaningful. The descriptive statistics in this study include frequency distributions with minimum and maximum value, mean percentages, and standard deviation.

3.8. SAMPLE SIZE FOR QUANTITATIVE STUDY

In this study a total of 934 third year students from 8 faculties across the selected rural based universities were sampled for this study. 934 students were selected because it represents the 10% of the entire population of third year students in the two selected institutions. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) and Kumar (2014) opine that a large sample size is needed in a quantitative study in order to enhance generalization. The table below gives a brief of the sample size used for the quantitative study, while the demographic data of the sample is presented in the next chapter.

Table 3.3: Study Sample Size (SSS)

S/N	FACULTY (South African based university)	STUDENTS (Questionnaire)	FACULTY (Nigerian based university)	STUDENTS (Questionnaire)
1	Art	158	Faculty of Education	124
2	Education	118	Faculty of Art	112

3	Science	139	Faculty of Science	140
4	Commerce, Law and Administration	75	Faculty of Law	68
Total		490		444

3.9. THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

The sample, sampling procedure, sampling technique and data collection tool adopted for the qualitative study is discussed below:

3.9.1 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The sampling techniques, sample frame and sample size were taken into consideration. Creswell (2014) and Kumar (2014) aver that the techniques and procedures adopted for a study must be taken into consideration before the selection of samples for the study.

3.9.1.1 Sampling Technique

Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were adopted for the qualitative study. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques are employable in a research work based on the characteristics present in the participants (Creswell, 2014). The researcher adopted purposive and convenient sampling techniques in selecting the institutions and the academic staff members who were participants of the qualitative study. Sixteen (16) lecturers were purposively and

conveniently selected based on their position as lecturers of the selected level of undergraduate students under study, as well as their availability. Moreover, the institutions were purposively selected based on the common characteristics such as population, similar faculties, pattern of funding, location of institution among others. In this study, the sampling technique enabled the researcher to select academic participants and two institutions with common features.

3.9.2. QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION METHOD

According to Kumar (2014) qualitative data can be collected through the use of interview or observation techniques. For this study, the interview technique was adopted.

3.9.2.1. Interview

Interviews were used for data collection in this study. Brink et al. (2013) and Kumar (2014) describe interview as a method usable for data collection. They support that it aids responses from participant(s) in different manners: either through face-to-face encounter, telephone call or electronic means which includes emails, skype, amongst others. Kumar (2014) asserts that interview can be in different forms: structured, semi-structured and unstructured questions. In this study, the researcher adopted semi-structured interview with some purposively selected lecturers in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria.

The justification for selecting semi-structured interview was based on Kumar's (2014) assertion that it is flexible, ensures a very high rate of control of interview situation, enables the recording of conversation and the elicitation of unintended responses as well as the provision of in-depth data that is useful in the achievement of the specific objectives of the research. In addition, the researcher was guided by an interview schedule guide which assisted in ensuring that all lecturers were asked specific questions. Hence, in general all lecturers who were interviewed for this study were asked seven uniform questions. However, based on certain responses given by lecturers as the interview unfolded additional questions were asked.

3.10. QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE AND ANALYSIS

The researcher followed different procedures in collecting data, one of which was done by conducting interviews with 16 selected lecturers across the two institutions.

3.10.1. USE OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE GUIDE

The researcher visited the different faculties, purposively selected the lecturers to be interviewed. Appointment was booked with 19 lecturers, but in the end, 16 were interviewed. The researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews using an interview schedule guide. The interview schedule guide was used to assist the researcher to ask specific questions regarding the subject matter. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and later transcribed. Each interview lasted between 25 and 35 minutes. However, due to the busy schedule and unavailability of the lecturers, the interviews were completed in two weeks. Some interviews were conducted in the offices of the lecturers while some were conducted at the departmental office and others at the university staff club centre. This was due to the choice of the lecturers and the place they agreed for the interview to be relatively conveniently conducted.

3.10.2. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data from interviews with lecturers were analysed manually through the use of thematic coding. The researcher initially employed the service of a transcriber who transcribed the responses of the lecturers, after which the responses were coded into different themes based on the questions that were asked and the countries.

It must be noted that the two instruments were used to answer all research questions stated in the first chapter of the study. This was due to the effort of the researcher to ensure triangulation in

the collection of data. Hence, both instruments were employed to gather data that were used to answer the first four research questions.

3.11. SAMPLE SIZE FOR THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

In this study 16 lecturers lecturing third year students from 8 faculties across the selected rural based universities were sampled. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) and Kumar (2014) aver that in order to get in-depth information regarding a subject matter in a study, a small sample size is needed, using qualitative study. Hence, only 8 lecturers were selected from each university. The lecturers were conveniently and purposively selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. The table below gives a brief of the sample size used for the qualitative study.

Table 3.4: Study Sample Size (SSS)

S/N	FACULTY (South African based university)	LECTURERS Interview	FACULTY (Nigerian based university)	LECTURERS Interview
1	Art	2	Faculty of Education	2
2	Education	2	Faculty of Art	2
3	Science	2	Faculty of Science	2

4	Commerce, Law and Administration	2	Faculty of Law	2
Total		8		8

3.12. VALIDITY OF SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

The questionnaire and interview schedule guide used for the study were examined by the supervisors, who are research experts, and other colleagues in order to ascertain their construct and content validity. Ani (2014) observes that a professional's view point on a research instrument is very important in measuring validity in social science research. However, the justification for validating the questionnaire is based on the submission of Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) who state that validating research questionnaire is to prevent biased and unrealistic research results. This implies that validity assists a researcher to draw a very sound conclusion from his/her research data. In this study, comments made by experts and colleagues regarding the interview schedule guide were taken into consideration before the final draft of the interview schedule guide was prepared and finally put to use.

3.13. RELIABILITY OF SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Reliability is a way of ensuring that research instrument is of good quality (Creswell, 2009). It is essential to conduct a test to determine the extent to which the research instrument is reliable. Brink, Walt and Rensburg (2014) claim that reliability refers to the extent to which the research instrument measures consistently whatever it is designed to measure.

For the purpose of this research, the following measures were put into consideration in order to increase the reliability of the interview schedule in the research. A pilot study was conducted so as to test, verify and refine the research instruments in order to identify problems that the respondents might face in having to understand the questions and to reduce inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the questionnaire. The researcher employed the use of simple concepts. After the pilot study, some ambiguous questions were observed based on the clarity that was sort by the interviewees. Hence, they were modified while others were removed. The pilot study was conducted with undergraduates of University of Zululand, South Africa. They were not part of the main study. The students were given copies of the questionnaire to fill and were allowed to comment on the clarity and suitability of the instrument. Some lecturers from the University of Zululand were interviewed using the interview schedule guide in order to know if the questions were easy to comprehend. Similar pilot study was conducted with some undergraduate students of Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Nigeria who did not take part in the main study. The errors such as spellings, unclear sentences, noticed from the comments made by the students and behaviour of lecturers during the pilot studies were adjusted in the main questionnaire before they were finally adopted and used for the main study. The pilot studies enabled the researcher to know the validity

3.14. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on this, the research was conducted in line with various ethical issues guiding research in the institution where the researcher is registered. Ethical clearance was first obtained from the University of Zululand research office upon approval of the study. The researcher then, proceeded to obtain permission to obtain data from the appropriate administrative offices in the two universities. Permission was also obtained from the province office for the South African based university as a matter of practice. However, no permission was obtained at the state office for the Nigerian based university, because it was not prerequisite. This indicated that the data for the study was conducted in line with the approved data collection protocol.

Furthermore, the participants in this research were informed about the nature and purpose of the study and their confidentiality was granted and protected concerning the information they divulged. The confidentiality of the student respondents was preserved by the researcher by asking them not to write their names on the questionnaire, while the confidentiality of the lecturers were preserved through by destroying the recorded interview immediately after the transcription was successfully done. They were also informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and they could back out at any given time they felt uncomfortable during the survey. All these were included in the consent form which was signed by the participants before the instruments were administered.

3.15. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to various constraints such as time and finance, this study was limited to two selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. Hence, the data may not be generalized to all rural institutions across the African continent or global world, though the collected data may be a true reflection of some institutions across the globe.

3.16. SUMMARY

The chapter examined different approaches, methods and techniques that were used to conduct the study. The quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to obtain data for the study. The instruments used for the collection of data in the study were questionnaire and interview schedule. Systematic sampling technique was used to select students as respondents to questionnaires, while interviews were conducted with some purposively and conveniently selected lecturers who lecture third year students. The sample size for the study was nine hundred and forty-three (943) students from the two selected rural universities. The questionnaire was administered to the student respondents, while face-to-face interviews were conducted with the selected lecturers within the two universities. The two research instruments were validated by the experts in the field of human and social science education. Moreover, two

pilot studies were conducted at the University of Zululand, South Africa, and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria, in order to test for the reliability of the instruments and ensure validity at the same time. The feedbacks received during the pilot studies were used to revise the items of the questionnaire and interview schedule guide. This was done before embarking on the main survey. The quantitative data for the study were coded and entered into Excel package and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 20.0 software was used to analyze the results. Moreover, the qualitative data were transcribed, coded and analysed thematically.

The next chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of all data retrieved through questionnaires which were administered to student respondents across the two selected rural institutions.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an analysis of data collected by means of a questionnaire (see addendum 5-6) from a sample of nine hundred and thirty-four student participants and sixteen lecturers. The responses provided in the questionnaire were answers to the research questions stated in Chapters one. The research questions are as follow: “What are the learning challenges of undergraduate students in selected rural universities of South Africa and Nigeria? What are the causes of learning challenges among undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria? What measures can be used to alleviate undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria from learning challenges?” In addition to the summary of data which is presented in statistical form in frequency distribution tables, a brief interpretation is also provided to contextualize the responses into the objectives of the study which are as follow: “To investigate the learning challenges of undergraduate students in selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. To find out the causes of learning challenges among undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. To explore the measures that can be used to alleviate undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria from learning challenges”. The retrieved questionnaires were counted before commencing analysis. This is supported by Kumar (2014) as a means of validating the generalizability of the findings and representativeness of the sample in the study. The statements from the questionnaire were used as captions for the statistical data presented in each frequency distribution table. Creswell (2014) suggests that in social science related research, the numerical data should be accompanied by a brief narration to unpack the significance, effects or implications of symbols in the context of the critical research questions of the study. Thus, a brief interpretation is provided for numerical data presented in each frequency distribution table. Participants’ narrative responses accompanying each closed-ended statement from the questionnaire were summarized in categories. Interpretation and discussion of both statistical and qualitative data collected by means of a questionnaire from student participants

were carried out within the framework established from the synthesis of theories presented in chapters one and two of this study. The responses to the questions from the questionnaire were summarized and presented accordingly in the following categories as they were reflected in the instrument; Section A required students to provide their biographical data particularly, gender, age group, marital status and faculty as which is reflected in chapter three of the study, while Section B required student respondents to respond to questions based on their experiences of learning challenges. Section C required student respondents to respond to questions on the causes of learning challenges, while Section D provided student respondents the opportunity to respond to open ended questions which were aimed at supporting their answers to the closed ended questions in the previous sections.

4.2 SECTION 1 OF QUESTIONNAIRE: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

4.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF STUDENTS FROM THE SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The demography of student respondents of the study is presented in table 4.1 below. The demography gives a description of the kind of students to whom questionnaires were administered.

Table 4.1: The demographic data of undergraduate university students in selected university in South Africa and Nigeria

DEMOGRAPHICS	South Africa		Nigeria	
	Frequency (N =490)	Percent (%)	Frequency (N =444)	Percent (%)
GENDER				

Male	241	49.2	219	49.3
Female	249	50.8	225	50.7
AGE				
18-29	469	95.7	411	92.6
30-39	21	4.3	29	6.5
40-Above	00	00	4	0.90
ETHNICITY				
Black	478	97.6	444	100.0
Indian	12	2.4	00	00
MARITAL STATUS				
Single	477	97.3	401	90.3
Married	12	2.4	38	8.6
Divorced	1	0.20	5	1.1
FACULTY				
Agriculture and	139	28.4	68	15.3

Science				
Arts	158	32.2	124	28.0
Commerce, Admin and Law	75	15.3	112	25.2
Education	118	24.1	140	31.5

4.2.2 COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS IN SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN AND NIGERIAN RURAL BASED UNIVERSITIES

Table 4.1 shows the demographic profile of undergraduate university students (respondents) who participated in the study. Data from the selected South African and Nigerian universities are compared in order to know the level of similarities and differences that exist in the demographic data of respondents, the experienced learning challenges, causes of the learning challenges and countermeasures put up by students in South Africa and Nigeria. The following variables (Gender, Ethnicity, Marital status and Faculty) formed part of the profiles of the respondents. Based on the findings, majority of the undergraduate students who participated in the survey were blacks, singles and mostly between the ages of 18-29. The analysis shows that 50.4 percent were males from South Africa and 58.8 percent were males from Nigeria, while 49.6 percent were females from South Africa and 41.2 percent were females from Nigeria. With regards to age, most of the participants from both countries were between 18-29 years, while people aged 40 and above were the least to participate, with none at all coming from South Africa. Black and Indian ethnic groups in South Africa participated in the study with Black South Africans dominating (95.9%). This may be due to the choice of institution in which the study was conducted. The area is dominated by Black South Africans. However, Nigerians are not classified according to ethnic origins. All citizens of Nigeria are referred to as Nigerians. The faculties selected for the study were: Agriculture and Science, Arts, Commerce, Administration and Law, as well as Education. The researcher selected faculties that are similar, to ensure

uniformity. However, pilot studies were conducted in two selected institutions in both countries to check whether the instruments (questionnaire and interview schedule guide) were understandable as well as to make necessary modification in that regard. The data collected through questionnaire during the pilot study helped the researcher to modify the actual questionnaire that was used for the main study.

After analysing the demographic data retrieved from student respondents, the researcher worked on the second section of the questionnaire by tagging the responses of respondents with identification numbers. This was done for easy and clear identification. Thereafter, each response from the questionnaires was scored using a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) =4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) =2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

After the scoring by the researcher and cross examination of the scoring by an expert statistician, the results were transferred to a summary data sheet. The cross examination by an expert statistician was done in order to reduce the occurrence of error to the barest minimum. The scores were later systematically recoded. Each item was assigned its column with each scores tabulated since the data analysis involved item analysis.

All data were rechecked after the completion of statistical analyzes. The original scores were rechecked and compared alongside the data sheet. This was done in order to avoid and correct all forms of discrepancies, ensuring reliability.

Statistical tables together with analyzes and brief interpretation of the data from respondents are presented below.

4.2.3 SECTION 2 OF QUESTIONNAIRE: LEARNING CHALLENGES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NIGERIA

The distribution of data in table 4.2 displays the assessment of the value of students' response on their experiences of learning challenges (n=934).

Table 4.2: Respondents' views to whether students struggle trying to understand new concepts

Statement: I struggle trying to understand new concepts				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	13	2.7	2	0.5
Disagree	101	20.6	18	4.1
Agree	301	61.4	294	66.2
Strongly Agree	75	15.3	130	29.2
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.2 shows that 23.3% (2.7 + 20.6) of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) struggle trying to understand new concepts, while 76.7% (61.4 + 15.3) of the South Africa student respondents agree that they (students) struggle trying to understand new concepts. Meanwhile, 4.6 (0.5 + 4.1) of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) struggle trying to understand new concepts and 95.4% (66.2 + 29.2) agree that that they (students) struggle trying to understand new concepts. Generally, it can be observed that

majority of the respondents from the two selected rural universities agree/strongly agree that they (students) struggle trying to understand new concepts. A total of 781 out of 934 total respondents translating to 83.6% affirmed that they struggle trying to understand new concepts. Hence, it can be upheld that students from the two countries struggle trying to understand new concepts. Fook and Sidhu (2015) describe it as cognitive learning challenge. The finding coincides with the work of Akoojee and Nkomo (2008) who opine that students from black dominated institutions struggle while trying to learn. They further aver that such struggle is due to lack of quality in the educational system.

Table 4.3: Respondents' views to whether students easily lose concentration when teaching and learning activities are in progress

Statement: I easily lose concentration when teaching and learning activities are in progress				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	28	5.7	23	5.2
Disagree	176	35.9	75	16.9
Agree	222	45.3	211	47.5
Strongly Agree	64	13.1	135	30.4
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.3 indicates that 41.6% (5.7 + 35.9) of the South African respondents disagree that they do not easily lose concentration when teaching is on or when they are reading while 58.4% (45.3 + 13.1) of the student respondents from South Africa agree that they (students) easily lose concentration when teaching is on or when they are reading. However, 22.1% (5.2 + 16.9) of the

Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) easily lose concentration when teaching is on or when they are reading while 77.9% (47.5 + 30.4) of the Nigerian student respondents agree that they (students) easily lose concentration when teaching is on or when they are reading. The finding of the study shows that easy loss of concentration during learning activities constitute cognitive learning challenge for undergraduate university students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. This concurs with the work of Okioga (2013) who opine that easy loss of concentration constitutes learning challenges students. He however added that the socio-economic background of the students may be the cause for the easy loss of concentration. Hence, it can be deduced that socio-economy contributes to students' easy loss of concentration during learning exercise and that constitutes learning challenge. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory which explains the basic needs of humans also buttress the idea that individuals will first satisfy certain basic needs before moving towards self-fulfillment. This implies that students without food security and other basic needs are likely to lose concentration while undergoing learning process.

Table 4.4: Respondents' views to Lack of good foundation in the choice of course of students constitute learning challenge

Statement: Poor foundation in my choice of course is a learning challenge to me				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	21	4.3	11	2.5
Disagree	65	13.3	35	7.9
Agree	224	45.7	168	37.8
Strongly Agree	180	36.7	230	51.8
Total	490	100	444	100

The results from the Table 4.4 shows that 17.6% (13.3 + 4.3) of the South African student respondents disagree that lack of good foundation in their choice of course constitutes learning challenges for them (students) while 82.4% (36.7 + 45.7) of the South African student respondents agree that lack of good foundation in their choice of course constitutes learning challenges for them (students). Meanwhile, 10.4% (2.5 + 7.9) of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that lack of good foundation in their choice of course constitutes learning challenges for them (students) and 89.6% (51.8 + 37.8) agree that lack of good foundation in their choice of course constitutes learning challenges for them (students). The finding suggests that majority (85.9%) of the respondents from the two countries are in agreement that lack of good foundation in their choice of course constitutes learning challenges for them (students). This finding correlates with the works of Agba (2015); Wallet and Melgar (2015) who opine that the previous knowledge of students contributes to their abilities to learn new concepts. According to Souriyavongsa et al. (2013), previous knowledge is important in ensuring that new ideas are learnt. This implies that high school experiences of students influence their university education. Surmise to state that students with good high school education are likely to do better compared to students with poor high school experiences.

Table 4. 5: Respondents' views on whether student - lecturer relationship constitutes learning challenge

Statement: The way I relate with my lecturer is a learning challenge to me				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	37	7.6	19	4.3
Disagree	101	20.6	41	9.2
Agree	95	19.4	137	30.9
Strongly Agree	257	52.4	247	55.6

Total	490	100	444	100
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The results from the Table 4.5 shows that 28.2% of the South African student respondents disagree that their (students’) relationship with their lecturers influence their abilities to learn while 71.8% agree that their (students’) relationship with their lecturers influence their abilities to learn. However, 13.5% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that their (students’) relationship with their lecturers influence their abilities to learn while 86.5% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that their (students’) relationship with their lecturers influence their abilities to learn. This indicates that student-lecturer relationship is a major learning challenge for majority of the students in the selected rural universities. This finding concurs with the studies conducted by Gallagher (2013); Tucker (2016) and Kaufman and Sandilos (2016) which aver that poor student-lecturer relationship constitutes learning challenges experienced by students. Findings also show that this challenge can be minimized in environments where the student-lecturer ratio is manageable, compared to situations where students are overpopulated and only very few students can have good access to the available lecturers. On the contrary, Baumeister Campbell, Krueger and Vohs (2003) had earlier opined that it is the self-confidence of students and relationship with peers that determine the extent to which they will experience learning challenges. It is however believed that students who lack self-confidence will yet encounter learning challenges though they have good relationship with their lecturers. Consequently, Baker, Grant and Morlock (2008) as well as Shore (2016) assert that lecturers are to help students build self-confidence as they relate with them. Thus, student-lecturer relationship is important in curbing or combating learning challenges experienced by students.

Table 4.6: Respondents’ views on effect of distance to campus on students’ attendance of lectures

Statement: Distance to campus makes me absent myself from lectures		
	South African Respondents	Nigerian Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	67	13.7	59	13.3
Disagree	23	4.7	87	19.6
Agree	171	34.9	159	35.8
Strongly Agree	229	46.7	139	31.3
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.6 shows that 18.4% of the student respondents from South Africa disagree that distance to campus make them (students) to absent themselves from lectures while 81.6% of the South African student respondents agree that distance from campus make them (students) absent from lectures. However, 32.9% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that distance to campus make them (students) to absent themselves from lectures while 67.1% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that distance to campus make them (students) absent themselves from lectures. The finding concurs with the work of Piccoli, Ahmad, and Ives (2001) who avers that learning from a distance constitutes learning challenge. However, Jagers (2016) states that learning from a distance through the use of social media and internet is less problematic in this regard. Surmise to state that learning from a distance through internet holds its own challenges whereas learning face-to-face from a distance holds a different challenge. Hence, the application of personal resilience theory as opined by Southwick Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick and Yehuda (2014) becomes necessary.

Table 4.7: Respondents view on cultural diversity being a learning challenge

<p>Statement: The experiences in the university differs from the experiences at home and it constitutes learning challenge for me</p>
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Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	6	1.2	9	2.0
Disagree	25	5.1	15	3.4
Agree	185	37.8	114	25.7
Strongly Agree	274	56.0	306	68.9
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.7 indicates that 6.3% of South African student respondents disagree that the differences in campus and home experiences constitute learning challenges for them (students), while 93.8% agree that the differences in campus and home experiences constitute learning challenges for them (students). On the other hand, 5.4% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that the differences in campus and home experiences constitute learning challenges for them (students), while 94.6% agree that the differences in campus and home experiences constitute learning challenges for them (students). The finding from the study suggests that cultural diversity constitutes learning challenge for students, since the differences in the experiences at home and campus affects the learning abilities of majority of the students. This corresponds to the work of Meier and Hartell (2009) who opine that cultural diversity exists in universities and when not properly handled constitutes learning challenges for students.

Table 4.8: Respondents views on difficulty in comprehending lectures of foreign lecturers

Statement: Lectures taught by foreign lecturers are difficult for me to understand				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage

Strongly Disagree	83	16.9	151	34.0
Disagree	101	20.6	190	42.8
Agree	161	32.9	56	12.6
Strongly Agree	145	29.6	47	10.6
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.8 shows the responses of students from the selected universities in South Africa and Nigeria on the learning challenges experienced in lectures taught by foreign lecturers and their difficulty to understand. 37.5% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (student) experience learning challenges because of foreign lecturers, while 62.5% of the South African student respondents agree that they (student) experience learning challenges because of foreign lecturers. However, 76.8% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) experience learning challenges due to foreign lecturers, while 23.2% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that they (students) experience learning challenges due to foreign lecturers. From the finding, it can be deduced that the South African perspective of this study concurs with the work of Sium, Desai and Ritskes (2012) as well as Heleta (2016) who advocate the need for decolonisation of the education system in the African society for students to comprehend. This is because majority of the South African students agree that they experience learning challenges due to foreign lecturers. Moreover, decolonisation is used to mean the act of removing various Eurocentric cognitive and civilisational conceits from African institutions, in order to ensure that African systems and cultures are properly and adequately practiced (Heleta, 2016). However, the finding from the Nigerian perspective of the study counters the decolonization theory. Surmise to state that resilience theory as opined by (Perez Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado and Cortes 2009 and Corntassel, 2012) is explored amongst the Nigerian students selected for this study as the Nigerian students seem to be resilient ensuring that they succeed against all odds.

Table 4.9 shows the responses of students from the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria on language of instruction constituting learning challenge.

Table 4.9: Respondents views on language of instruction as learning challenge

Statement: Language of instruction constitutes learning challenge for me				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	51	10.4	238	53.6
Disagree	121	24.7	122	27.5
Agree	182	37.1	17	3.8
Strongly Agree	136	27.8	67	15.1
Total	490	100	444	100

35.1% of the South African student respondents disagree that language of instruction constitutes learning challenge for them (students), 64.9% agree that language of instruction constitutes learning challenge for them (students). Meanwhile, 81.1% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that language of instruction constitutes learning challenge for them (students) and 18.9% agree that language of instruction constitutes learning challenge for them (students). The finding of the South African part of this study concurs with the work of Sawir (2005) who opine that the language of instruction is important and can constitute learning challenge for students. However, the finding from the Nigerian part of the study contradicts the work of Sawir (2005), as language of instruction does not constitute learning challenge to majority of the Nigerian student respondents selected for this study. This implies that while majority of the South African student respondents experience learning challenge through the adopted language of instruction, majority of the Nigerian student respondents do not experience learning challenge through the adopted language of instruction. This discrepancy could be as a result of the way and manner the English language is taught to the students in the two different countries prior to the enrolment in

the university. This accounts for the reason why some foreign countries who adopt the English language as their first language (L1) seem to insist that English proficiency test must be written by their prospective university candidates from foreign countries where English is considered as official, foreign or second language (L2).

Table 4.10: Foreign Background of student constitutes learning challenge

Statement: Students with foreign background have difficulty studying in this institution				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	75	15.3	162	36.5
Disagree	99	20.2	156	35.1
Agree	111	22.7	44	9.9
Strongly Agree	205	41.8	82	18.5
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.10 shows the responses of students from the selected universities in South Africa and Nigeria on students' foreign background constituting learning challenge. 35.5% of the South African student respondents disagree that foreign background constitutes learning challenge for them (students) while 64.5% of the South African student respondents agree that foreign background constitutes learning challenge for them (students). Meanwhile, 71.6% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that foreign background constitutes learning challenge for them (students) and 28.4% agree that foreign background constitutes learning challenge for them (students). The finding indicates that while majority of the South African student respondents agree that they (students) experience learning challenges due to foreign background, majority of

the Nigerian students' respondents disagree that they do not encounter learning challenges due to their foreign background. Thus, the finding from the South African perspective of the study concurs to the finding of Gu, Schweisfurth and Day (2010) who state that foreign background affects the learning abilities of students. However, the result from the Nigerian students contradicts the finding of Gu, Schweisfurth and Day (2010) but coincides with the work of Okioga (2013) who disagrees that foreign background does not constitute learning challenges for students, rather he considers the socio-economic background of students as a more prevailing cause of learning challenges experienced by university students across the globe.

Table 4.11: Respondents view on students face difficulty trying to understand the English language

Statement: Students face difficulty trying to understand the English language				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	45	9.2	209	47.1
Disagree	91	18.6	106	23.9
Agree	206	42.0	53	11.9
Strongly Agree	148	30.2	76	17.1
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.11 shows the responses of students on how they experience difficulty trying to understand the English language. 27.8% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) encounter learning challenges trying to understand the English language, while 72.2% of the South African student respondents agree that they (students) encounter learning challenges trying to understand the English language. On the contrary, 71% of the Nigerian

student respondents disagree that they (students) encounter learning challenges trying to understand the English language, while 29% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that they (students) encounter learning challenges trying to understand the English language. Generally, while majority of the South African student respondents agree that they (students) experience challenges trying to understand English language, majority of the Nigerian student respondents disprove that they (students) do not experience challenges trying to understand the English language. The finding of the study suggests that South African students likely encounter more learning challenges based on the use of English language as medium of instruction compared to their counterparts in the selected Nigerian rural university. Meanwhile, Sawir (2005) opine that the adopted language of instruction has influence on the learning abilities of students. Surmise to state that the finding of the South African part of this study corroborates the work of Sawir (2005) who avers that learning challenges can be experienced due to the adopted language of instruction. However, the finding of the Nigerian part of this study seems to be in contrast with the work of Sawir (2005), as majority of the Nigerian students disagree that they (students) do not experience learning challenges because of the adopted language of instruction.

4.2.4 SECTION 3 OF QUESTIONNAIRE: CAUSES OF LEARNING CHALLENGES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NIGERIA

Understanding of Policies

Table 4.12: Respondents view on familiarity with national education policies

Statement: I am familiar with the educational policies of the Nation				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage

No	179	36.5	221	49.8
Unsure	247	50.4	168	37.8
Yes	64	13.1	55	12.4
Total	490	100	1111	100

Table 4.12 shows the responses of student respondents on their familiarity with national education policies. While, 36.5% of the South African student respondents disagree that they are not familiar with the education policies of South Africa, 50.4% are unsure and 13.1% agree that they are familiar with the policies. Meanwhile, 49.8% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they are not familiar with the educational policies of Nigeria, while 37.8% unsure of their familiarity with the national education policies and 12.4% agree that they are familiar with the education policies of Nigeria. The results show that majority of the students from the selected rural universities are either not familiar or unsure of their familiarity with the education policies of their nations. This implies that part of the learning challenges experienced by students in the selected rural based institutions may be due to lack of unfamiliarity with the education policies of their nations. This finding coincides with the work of Okebukola (2002) and report of OECD (2008) which indicates that policies are important and vary from one country to another and the familiarity of such policies by students aid academic success. Hence, students are expected to familiarize themselves with the policies of the institution and education policies of their nations in order to be able to avoid or overcome certain learning challenges.

Table 4.13: Respondents view on knowledge of policies being helpful

Statement: My knowledge of the educational policies has helped me to overcome learning challenges				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage

No	184	37.6	246	55.4
Unsure	247	50.4	164	36.9
Yes	59	12.0	34	7.7
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.13 reflects the responses of student respondents on how knowledge of policies has helped them (students). While 37.6% of the South African student respondents do not agree that their knowledge of education policies has helped them in overcoming learning challenges, 50.4% (majority) are unsure about knowledge of education policies being of help to them. However, 12.0% agree that their knowledge of educational policies has helped them in overcoming learning challenges. Meanwhile, 55.4% (majority) of the Nigerian student respondents do not agree that their knowledge of education policies have helped them to overcome learning challenges, 36.9% of the Nigerian student respondents are unsure. Moreover, 7.7% affirm that knowledge of education policies has been helpful. Surmise to state that while majority of the South African student respondents are unsure about their knowledge of education policies being of help to them, majority of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that knowledge of education policies has helped them. Hence, students' lack of knowledge or uncertainty of education policies constitutes learning challenges for students. This finding corroborates the works of Tomlinson (2014) and Budginaitė, Siarova, Sternadel, Mackonytė, and Spurga (2016) who opine that for students to succeed, education policies need to be channeled towards catering for them and made known to them. Hence, while policies are made by the government and institutions, they are to be made known and easily accessible to students. This helps to avail them the opportunity on their conducts and practices in the institutions.

Table 4.14: Respondents view on alignment of policies

Statement: The policies of the institution aligns with the national policy on education				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	187	38.2	231	52.0
Unsure	193	39.4	163	36.7
Yes	111	22.4	50	11.3
Total	490	100	444	100

52.0% of Nigerian student respondents disagree that the policies of their institution aligns with the national policy on education, 36.7% are unsure, while 11.3% agree that the policies of their institution aligns with the national policy on education. Surmise to state that while majority of the South African respondents are unsure of the policies of their institution being in alignment with the national policy on education, majority of the Nigerian student respondents disagree. This finding (majorly) from the Nigerian perspective suggests that policies of the institutions are in contrast with the national policies on education in some cases. However, the works of OCED (2008) and Budginaitė, Siarova, Sternadel, Mackonytė, and Spurga (2016) support the notion that there should be alignment in policies. In other words, policies of the institutions must align with national education policies. Hence, from the foregoing, it can be deduced that none alignment of policies of institution with national policies on education could be part of the reason for the learning challenges experienced by students.

Table 4.15: Views of the students on awareness of policies of institutions

Statement: I am aware of the policies of the institution				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	168	34.3	315	71.2
Unsure	220	44.9	92	20.7
Yes	102	20.8	36	8.1
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.15 shows that 34.3% of the South African students' respondents disagree that they are aware of the policies of the university, while 44.9% are unsure and 20.8% agree that they are aware of the policies of the institution. However, 71.2% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they are aware of the policies of their university, while, 20.7% are unsure and 8.1% agree that they are aware of the policies of their university. This suggests that majority of the student respondents in two selected rural universities are either not aware or unsure of the policies of their institutions. This finding corroborates the works of Mihanović, Batinić, and Pavičić (2016) and Serdyukov (2017) who in support of the motivation theory by Herzberg consider policies of institutions as constituting factors of dissatisfaction. The theory further states that the awareness of such policies by students tends to help them in combatting certain challenges that may arise. This implies that students need ensure that they acquaint themselves with the policies of their universities in order to overcome certain learning challenges.

Table 4.16: Views of the students on the favourability of institutional policies

Statement: The policies of the institution are favourable to me				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	119	24.3	130	29.3
Unsure	293	59.8	179	40.3
Yes	78	15.9	135	30.4
Total	1224	100	1111	100

Table 4.16 shows that 24.3% of the South African student respondents disagree that the policies of their institution are not favourable to them (students), while 59.8% are unsure and 15.9% agree that the policies of their institution are favourable to them. However, 29.3% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that the policies of their universities are not favourable to them (students), while 40.3% are unsure and 30.4% agree that the policies of their institution are favourable to them. This implies that majority of the student respondents from the two selected rural universities are unsure of the policies of their institutions being favourable to them (students). Herzberge’s motivation theory states that policies have influence in constituting challenges for people in organizations. Suffice therefore to state that students in the selected rural universities experience learning challenges due to unfavourable university policies. This is because majority of the student respondents affirmed that they are unsure of the university policies favouring them (students).

Infrastructural Resources

Table 4.17: Responses of students on access to library

Statement: I access the library well				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	90	18.4	102	23.0
Unsure	74	15.1	123	27.7
Yes	326	66.5	219	49.3
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.17 shows the responses of students on the level of accessibility of the library as an infrastructural resource of the university. 18.4% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) access library resources well, 15.1% are unsure, while 67% agree that they (students) access library resources well. In the same vein, 23.0% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) do not access the library resources, while, 27.7% are unsure and 49.3% agree that they (students) access library resources. Surmise to state that majority of the student respondents from the two selected rural universities access library resources, hence do not experience learning challenges due to access to library resources. This finding corroborates the works of Hanushek (1997) and Ogbogu (2014) who aver that learning challenges are not experienced due to access to library resources. Hanushek (1997) and Ogbogu (2014) however aver that other factors need to be considered.

Table 4.18: Responses of students on access to quality internet facilities

Statement: I have access to quality internet facilities around campus				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	129	26.3	230	51.8
Unsure	199	40.6	103	23.2
Yes	162	33.1	111	25.0
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.18 indicates that access to quality internet facility is a major challenge in the two selected rural universities. 26.3% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) do not have access to quality internet facility, 40.6% are unsure and 33.1% agree that they (students) have access to quality internet facility. On the contrary, 51.8% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) do not have access to quality internet facility, 23.2% are unsure and 25.0% agree that they (students) have access to quality internet facility. Based on the finding of the study, it can be deduced that low access to internet facilities contribute to the learning challenges experienced by the students in the selected rural institutions. This finding coincides with the works of Dysthe (2002), Johns (2003) and Rohleder et al. (2008) who aver that poor internet supply in institutions of learning contributes to the learning challenges that are experienced by students in such institutions.

Table 4.19: Responses of students on usage of audio-visuals during lectures

Statement: Our lectures are taught through the use of audio-visuals				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	105	21.4	222	50.0
Unsure	86	17.6	95	21.4
Yes	299	61.0	127	28.6
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.19 shows the result of the collected data on the availability and usage of audio-visuals during teaching and learning processes in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. 21.4% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) are not taught through the use of audio-visuals, 17.6% are unsure and majority (61.0%) agree that they are taught through the use of audio-visual aids. On the contrary, 50.0% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) are not taught through the use of audio-visuals, 21.4% are unsure while 28.6% of the Nigerian student respondents agree to the use of audio-visuals by lecturers during teaching and learning processes. Finding of the study shows that the use of audio-visual aids is relatively different in the two selected rural universities in the two countries. Surmise to state that while audio-visual aids are majorly used by lecturers in the selected South African rural university only few lecturers use audio-visual aids in the selected Nigerian university. This finding suggests that non-usage of audio-visual aids in the selected Nigerian university causes learning challenges for the students. This concurs with the work of Social learning theorists: Muro and Jeffrey (2008) which states that knowledge is to be constructed by the students based on what they (students) see, hear, touch and feel. Suffice to state that while lack of audio-visuals constitutes learning challenge for Nigerian students, it may not constitute learning challenge for South students, except it is not well utilized.

Table 4.20: Responses on recommended text materials as cause of learning challenge

Statement: I find it difficult to cope with the recommended text materials				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	38	7.8	142	31.9
Unsure	202	41.2	87	19.6
Yes	250	51.0	215	48.5
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.20 shows the responses of students on learning challenges based on recommended text materials by lecturers. Majority of the students from both countries experience learning challenges with the recommended text materials. The finding of the study coincides with the work of Fook and Sidhu (2015) who aver that recommended text materials constitute learning challenges for students. Social learning theory states that learning materials should be relevant to the culture of students (Bandura, 1977 & 1986 and Dai, 2015). Students learn faster in context. Thus, contextual learning should be promoted through the recommendation of text materials which will enhance such type of learning.

Table 4.21: Responses of students on access to laboratory equipment

Statement: I have access to equipment in the laboratories				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	97	19.8	235	52.9
Unsure	142	29.0	115	25.9
Yes	251	51.2	94	21.2
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.21 shows that 19.8% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) have access to laboratory equipment, 29.0% are unsure, while majority (51.2%) of the South African student respondents agree that they (students) have access to laboratory equipment. However, 52.9% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) have access to laboratory equipment, 25.9% of the student respondents from the selected Nigerian rural university are unsure, while 21.2% agree that they (students) have access to laboratory equipment. This suggests that students in the selected South African rural university have more access laboratory equipment compared to their counterparts in the selected Nigerian rural university. Thus, lack of quality access to laboratory equipment may be the cause of learning challenges for many students in the selected rural Nigerian university, while lack of laboratory equipment is not a cause of learning challenges to students in the selected South African rural university. The finding of the Nigerian part of the study corroborates the works of Akoojee and Nkomo (2008) and Souriyavongsa et al. (2013) who assert that access to quality laboratory equipment that enhances learning makes learning easy for students. This also implies that the rate of learning challenges experienced by students in the selected South African rural university is reduced due to the access to quality laboratory equipment given to students in the institution.

Assessment and Feedback

Table 4.22: Responses of students on assessment by lecturers

Statement: I am well assessed by lecturers every semester				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	93	19.0	55	12.4
Unsure	154	31.4	130	29.3
Yes	243	49.6	259	58.3
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.22 shows the responses of student respondents on the perception of students towards the level of assessment given to them by lecturers. 19.0% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) are well assessed by lecturers every semester. 31.4% of the South African student respondents are unsure, while 49.6% agree that they (students) are well assessed by lecturers every semester. However, 12.4% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) are well assessed by lecturers every semester. 29.3% of the Nigerian student respondents are unsure, while 58.3% agree that they (students) are well assessed by lecturers every semester. The finding indicates that majority of the students from both selected rural universities agree that they are well assessed by lecturers every semester. This implies that assessment of students according to the finding of study is relatively well carried out based on the opinion of student respondents in the selected universities in the two countries. Surmise to state that students in the selected rural universities do not experience learning challenges due to the type of assessment given to them by lecturers. This finding concurs with the work of Anzene (2014) who states that quality assessment enhances quality learning. Hence, the finding of this study implies that assessment is not a major contributing factor to the learning challenges

experienced by undergraduate university students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. Thus, learning challenges is expected to be reduced in these two countries based on the quality of assessment given to students.

Table 4.23: Responses of students on assessment types

Statement: I like the way we are assessed				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	55	11.2	55	12.4
Unsure	214	43.7	130	29.3
Yes	221	45.1	259	58.3
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.23 shows that 11.2% of the South African student respondents in the selected rural university disagree that they (students) do not like the way they are assessed. 43.7% of the South African student respondents in the selected rural university are unsure if they (students) like the way they are assessed. However, 45.1% of the South African respondents in the selected rural university agree that they (students) like the way they are assessed. Meanwhile, 12.4% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) do not like the way they are assessed. 29.3% of the Nigerian student respondents in the selected rural university are unsure if they (students) like the way they are assessed. Moreover, 58.3% of the Nigerian student respondents in the selected rural university agree that they (students) like the way they are assessed. The finding indicates that majority of the students from both countries are satisfied with the type of assessment given by lecturers. Contrary to the finding of Fook and Sidhu (2015) who opine that assessment type constitutes major learning challenges for students, the finding of this study

suggests that assessment type does not cause major learning challenges for students in the selected rural universities.

Table 4.24: Responses of students on usefulness of assessment given by lecturers

Statement: The assessment given by lecturers has helped to make me better				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	56	11.4	73	16.4
Unsure	114	23.3	117	26.4
Yes	320	65.3	254	57.2
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.24 indicates that 11.4% of the South African student respondents disagree that the assessment given to them (students) by lecturers has not helped to make them better. 23.3% of the South African student respondents are unsure if the assessment given to them (students) by lecturers has helped to make them better. However, 65.3% of the South African student respondents agree that the assessment given to them (students) by lecturers has helped to make them better. Meanwhile, 16.4% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that the assessment given to them (students) by lecturers has not helped to make them better. 26.4% of the Nigerian student respondents are unsure whether the assessment given to them (students) by lecturers has helped to make them better, while 57.2% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that the assessment given to them (students) by lecturers has helped to make them better. This finding shows that majority of the student respondents in the two selected rural universities agree that the assessment given to them (students) by lecturers is helpful and do not cause learning challenges for them. This finding coincides with the work of Anzene, (2014) who aver that the focus and reason for assessing students is to make them better. He further explains that assessments are to be relevant and helpful to students, otherwise, it will constitute learning challenges for the

students. Suffice to state that the assessments given to students by lecturers in the two selected rural universities are relevant to the students.

Table 25: Responses of students on feedback received from lecturers in class

Statement: I enjoy the type of feedback I get from lecturers in class				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	148	30.2	116	26.1
Unsure	230	46.9	181	40.8
Yes	112	22.9	147	33.1
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.25 shows that 30.2% of the South African student respondents in the selected rural university disagree that they (students) do not enjoy the type of feedback given to them (students) by lecturers in class. 46.9% of the South African student respondents in the selected rural university are unsure whether they (students) enjoy the type of feedback given to them (students) by lecturers in class. However, 22.9% of the South African student respondents in the selected rural university agree that they (students) enjoy the type of feedback given to them (students) by lecturers in class. Moreover, 26.1% of the Nigerian student respondents in the selected rural university disagree that they (students) do not enjoy the type of feedback given to them (students) by lecturers in class. 40.8% of the Nigerian student respondents in the selected rural university are unsure whether they (students) enjoy the type of feedback given to them (students) by lecturers in class. However, 33.1% of the Nigerian student respondents in the selected rural university agree that they (students) enjoy the type of feedback given to them (students) by lecturers in class. The finding of the study indicates that while majority of the students in the selected rural universities in the two countries are unsure regarding their decision on whether they (students) enjoy the type feedback received from lecturers in class, some state

that they do not enjoy the type of feedback received from lecturers in class, while only a few agree that they enjoy the type of feedback received from lecturers in class. Hence, it can be deduced that the type of feedback received by students from lecturers in the selected rural universities causes learning challenges for the students. This corroborates the work of Daniels and McBride (2001) who aver that learning is incomplete without proper feedback from lecturer and can constitute learning challenge for students. This is also supported with the social learning theory which though encourages construction of knowledge by students, yet explains the significance of the role of the lecturer. Suffice to state that majority of the students in the selected rural universities are pleased with the type of assessment given, but do not enjoy the type of feedback received from lecturers.

Table 4.26: Responses of students on electronic feedback from lecturers

Statement: I enjoy feedback received through email				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	126	25.7	174	39.2
Unsure	211	43.1	140	31.5
Yes	153	31.2	130	29.3
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.26 shows the responses of students regarding electronic feedback received from lecturers. 25.7% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) do not enjoy the feedback received from lecturers through email. 43.1% of the South African student respondents are unsure whether they (students) enjoy the feedback received from lecturers through email. However, 31.2% of the South African student respondents agree that they (students) enjoy the feedback received from lecturers through email. On the other hand, 39.2% of

the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) do not enjoy the feedback received from lecturers through email. 31.5% of the Nigerian student respondents are unsure whether they (students) enjoy the feedback received from lecturers through email. However, 29.3% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that they (students) enjoy the feedback received from lecturers through email. The result of the finding suggests poor electronic feedback from lecturers as one of the causes of learning challenges experienced by undergraduate university students in the selected countries. This corroborates the works of Tsai, Tsai and YiLin (2014) as well as Jovanovic and Devedzic (2015) who view feedback from lecturers as source of motivation for students. In addition, Kirkup and Kirkwood (2005) supports the use of ICT facilities in teaching and learning exercises. This includes assignments and feedbacks from lecturers. Hence, failure to maximize this avenue in the 21st century education system may cause learning challenges for students.

Academic Malpractice

In addition to the causes of learning challenges identified above, questions relating to academic malpractices were explored in form of statements to know the extent to which they influence the learning abilities of students in the selected universities in the two nations.

Table 4.27: Responses of students on sexual abuse by lecturers

Statement: Students are sexually abused by lecturers				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	173	35.3	111	25.0
Unsure	228	46.5	149	33.6
Yes	89	18.2	184	41.4

Total	490	100	444	100
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Table 4.27 shows the responses of students' respondents from both countries on sexual harassment by lecturers. 35.3% of the South African student respondents in the selected rural university disagree that they (students) are sexually abused by lecturers. 46.5% of the South African student respondents are unsure whether they (students) are sexually abused by lecturers. Moreover, 18.2% of the students agree that they are sexually abused by lecturers. However, 25.0% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) are sexually abused by lecturers. 33.6% of the Nigerian student respondents are unsure whether they (students) are sexually abused by lecturers. Meanwhile, 41.4% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that they (students) are sexually abused by lecturers. The finding of the study shows that sexual abuse of students by lecturers may not be a cause of learning challenges to South African students, but seems to cause learning challenge for Nigerian students. This corroborates the work of Dimkpa (2011) who avers that students in institutions of learning where sexual abuse thrives will experience learning challenges. Hence, existence of sexual abuse in universities is considered as one of the causes of learning challenges.

Table 4.28: Responses of students on victimization from lecturers

Statement: Lecturers exploit students				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	178	36.3	106	23.9
Unsure	240	49.0	163	36.7
Yes	72	14.7	175	39.4
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.28 shows responses of students' respondents on victimization by lecturers. 36.3% of the South African student respondents disagree that lecturers do not exploit them (students). 49.0% of the South African students are unsure whether lecturers exploit them (students). However, 14.7% agree that lecturers exploit them (students). 23.9% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that lecturers do not exploit them (students). 36.7% of the Nigerian students are unsure whether lecturers exploit them (students). However, 39.4% agree that lecturers exploit them (students). The finding of the study shows that victimization from lecturer is not a major cause of learning challenge to South African undergraduate university students. However, it is a major cause of learning challenges to Nigerian undergraduate university students. This coincides with the finding of the works of Ogbonnaya Ogbonnaya and Emma-Echiegu (2011) which explains that victimization from lecturers to students causes learning challenges. Surmise to state that while majority of Nigerian students experience learning challenges caused by victimization from lecturers, only a few South African student experience learning challenges due to victimization from their lecturers.

Table 4.29 Responses of students on lecturers shunning lecture periods

Statement: Lecturers shun lecture periods				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	153	31.2	132	29.7
Unsure	187	38.2	122	27.5
Yes	150	30.6	190	42.8
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.29 shows the responses of student respondents in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria on lecturers shunning lecture periods. 31.2% of the South African student respondents disagree that lecturers do not shun lecture periods. 38.2% of the South African student respondents are unsure whether lecturers shun lecture periods. Meanwhile, 30.6% of the South African student respondents agree that lecturers shun lecture periods. However, 29.7% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that lecturers do not shun lecture periods. 27.5% of the Nigerian student respondents are unsure as to whether lecturers shun lecture periods. Moreover, 42.8% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that lecturers shun lecture periods. The finding of the study corroborates with the works of Archibong (2012) as well as Kigotho and Lloyd (2004) who aver that regular absenteeism of lecturers from lectures causes learning challenge for the students. Thus, from the finding of this study, it can be deduced that absenteeism of lecturers is part of the causes of learning challenges experienced by students in the selected universities in the two countries.

Table 4.30: Responses of students on demand and reception of bribes by lecturers

Statement: Lecturers demand and receive bribes to pass students				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	146	29.8	118	26.6
Unsure	248	50.6	159	35.8
Yes	96	19.6	167	37.6
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.30 shows the responses of South African and Nigerian student respondents in the selected rural universities on their experiences of learning challenges due to demands of bribes by lecturers. 29.8% of the South African student respondents disagree that lecturers do not

demand or receive bribes to pass them (students). 50.6% of the South African student respondents are unsure whether lecturers demand or receive bribes in order to pass them (students). However, 19.6% of the South African student respondents agree that lecturers demand or receive bribes to pass them (students). Meanwhile, 26.6% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that lecturers do not demand or receive bribes to pass them (students). 35.8% of the Nigerian student respondents are unsure as to whether lecturers demand or receive bribes to pass them (student). However, 37.6% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that lecturers demand or receive bribes to pass them (students). The finding shows that while majority of the South African student respondents are unsure as to whether lecturers demand or receive bribes to pass them (students), majority of the Nigerian student respondents agree that lecturers demand or receive bribes to pass them (students). This implies that demand or collection of bribe to pass students may be one of the causes of learning challenges experienced by most students in the selected rural university in Nigeria but may not be one of the causes of learning challenges for most students in the selected rural South African university. The finding corroborates the works of Lloyd (2004) Dimkpa (2011) who describe demand or collection of bribe to pass students as lack of professionalism and considers it as one of the reasons for learning challenges experienced by students in universities.

Table 4.31: Responses of students on recruitment of incompetent lecturers

Statement: Incompetent lecturers are employed to lecture				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	106	21.6	163	36.7
Unsure	184	37.6	146	32.9
Yes	200	40.8	135	30.4
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.31 shows the responses of student respondents on the employment of incompetent lecturers by the university to lecture the students in the selected rural universities. 21.6% of the South African student respondents disagree that incompetent lecturers are not employed to lecture them (students). 37.6% of the South African student respondents are unsure as to whether incompetent lecturers are employed to lecture them (students). Moreover, 40.8% of the South African student respondents agree that incompetent lecturers are employed to lecture them (students). On the other hand, 36.7% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that incompetent lecturers are not employed to lecture them (students). 32.9% of the Nigerian student respondents are unsure as to whether incompetent lecturers are employed to lecture them (students). However, 30.4% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that incompetent lecturers are employed to lecture them (students). The finding of the study suggests that employment of incompetent lecturers to the position of lecturers contribute to the learning challenges experienced by undergraduate university students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. For instance, an average of 30-41 percent of student respondents attests that they are lectured by incompetent lecturers. This finding concurs to the findings of the works of Yariv (2011) and Prasetio, Azis and Fadhilah (2017) that employment of incompetent lecturers is an act of academic malpractice which causes learning challenges for students.

Table 4.32: Responses of students on campus unrest and insecurity being a cause of learning challenge

Statement: I experience learning challenge due to campus unrest and insecurity				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No	121	24.7	143	32.2
Unsure	87	17.7	56	12.6
Yes	282	57.6	245	55.2

Total	490	100	444	100
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Table 4.32 shows the responses of student respondents on campus unrest and insecurity being a cause of learning challenge. 24.7% of the South African student respondents disagree that campus unrest and insecurity does not cause learning challenges for them (students). 17.7% of the South African student respondents are unsure as to whether campus unrest and insecurity cause learning challenges for them (students). 57.6% of the South African student respondents agree that campus unrest and insecurity cause learning challenges for them (students). However, 32.2% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that campus unrest and insecurity does not cause learning challenges for them (students). 12.6% of the Nigerian student respondents are unsure as to whether campus unrest and insecurity cause learning challenges for them (students). Moreover, 55.2% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that campus unrest and insecurity cause learning challenges for them (students). The finding suggests that majority of the students in the selected rural universities experience learning challenges because of campus unrest and insecurity. This finding coincides with the work of Nkosi (2012) and Isokpan and Durojaye (2016) who state that students are hindered from moving freely and having peace of mind to study without fear in unsecured environments. Isokpan and Durojaye (2016) further opine that sometimes students are hindered from moving freely and accessing universities in such areas where there are frequent attacks by hoodlums. For instance, some students from South West Nigeria schooling in some North based universities in Nigeria where the insurgence is prevalent have been killed, while some have been withdrawn by parents and others had delays going back to campus for fear of being harmed (Isokpan & Durojaye, 2016). This affects the learning abilities of undergraduate university students as not all learning activities take place in classrooms, some occur outside. Similarly, according to Makoni (2014) and Isokpan and Durojaye (2016) student unrest seems to be a regular occurrence on campus. This is usually caused by the activities of cultists and political crises emanating from students' political bodies. Insecurity is a major factor that increases the rate of learning challenges in Nigeria (Obiajulu, 2012). Undergraduate university students will not avail themselves to be taught in an unsecured environment, neither will lecturers be present to transfer knowledge in such environment. Proper

and quality learning process takes place in peaceful and salient environments (Ajuwon & Oyeniya 2010 and Makoni, 2014).

Comparisons between South Africa and Nigeria for each of the Factors

To carry out the pair-wise comparisons of the respondents' views on each of the factors between South African and Nigerian respondents, Mann-Whitney U-statistic was employed. This statistic is a nonparametric counterpart of the usual two-sample t-test. The use of two-sample t-test parse is not valid because the data collected for this study are on ordinal scale and the two-sample t-test requires at least, interval scale of measurement.

Table 4.33: Comparative Analysis of the Responses from the two countries on Understanding of Policies

SN	Statement	Country	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Test Statistic	P-Value
1	I am familiar with the educational policies of the Nation	SA	490	447.59	219318.50	99023.50	0.009
		NG	444	489.47	217326.50		
		Total	934				
2	Knowledge of policies on education has helped me to be better	SA	490	430..59	210987	90692	< 0.0001
		NG	444	508.24	225658		
		Total	934				
3	The policies of the institution aligns with the national policy on education	SA	490	438.07	214656	94361	< 0.0001
		NG	444	499.98	221989		
		Total	934				
4	I am aware of the	SA	490	384.66	188483.50		

	policies of the institution	NG	444	558.92	248161.50	68188	< 0.0001
		Total	934				
5	The policies of the institution are favourable to me.	SA	490	474.95	232725.50	105129.5	< 0.0001
		NG	444	459.28	203919.50		
		Total	934				

From Table 4.33, it can be deduced that responses from the two countries on each of the statements are significantly different since the P-value in all the five statements in the Table are less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, it can be concluded that respondents' views on understanding of policies from the two countries are statistically similar. Moreover, statements from open ended questions show that the understanding students have on policies influence their learning abilities. On the contrary, while Corntassel (2012) opines that indigenous people are to kick against the practice of foreign policies, Borysiewicz (2015) explains that people in an environment such as study place only need to understand the policies in order to succeed. Surmise to state that while Corntassel (2012) suggests the decolonization of the institutions, Borysiewicz (2015) suggests that policies should be understood by students. Meanwhile, the findings of the study show that students' lack of understanding of the policies of institutions constitute learning challenges for them (students).

Table 4.34: Comparative Analysis of the Responses from the two countries on Infrastructural Resources

SN	Statement	Country	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Test Statistic	P-Value
1	Students access the library very well	SA	490	499.97	244983	92872	< 0.0001
		NG	444	431.67	191662		

		Total	934				
2	Students have access to quality internet facilities around campus	SA	490	488.08	239157	98698	0.009
		NG	444	444.79	197488		
		Total	934				
3	Audio-visuals are used for lecturing	SA	490	520.50	255044.50	82810.50	< 0.0001
		NG	444	409.01	181600.50		
		Total	934				
4	Text materials are used for lecturing	SA	490	426.74	209101	88806	< 0.0001
		NG	444	512.49	227544		
		Total	934				
5	Students have access to equipment in the laboratories.	SA	490	479.91	235154	102701	0.110
		NG	444	453.81	201491		
		Total	934				

From the Table 4.34, it can be deduced that responses from the two countries on each of the statements are significantly similar since the P-value for all the statements in the Table are less than the significance level (0.05) except that of statement 5 (students have access to equipment in the laboratories) in which the P-value (0.110) is greater than 0.05 which implies that submissions from the two countries on that statement are different. Hence, it can be concluded that respondents' views on Infrastructural Resources (IR) from the two countries are statistically similar aside those on students' accessibility to equipment in the laboratories. This finding suggests that students in the two selected rural universities experience learning challenges due to infrastructures, except for the South African students who seem to have access to more equipped laboratories than their counterparts in the selected rural Nigerian university.

Table 4.35: : Comparative Analysis of the Responses from the two countries on Assessment and Feedback

SN	Statement	Country	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Test Statistic	P-Value
1	Students are well assessed every semester	SA	490	453.13	222035	101740	0.048
		NG	444	483.36	214610		
		Total	934				
2	The type of assessment given to students is commendable	SA	490	463.30	227018	106723	0.585
		NG	444	472.13	209627		
		Total	934				
3	The assessment given by lecturers help to make students better	SA	490	497.31	243686	94172	< 0.0001
		NG	444	464.60	192962		
		Total	934				
4	Students enjoy the type of feedback they get from lecturers	SA	490	465.36	228025	107730	< 0.0001
		NG	444	469.86	208620		
		Total	934				
5	Students enjoy feedback received through email	SA	490	491.71	240935.50	96919.50	0.002
		NG	444	440.79	195709.50		
		Total	934				

From the Table 4.35, it can be deduced that responses from the two countries on each of the statements are significantly different since the P-value for all the statements in the Table are less

than the significance level (0.05) except that of statement 2 (the type of assessment given to students is commendable) in which the P-value (0.585) is greater than 0.05 which implies that submissions from the two countries on that statement are similar. Hence, it can be concluded that respondents' views on Assessment and Feedback from the two countries are statistically different, except on the type of assessment and feedback given to the students.

From the Table 4.36, it can be deduced that responses from the two countries on each of the statements are significantly different since the P-value for all the statements in the Table are less than the significance level (0.05). Thus, it can be concluded that respondents' views on Academic Malpractice from the two countries are statistically similar. This implies that students from the two selected rural universities experience similar forms of malpractices, and such affect their learning abilities.

Table 4.36: Comparative Analysis of the Responses from the two countries on Academic Malpractice

SN	Statement	Country	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Test Statistic	P-Value
1	Students are sexually abused by lecturers	SA	490	421.10	206340.50	86045.50	< 0.0001
		NG	444	518.70	230304.50		
		Total	934				
2	Lecturers victimize students	SA	490	418.65	205138	84843	< 0.0001
		NG	444	521.41	231507		
		Total	934				
3	Lecturers shun lecture periods	SA	490	450.59	220789.50	100494.50	0.033
		NG	444	486.16	215855.50		
		Total	934				
4	Lecturers receive bribes to make pass students	SA	490	444.36	217737	97442	0.003
		NG	444	493.04	218908		
		Total	934				
5	Incompetent lecturers are employed to lecture	SA	490	500.76	245373	92482	< 0.0001
		NG	444	430.79	191272		
		Total	934				

Table 4.37: Comparative Analysis of the Responses from the two countries on Learning Challenges amongst Students

SN	Statement	Country	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Test Statistic	P-Value
1	Students struggle trying to understand new concepts	SA	490	412.44	202094.50	81799.50	< 0.0001
		NG	444	528.27	234550.50		
		Total	934				
2	Students easily lose concentration when teaching is on or when they are reading	SA	490	392.10	192129.50	71834.50	< 0.0001
		NG	444	550.71	244515.50		
		Total	934				
3	Lack of good foundation in the choice of course of students constitute learning challenge	SA	490	422.70	207121	86826	< 0.0001
		NG	444	516.95	229524		
		Total	934				
4	Students relationship with their lecturers influence their ability to learn	SA	490	427.88	209662	89367	< 0.0001
		NG	444	511.22	226983		
		Total	934				
5	Distance to campus make students to absent themselves from lectures	SA	490	504.77	247338	90517	< 0.0001
		NG	444	426.37	189307		
		Total	934				

From the Table 4.37, it can be deduced that responses from the two countries on each of the statements are significantly different since the P-value for all the statements in the Table are less

than the significance level (0.05) which implies that submissions from the two countries on the statements are similar. Hence, it can be concluded that respondents' views on Learning Challenges amongst students from the two countries are statistically similar.

Table 4.38: Comparative Analysis of the Responses from the two countries Cultural Diversity

SN	Statement	Country	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Test Statistic	P-Value
1	The experiences in the university differs from the experiences at home	SA	490	451.53	221248.50	100953.5	0.029
		NG	444	485.13	215396.50		
		Total	934				
2	Students are affected by differences in culture of the institution and home	SA	490	423.86	207692	87397	< 0.0001
		NG	444	515.66	228953		
		Total	934				
3	students with foreign background have difficulty studying in this institution	SA	490	398.69	195360	75065	< 0.0001
		NG	444	543.43	241285		
		Total	934				
4	Lectures taught by foreign lecturers are difficult to understand	SA	490	486.49	238382.50	99472.5	0.019
		NG	444	446.54	298262.50		
		Total	934				
5	Students force themselves to learn the English language	SA	490	490.57	240379.50	97475.5	0.004
		NG	444	442.04	196265.50		
		Total	934				

From the Table 4.38, it can be deduced that responses from the two countries on each of the statements are significantly different since the P-value for all the statements in the Table are less than the significance level (0.05) which implies that submissions from the two countries on the statements are similar. Hence, it can be concluded that respondents' views on Cultural Diversity from the two countries are statistically similar.

Table 4.39: Comparative Analysis of the Responses from the two countries Cultural Diversity

SN	Statement	Country	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Test Statistic	P-Value
1	Lecturers teach using home language	SA	490	455.69	223288	102993	0.128
		NG	444	480.53	213357		
		Total	934				
2	Students use their personal data subscription to browse	SA	490	351.51	172242	51947	< 0.0001
		NG	444	595.5	264403		
		Total	934				
3	Students use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught	SA	490	396.26	194167	73872	< 0.0001
		NG	444	546.12	242478		
		Total	934				
4	Students teach one another by themselves	SA	490	395.04	193567.5	73272.5	< 0.0001
		NG	444	547.47	243077.5		
		Total	934				
5	Students improvise to	SA	490	397.96	195002		

use different places as class-rooms	NG	444	544.24	241643	74707	< 0.0001
	Total	934				

From the Table 5.37, it can be deduced that responses from the two countries on each of the statements are significantly different since the P-value for all the statements in the Table are less than the significance level (0.05) which implies that submissions from the two countries on the statements are similar. Hence, it can be concluded that respondents' views on Countermeasures from the two countries are statistically similar. However, because the P-value of the first statement is higher than 0.05, it means that there is significant difference in the responses of students to statement 1. This implies that while lecturers from the selected rural university in South Africa adopt the home language as a countermeasure, it does not apply to lecturers in the selected rural Nigerian university. This discrepancy can be as a result of the universality in the state of origin and language spoken by students in the selected Nigerian institution.

Below are models created based on the responses retrieved from student respondents in the selected universities in South Africa and Nigeria.

Table 4.40: South Africa Model

Factor	Estimate	Standard Error	Wald's Statistics	P-value	Interpretation
Constant	2.97126	0.97869	9.12636	0.0037	Significant
Gender	0.1632	0.13635	1.03424	0.3052	Not Significant
Age	-0.7932	0.34845	3.71074	0.0585	Not Significant

Marital Status	-0.2988	0.55146	0.21008	0.6628	Not Significant
Religion	-0.0144	0.07474	0.02626	0.8627	Not Significant
Race	0.6108	0.11817	19.04355	< 0.0001	Significant
Faculty	-0.1608	0.06262	4.7773	0.035	Significant
Policies	-1.5132	0.15857	64.77837	< 0.0001	Significant
Infrastructures	-1.5924	0.1515	79.56982	< 0.0001	Significant
Feedback	0.1668	0.15352	0.84234	0.3264	Not Significant
Malpractice	0.6792	0.10605	29.1486	< 0.0001	Significant
Diversity	1.158	0.13029	56.57414	< 0.0001	Significant
Countermeasures	0.7008	0.10403	32.23314	< 0.0001	Significant

Learning Challenges

$$\begin{aligned}
&= 2.9713 + 0.1632 * Gender - 0.7932 * Age - 0.2988 * Marital Status \\
&- 0.0144 * Religion + 0.6108 * Race - 0.1608 * Faculty - 1.5132 * Policies \\
&- 1.5924 * Infrastructures + 0.1668 * Feedback + 0.6792 * Malpractice \\
&+ 1.158 * Diversity + 0.7008 * Countermeasures
\end{aligned}$$

The model has the goodness-of-fit Pearson's Chi-square value of 2208.8992 with the p-value <0.0001 indicating that the fitted model is good.

The findings based on the model presented in table 4.40 show that gender, age, marital status, religion and feedback are not significant factors to be considered in relation to the learning challenges experienced by the South African student respondents. However, race, faculty, policies (university and national), infrastructures, malpractices, cultural diversity and countermeasures put up by students and lecturers are important factors to be considered in relating with the learning challenges experienced by South African undergraduate students in the selected rural university.

Table 4.41:Nigeria Model

Factor	Estimate	Standard Error	Wald's Statistics	P-value	Interpretation
Constant	6.19446	0.81305	57.54475	<0.0001	Significant
Gender	1.0608	0.14847	36.73269	< 0.0001	Significant
Age	0.9792	0.26462	9.81619	0.0026	Significant
Marital Status	1.4796	0.26664	22.09072	< 0.0001	Significant
Religion	-0.1788	0.1515	0.99586	0.3128	Not Significant
Race	-2.6688	0.22523	100.18493	< 0.0001	Significant
Faculty	-0.072	0.06262	0.95748	0.3403	Not Significant
Policies	0.4032	0.15049	5.16615	0.024	Significant
Infrastructures	-0.1596	0.12827	1.111	0.294	Not Significant
Feedback	-0.4068	0.12625	7.46087	0.007	Significant

Malpractice	0.576	0.10605	21.21404	< 0.0001	Significant
Diversity	0.8928	0.12221	38.40525	< 0.0001	Significant
Countermeasures	0.4908	0.13635	9.27786	0.0024	Significant

Learning Challenges

$$\begin{aligned}
&= 6.1945 + 1.0608 * Gender + 0.9792 * Age + 1.4796 * Marital Status \\
&- 0.1788 * Religion - 2.6688 * Race - 0.072 * Faculty + 0.4036 * Policies \\
&- 0.1596 * Infrastructures - 0.4068 * Feedback + 0.576 * Malpractice \\
&+ 0.8928 * Diversity + 0.4908 * Countermeasures
\end{aligned}$$

The model has the goodness-of-fit Pearson’s Chi-square value of 1997.835 with the p-value <0.0001 indicating that the fitted model is good.

The findings based on the model presented in table 4.41 show that religion, faculty and infrastructures are not significant factors to be considered in relation to the learning challenges experienced by the Nigerian student respondents. However, gender, age, marital status, policies (university and national), feedback, malpractices, cultural diversity and countermeasures put up by students and lecturers are important factors to be considered in relating with the learning challenges experienced by the Nigerian undergraduate students in the selected rural university

Table 4. 42: Combined Model (Combining the two countries)

Factor	Estimate	Standard Error	Wald’s Statistics	P-value	Interpretation
Constant	2.79684	0.51106	29.71016	<0.0001	Significant

Country	0.2556	0.10706	4.06525	0.0425	Significant
Gender	0.2424	0.09292	4.91365	0.0257	Significant
Age	-0.3492	0.19291	2.34118	0.1328	Not Significant
Marital Status	0.2424	0.21513	0.91203	0.4142	Not Significant
Religion	0.0756	0.06262	1.04232	0.351	Not Significant
Race	-0.1416	0.09696	1.52611	0.249	Not Significant
Faculty	-0.1752	0.04242	12.28463	< 0.0001	Significant
Policies	-0.534	0.09999	20.19394	< 0.0001	Significant
Infrastructures	-0.7944	0.09191	53.33406	< 0.0001	Significant
Feedback	-0.3528	0.08787	11.65439	0.0012	Significant
Malpractice	0.6384	0.06666	65.0945	< 0.0001	Significant
Diversity	0.9468	0.08181	96.70548	< 0.0001	Significant
Countermeasures	0.4824	0.07676	27.93963	< 0.0001	Significant

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{Learning Challenges} = & 2.7968 + 0.2556 * \text{Country} + 0.2424 * \text{Gender} - 0.3492 * \text{Age} \\
& + 0.2424 * \text{Marital Status} + 0.0756 * \text{Religion} - 0.1416 * \text{Race} - 0.1752 * \text{Faculty} \\
& - 0.534 * \text{Policies} - 0.7944 * \text{Infrastructures} - 0.3528 * \text{Feedback} + 0.6384 \\
& * \text{Malpractice} + 0.9468 * \text{Diversity} + 0.4824 * \text{Countermeasures}
\end{aligned}$$

The model has the goodness-of-fit Pearson's Chi-square value of 4198.9710 with the p-value <0.0001 indicating that the fitted model is good.

Table 4.42 shows that gender, age of students, marital status and feedback received by students are not significant factors to be considered in relating with the learning challenges experienced by the South African student respondents in the selected rural university. However, they are significant factors to be considered in relation to the responses of the Nigerian student respondents in the selected rural university.

NOTE: All tests were carried out at 5% level of significance

Table 4.42 shows that country, gender, faculty, policies, infrastructures, feedback, malpractice and countermeasures are significant to learning challenges. Meanwhile, age, marital status and race are insignificant. This is based on the demographic characteristics of respondents.

4.2.5 COUNTERMEASURES OF LEARNING CHALLENGES

Students and lecturers put up different countermeasures in attempts to manage different situations and learning challenges they encounter using various ideas. Based on the responses of the student respondents, the tables below are used to show the different countermeasures put up by lecturers and students in the selected universities from the two countries.

Table 4.43: Responses of students on the adoption of home language by lecturers

Statement: Lecturers teach using home language				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	203	41.4	75	16.9
No	217	44.3	326	73.4
Sometimes	70	14.3	43	9.7

Total	490	100	444	100
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Table 4.43 shows that 41.4% of the South African student respondents agree that lecturers lecture with the home language. 44.3% of the South African student respondents disagree that lecturers do not lecture with the home language. 14.3% of the South African student respondents agree that sometimes lecturers lecture with the home language. However, 16.9% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that lecturers lecture with the home language. 73.4% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that lecturers do not lecture with the home language. Moreover, 9.7% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that sometimes lecturers lecture with the home language. The finding of this study indicates that more South African lecturers adopt home language as medium of instruction compared to their counterparts in Nigerian universities. The finding of the study from the South African perspective coincides with the argument of the decolonization theorists who opine that African system of education should be decolonized to enhance the learning abilities of African students. However, the reverse is the case with the Nigerian students. The finding of the study from the Nigerian perspective coincides with the theory of resilience which encourages students to be resolute in learning at all cost.

Table 4.44: Responses of students on use of personal data for online academic work

Statement: Students use their personal data subscription to browse				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	83	16.9	317	71.4
No	360	73.5	43	9.7
Sometimes	47	9.6	84	18.9
Total	1224	100	444	100

Table 4.44 shows that 16.9% of the South African student respondents agree that they (students) use their personal data to surf the internet when attending to academic work. 73.5% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) do not use their personal data to surf the internet when attending to academic work. However, 9.6% of the South African student respondents agree that they (students) sometimes use their personal data to surf the internet when attending to academic work. However, 71.4% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that they (students) use their personal data to surf the internet when attending to academic work. 9.7% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) do not use their personal data to surf the internet when attending to academic work. However, 18.9% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that they (students) sometimes use their personal data to surf the internet when attending to academic work. This finding indicates that majority of the Nigerian student respondents in the selected rural university use their personal data to surf the internet when attending to academic work. The finding of the study from the Nigerian perspective corroborates the McClelland's Achievement Theory (1958) which explains that students put extra effort in order to get the desired achievement. The work of Weihrich, Cannice and Koontz (2008) also supports the view that extra efforts are made for success to be achieved. Meanwhile, South African students may not need to put-up countermeasures as this, since they have better access to internet facilities.

Table 4.45: Responses of students on personal study through internet

Statement: Students use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	122	24.9	225	50.7
No	203	41.4	87	19.6
Sometimes	165	33.7	132	29.7

Total	490	100	444	100
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Table 4.45 shows that 24.9% of the South African student respondents agree that they (students) use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught. 41.4% of the South African student respondents disagree that they (students) do not use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught. However, 33.7% of the South African student respondents agree that they (students) sometimes use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught. Meanwhile, 50.7% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that they (students) use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught. 19.6% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that they (students) do not use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught. However, 29.7% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that they (students) sometimes use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught. The finding of the South African perspective of this study suggests that though South African students have more access to internet, they do not maximize it for academic work. However, Nigerian students from the finding of the study tend to maximize their personal data for internet related academic work. This corroborates with the works of Wagner, (2001) and Kirkup and Kirkwood (2005) who opine that the internet can be a source of distraction some times. The finding also coincides with motivation theory of Herzberge (1923-2000) who opine that lecturers are to guide students in learning. This implies that provision of all the necessary learning materials is not enough; rather students are to be supervised to create their own knowledge.

Table 4.46: Responses of students on use of tutorials

Statement: Students teach one another by themselves (Tutorials)				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	222	45.3	313	70.5

No	47	9.6	56	12.6
Sometimes	221	45.1	75	16.9
Total	490	100	444	100

Table 4.46 shows that 45.3% of the South African student respondents agree that students teach one another by themselves through tutorials. 9.6% of the South African student respondents disagree that students do not teach one another by themselves through tutorials. Meanwhile, 45.1% of the South African student respondents agree that students sometimes teach one another by themselves through tutorials. However, 70.5% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that students teach one another by themselves through tutorials. 12.6% of the Nigerian student respondents disagree that students do not teach one another by themselves through tutorials. Moreover, 16.9% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that students sometimes teach one another by themselves through tutorials. The finding of the study suggests that students maximize tutorial sessions as countermeasure to learning challenges. The finding concurs with the work of Baumeister et al. (2003) which states that students learn better and gain self-confidence during tutorial sessions. The finding also supports environmental resilience theory explained by Perez et al. (2009) and Clark and Dumas (2015) as supports received from peers. This shows that students' learning abilities are greatly enhanced through tutorials: also known as peer learning.

Table 4.47 indicates that 48.8% of the South African student respondents agree that students and lecturers improvise to use different places as classrooms. 11.6%48.8% of the South African student respondents disagree that students and lecturers do not improvise to use different places as classrooms. However, 39.6%48.8% of the South African student respondents agree that students and lecturers sometimes improvise to use different places as classrooms. Meanwhile, 78.6% 48.8% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that students and lecturers improvise to use different places as classrooms. 9.9%48.8% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that students and lecturers improvise to use different places as classrooms.

Table 4.47: Responses of students on improvisation of classrooms

Statement: Students and lecturers improvise to use different places as classrooms				
Response	South African Respondents		Nigerian Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	239	48.8	349	78.6
No	57	11.6	44	9.9
Sometimes	194	39.6	51	11.5
Total	490	100	444	100

Moreover, 11.5%48.8% of the Nigerian student respondents agree that students and lecturers improvise to use different places as classrooms. The finding of the study suggests that lecture venues (building) are challenges faced by students in the two institutions. Hence, the countermeasure put up by the students and lecturers include the use of venues that are not lecture conducive for lectures. This is supported by both resilience theory (Perez et al., 2009) and human motivation theory (Passer and Smith 2001). In other words, while the students are motivated to work, they are supported by the lecturers to ensure that teaching and learning takes place regardless of the challenges.

4.3. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the analysis of quantitative data which was collected from student respondents. The analysis showed that similar common learning challenges such as cognitive learning challenges, lecturers-students relationship, among others are the various learning challenges experienced by students. The causes of the identified learning challenges which

include facilities, assessment and feedback from lecturers amongst others were also analysed and consequently discussed. The next chapter presents the analysis of qualitative data collected from academic staff members through semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an analysis of data collected by means of semi-structured interview. The target was to get answers to the research questions stated in Chapter one. The research questions are as follow: “What are the learning challenges of undergraduate students in selected rural universities of South Africa and Nigeria? What are the causes of learning challenges among undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria? What measures can be used to alleviate undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria from learning challenges?” In addition to the summary of data which is presented thematically, a brief interpretation is also provided to contextualize the responses into the objectives of the study which are as follow: “To investigate the learning challenges of undergraduate students in selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. To find out the causes of learning challenges among undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. To explore the measures that can be used to alleviate undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria from learning challenges”.

5.2 PERCEPTION OF LECTURERS’ ABOUT LEARNING CHALLENGES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

5.2.1 THE PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The process of qualitative data analysis began with the development of transcripts from audio-tapes by the researcher. The responses were classified according to the trends, themes and

patterns of thought elicited from interview sessions. This is supported by Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) who opine that qualitative data analysis entails breaking down of data, examining, comparing and categorizing the data. Kumar (2011) added that the breaking down of data into discrete parts should involve examination and comparison of data for easy identification of similarities and differences.

5.2.1.1. Presentation of Retrieved Data from Interviews

The data retrieved data from interviews conducted with lecturers in the selected universities in the two countries are presented in tabular form. The responses are presented in the tables below

Responses from lecturers in the selected South African university on learning challenges among undergraduate university students in South Africa

Theme: Meaning of Learning Challenges:

Academic staff from the two selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria gave various meanings to the term 'learning challenges' based on their different perceptions. Some meanings put-up by interviewed lecturers from the South African based rural university are presented below, with "SAL" representing South African Lecturer:

SAL 1: Learning challenges could be any barrier depriving a student from participating in active learning.

SAL 2: Learning challenges are physical and visible factors that thwart or stop students from grasping whatever is taught or read within a given environment.

SAL 3: Learning challenges are the barriers which hinder learning from taking place, or distorts the flow of students during any learning exercise.

SAL 4: Learning challenges are all the hindrances to smooth academic learning on the part of the learners. These could be classified as natural or artificial impediments.

SAL 5: Learning is an exercise, so everything that continuously makes the exercise difficult should be referred to as learning challenges.

Some meanings of learning challenges as expressed by some Nigerian rural university based lecturers are stated below, with “Nig. L” representing Nigerian Lecturer:

Nig. L1: Anything that prevents students from comprehending what is taught by lecturers or read by them.

Nig. L2: Challenges encountered from institution, peers, families, and so on, hindering students from getting to understand what they are taught or what they read are learning challenges.

Nig. L3: All that make learning difficult for students should be categorized as learning challenges. Learning challenges are difficulties that deny a student the opportunity to comprehend what lecturers teach. It hinders them from active participation in class tasks.

Nig. L4: Physical, material, human, resource that makes it difficult for students to comprehend all that are taught or all that they study are referred to as learning challenges.

Nig. L5: Challenges emanating from peers, family members, academic and non-academic members of staff that slows down the learning pace of students are learning challenges.

From the comments of the lecturers, learning challenges are difficulties encountered by students in the pursuit of knowledge and academic success. They are difficulties emanating mainly from

lack of physical and material substances or resources such as: infrastructures, finance, among others. This includes challenges emanating from family, peer, and individual students. Thus, learning challenges are problems faced by students in an attempt to comprehend new concepts and acquire knowledge. Learning challenges are difficulties which hampers the smooth running of acquisition of knowledge.

Additionally, comments of lecturers from the two institutions show that the perception of learning challenges in South Africa and Nigeria are similar. From the interviews conducted with lecturers, it can be deduced that learning challenges entails barriers that hamper the learning abilities of students. These barriers are classified as physical and socio-cultural barriers. This coincides with the perception of Kamal and Bener (2009) who opine that the socio-cultural background of students influences their abilities to learn. Similarly, the report of lecturers on the meaning of learning challenges conforms to the finding of the work of Chiu and Khoo (2005) that learning challenges can be constituted by physical conditions of the institution of learning. The physical barriers include available structures, manpower, etc.

Learning Challenges Experienced by undergraduates in the selected South African and Nigerian based rural universities

Students in different universities across nations of the world experience various learning challenges. The challenges may be similar and in different degrees. Lecturers identified different learning challenges peculiar to students in their institutions. The responses of lecturers on the different identified learning challenges experienced by undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria are stated below:

Theme: Cognitive Learning Challenges

The responses of selected South African lecturers on experiences of students with regards to cognitive learning challenges are presented below:

SA L 7: Students find it difficult to cope with what they are taught though I know that they are not taught things that are out of the bloom.

SA L2: All they are taught is within the curriculum approved by the Department of Higher Education (DHET). Unfortunately, we cannot go below the standard, they must be able to match their counterparts in other parts of the world, yet they find it difficult.

SA L8: Failure of students to reason logically constitutes cognitive challenge.

Nig. L8: Some of our students find it difficult to comprehend what is taught though we try not to go beyond their level and scope of study.

Nig. L4: Students struggle to understand and cope with new concepts, in fact, even some old concepts are problematic to them, let alone building on such foundation.

Nig. L6: I feel our students are just lazy to read, understand concepts and try to do things on their own. They love to be spoon-fed, forgetting that this is a university, not a secondary school. Laziness contributes to the cognitive challenges experienced by our students.

The responses of lecturers from the two institutions shows that cognitive learning challenges are experienced by students in the two countries. They are characterized by the inability of students to work on their own in order to develop their abilities. Lecturers from the two institutions hold similar views that students are to be taught in order to meet world standard. Hence, it will be improper to go below the acceptable standard for students to comprehend. Students must ensure that they improve their learning skills in order to fit into global standard.

Theme: Assignment Related Challenges

The type of assignment given to students constitute learning challenges for them. Some students find it difficult to respond promptly and accurately to group assignments, while others find it difficult to respond to individual assignment. Responses from South African interviewees are reported below:

SA L8: Some students get excited over group assignments, yet will never participate, they leave it to their team members. It affects their learning abilities.

SA L3: Some lecturers fail to understand that assignments must be timely. Lecturers must know when to give assignments and the appropriate assignments to be given.

SA L5: I know that students are lazy, yet sometimes the volume of assignment given in different modules are quite burdensome. It affects their level of productivity.

SA L1: I sometimes feel for students with regards to assignment, but there is nothing I can do about it. Unfortunately, sometimes we try to make it easy for them by giving group assignments, too bad they abuse it.

SA L4: Lecturers must learn to adopt the right type of assignment, otherwise the essence of assignment will be frustrated.

Responses from selected Nigerian lecturers on the theme Assignment Related Learning Challenges are presented below:

Nig. L6: Lecturers must understand when to give assignments, the type of assignments and the volume of assignments. We (lecturers) should not just give assignments because we want to give assignments. Every assignment must have an on objective that it aims to achieve.

Nig. L3: As a lecturer, I feel we try our best in giving assignments, unfortunately, some of our students choose to do as they wish. Some choose not to do the assignments especially

when the assignments do not attract marks. I do not feel that all assignments should attract marks. Sometimes, assignments can be given to encourage students to work independently and acquire more knowledge.

Nig. L2:not all types of assignments are suitable at every point. Lecturers must know when to adopt a particular type of assignment. For instance, individual assignment should be done and treated differently from group assignments.

Nig. L8: Lecturers must endeavor to give realistic assignments.

Reports from lecturers in the two institutions show that students experience learning challenges with regards to assignment. These learning challenges emanate from the assignment type given and the volume. Lecturers are expected to consider, study and observe the state of their students in order to know the appropriate assignment, type and volume to be issued. In addition, realistic assignments are expected from lecturers. This implies that some assignments given to students by lecturers are unrealistic. The reports also suggest that students are to be guided properly in assignment practices.

Theme: Cultural diversity

The culture on campus differs from the home culture of students. This constitute challenges for the students to learn. Some students find it difficult to adjust and adapt to the situation on campus. Responses from interviewees from South Africa regarding cultural diversity constituting learning challenge for their students are presented below:

SA L6: Cultural diversity is like putting students in two different societies at the same time and asking them to find their way of survival around the societies. Obviously, it takes a while for one to adjust to a society, let alone two societies at the same time.

SA L7: *Some students are affected by cultural diversity based on their inability to cope with people from various culture in the same class. Some feel intimidated.*

SA L1: *Sometimes, students are made to work in groups, of course, cultural diversity will come to play affecting students.*

SA L5: *Students find it very difficult to adjust to the culture of the institution. They often hold on to their home practices. This affects them greatly.*

SA L3: *Students find it difficult to accept the culture on campus and this affects the instructional strategies of lecturers. Imagine a lecturer teaching with all zeal and vigour, only for him/her to realize that nothing has been understood by the students of all that has been said. This is one reason why some lecturers resolve to the use of home language.*

Responses from interviewees from Nigeria regarding cultural diversity constituting learning challenge for students are presented below:

Nig. L1: *Cultural diversity is not very obvious in this institution; they may exist but at minimal rate.*

Nig. L7: *Students tend to accept their fellow students as colleagues. Their origins are treated as insignificant.*

Nig. L2: *I do not think that cultural diversity affects the learning abilities of our students. They are taught in the English Language, they freely relate with lecturers and their fellow students in the same medium, so I do not want to believe that cultural diversity can affect their learning abilities. The only way it can affect a bit is due to the differences in what is obtainable in their homes and what is seen on campus.*

Nig. L5: *The tribe, language or beliefs of students differ, however, the institution tries to treat them equally. Well, the personal beliefs of students can affect their attitudes towards what is taught, who teaches, how they react to situations, etc. It is the cultural diversity of students based on their beliefs and attitudes towards situations that affects them (the students), not the culture on campus.*

Nig. L8: *I expect students to acclimatize quickly to the culture on campus leaving the home culture. Failure to do so, makes campus life difficult and uninteresting. However, they must take note that in adjusting, other factors are taken into consideration. For instance, they must factor-in campus social life, peer pressure, and so on and so forth.*

From the responses of respondents above, the culture on campus differs from the home culture of students. Hence, this difference in culture constitutes challenges for the students. While some students find it difficult to adjust and acclimatize to the situation on campus, others seem not to adjust at all.

Theme: Coping with Recommended Reading Materials

Recommended study materials can constitute learning challenges to students. Students find it difficult to comprehend some recommended reading materials. Responses from South African interviewees on students coping with recommended materials are presented below:

SA L8: *As lecturers we try as much as possible to recommend texts that are of quality and very helpful to students.*

SA L2: *It is unfortunate that students find it very difficult to comprehend some of these materials; I do not know if it is because of the language.*

SA L4: *I do not think there is anything that can be done regarding the recommended materials, except we choose to create our own which may take a while.*

SA L6: *Lecturers find it difficult to understand certain texts due to the level of vocabulary used, let alone students. I try to understand the recommended texts first, then break it down for my students. However, it is time and energy consuming.*

SA L3: *University students should be able to work independently without the support of lecturers. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case due to their inability to read, understand and work with recommended texts. Students sometimes end up craving to be spoon-fed. This is wrong and out of place.*

Responses from Nigerian interviewees on students coping with recommended materials are presented below:

Nig. L4: *The university is not a place where students are taught how to read and write, so I expect students to be able to comprehend whatever reading texts that may be recommended.*

Nig. L2: *I believe our students do not struggle with the recommended texts. We try as much as we can to recommend texts that are easy to comprehend.*

Nig. L3: *...in fact, with technology, I do not think students should have difficulties with recommended reading texts. They can surf the internet for other support materials.*

Nig. L7: *Reading materials are easy to comprehend. I try to recommend literatures that will be easily understood, however in certain courses some texts are compulsorily recommended*

despite their difficulty. A good example includes Shakespearian texts. I know students find it difficult to comprehend, but there is nothing I can do about it, Shakespeare must be studied.

Responses from the interviewed lecturers in the selected institutions suggest that the style of writing used for the recommended reading materials constitute learning challenges experienced by their undergraduate students. The pattern and language in which reading materials are published seem foreign to undergraduate university students and this makes it difficult for the students to easily comprehend except with the assistance of lecturers or other supporting materials. However, where supporting materials are lacking, it implies that students will be left at the mercy of lecturers.

Theme: Time management cum Social Activities

Time management is an important skill that students are expected to possess. Students are to ensure that they endeavor to manage their time appropriately in relation to their daily activities. Responses of South African interviewees on student time management in connection with social activities are reported below:

SA L6: Students lack the ability to plan and manage time properly. They give priority to less significant matters, leaving out significant issues. For instance, I cannot imagine a student paying more attention to drinking, smoking, partying, and other social activities without giving attention to the primary and major reason for coming to the university.

SA L2: Some lecturers find it difficult to manage time properly. They rather concern themselves with other selfish activities having less concern for their students, yet at the end, they cast blames on their students. This is unjust practice perpetrated by lecturers.

SA L5: Students misplace priority and that affects their ability to manage time properly. Time management is prime in the daily activities of individuals, hence, the inability of people to manage time properly amounts to failure.

SA L8: *It hurts so much that sometimes lecturers do not get to see their students attending classes. They get themselves involved in some frivolous activities, yet they write examinations. I wonder how such students will pass.*

Responses of Nigerian interviewees on student time management in connection with social activities are reported below:

Nig. L1: *Students must learn to strike a balance.*

Nig. L4: *Students can afford to waste money and time on unnecessary things like viewing football matches for hours, partying, chatting, and so on.*

Nig. L7: *Students find it difficult to maintain self-discipline. They are easily carried away by social media, failing to study.*

Nig. L6: *Some students claim to be religious, spend all their time carrying out religious activities. Unfortunately, they forget the primary aim for coming to this campus.*

Nig. L3: *A common mistake made by students is procrastination. Many students fall victim of procrastination. Pushing what can be done at a particular time to a later time. I wonder how they feel when they do such. Sometimes, they end up not doing that task.*

Nig. L5: *Any student who is able to control the time spent amidst friends, social media and partying, will definitely succeed. These are time wasters, but students find it difficult to understand or deal with them appropriately.*

Nig. L2: *It is true that lecturers can also contribute to time wastage for students. For instance, when lecturers go late for their lectures or absent themselves without notice, they contribute to poor time management by students, except for few students who may be wise enough to manage that time properly.*

Nig. L8: *Every student who fails to manage time properly, plans to fail in life and of course manage failure.*

The responses of the interviewees from the two countries show that poor time management influences the learning abilities of students negatively. Meanwhile, poor time management can be caused by the students, as well as the lecturers. Failure of lecturers to start and end classes promptly can lead to poor management of time for students. Hence, while lecturers ensure that they attend classes promptly and try not to encroach to other lecture periods, students must endeavour to plan all their routines based on priority.

Theme: Study Habit

The belief and expectation of lecturers in the selected universities is that every student must understand that their primary aim for going to the university is to study. Thus, students are expected to device good, suitable, profitable and workable study habits which will enhance success. Lecturers from the institutions opine that the study habits of students determine the level of success that will be achieved. Meanwhile, some lecturers hold the view that students do not study to understand or know, rather they study to pass examinations. This accounts for poor knowledge. Below are the responses from South African lecturers in the selected university on study habit constituting learning challenge for students:

SA L5: *The wrong study habit has been formed by some, hence, will need to unlearn the current practice and adopt a good study habit.*

SA L7: *Students find it difficult to study. They rather prefer to lazy around in search of pleasurable activities.*

SA L3: *Some students fail to read except during test, assignments, or examinations. In this regard, they only get to read to get good grades, pass examinations, rather than studying to know.*

Responses from lecturers in the selected Nigerian rural university on study habit constituting learning challenge for students are presented below:

Nig. L4: *Students prefer to play around enjoying themselves until it is few days to examination. By so doing, the level of knowledge received becomes restricted.*

Nig. L3: *Students who read for knowledge usually have good study habits and perform well during examinations and when they are engaged in conversations.*

Nig. L1: *People are different and assimilate differently. Students should be able to understand themselves and their most productive time. They can use such to plan their time and the best time to study.*

The responses from the lecturers indicates that study habits of students help to improve their learning abilities. Students who study well are likely to do better than their counterparts who fail to study. Failure to study causes failure and ignorance. However, some students feel lazy to study, they rather go about other activities of less or no importance. Surmise to state that student can experience learning challenge when they fail to adopt and apply good study habits.

Theme: Space Related Learning Challenges

The available space on campus influences the learning abilities of students. Space goes beyond land mass to infrastructures put up to ensure appropriate teaching and learning sessions. Responses of South African lecturers in the selected institution on space related learning challenge are presented below:

SA L1: Space is a crucial shortcoming affecting undergraduate university students in South African universities. The land mass may be there, yet the structures are lacking. By space, I mean structural facilities, especially lecture theaters, dining halls, laboratories.

SA L2: The population of students on campus is not commensurate to the available spaces. For instance, how will students be expected to learn conveniently when a campus meant to cater for 5,000 students is catering for over 15,000 students? This affects the level of assimilation of students.

SA L5: As a matter of fact, some students fail to attend classes knowing that their absenteeism will not be noticed, while others attend classes and get distracted due to class size.

SA L8: The equipment on ground are usually made to be in alignment with the available space, hence when space is small in relation to the population, it is certain that the equipment will be the same. Institutions where quantity is sort, not quality, learning challenges are inevitable. Unfortunately, most of our universities are interested in quantity and the amount of tuition to be received from students. We are less concerned about the quality and standard of education received by our students. This affects our students negatively.

Responses of Nigerian lecturers in the selected university on space related learning challenge are presented below:

Nig. L8: *This institution lacks sufficient buildings. It is true that new structures are being erected, but the fact still remains that at the moment students and lecturers still struggle to be accommodated.*

Nig. L2: *Students are affected by lack of adequate structures. The students have devised means of even having lectures under trees as long as lecturers are ready to teach in such environments.*

Nig. L5: *Our laboratories in this institution are poorly equipped. To begin with, the laboratories are way too small for the number of students admitted, let alone availability of equipment, reagents, and so on.*

Nig. L3: *Space is important for both students and lecturers. Even the administrative staff need space to be able to function properly. Without space, the institution seems not to exist. Gone are the days when teaching and learning activities will be willingly carried out by lecturers and students respectively under trees. Lecturers who try such in recent times know the result they get. Students will hardly show-up.*

Nig. L6: *Reasonable teaching and learning activities must take place in comfortable environments. If not very comfortable, at least relatively comfortable.*

Nig. L7: *I feel that too many imaginary teaching activities take place around this campus. Science student only hear about certain equipment or chemicals. The only places that they get to see such things are in text books or social media whereas life contacts with such things are needed. In fact, even some of us (lecturers) and lab attendants do not know such things in true life experience, yet we are expected to talk and teach about such things.*

Nig. L4: The issue with space on this campus is majorly based on corruption. The government fails to do the right thing to help the students, same as the administrative staff. Different vice chancellors come, do their bits and leave, by the time one hears about the fraudulent acts perpetrated by the outgone executive member, the scandal remains alarming. I wish the children and wards of all political leaders and executive administrative members of staff of universities are made to attend local universities. They send their children abroad and leave the local universities in dilapidating state.

The responses of lecturers from the two universities suggest that university education has become a money making venture, yet the level of quality put in place is poor. Space is necessary in ensuring quality education. However, while undergraduate students in the selected Nigerian university seem to have been able to device ways of coping with learning challenges related to space, their counterparts in the selected South African university are yet to counter such learning challenge.

Theme: Instructional Strategy Related Learning Challenge

Learning can be fast tracked or disrupted based on the strategy adopted by lecturers. Learning entails organized sets of activities which are predicated on the instructional strategies adopted by lecturers. Therefore, instructional strategies are to be treated as important. Adopted instructional strategies determine the pattern which class activities will take and how students will comprehend. Below are responses from South African interviewees on instructional related learning challenges:

SA L2: Once the right instructional strategy is adopted for a lesson, learning is bound to take place. However, it becomes problematic when the wrong strategy is adopted. Hence, lecturers must plan their strategy, while planning for a class.

SA L5: Lecturers are sometimes not bothered about the strategy adopted in transferring information to their students. This sometimes makes class activities disorganized and

uninteresting. Imagine, a mathematics lecturer teaching mathematics with slides as though he is teaching English language.

SA L6: Some lecturers believe that the best they can do is to go to lecture venues, pass across whatever they have and move on. Lecturing goes beyond that. It is expected to follow a systematic and logical process.

SA L7: I expect lecturers with education background to be familiar with adoption of instructional strategies. It is therefore important for lecturers to have education background.

SA L3: Lecturers are expected to be dynamic in their instructional strategies. It adds colour to class activities and makes learning process interesting.

Responses from Nigerian lectures in the selected university on instructional related learning challenges are presented below:

Nig. L4: Learning strategies are very important. Lecturers must be dynamic in their approach to lecturing. They must make lecture interesting, otherwise students will feel less interested to attend.

Nig. L7: sometimes the challenge in adopting the right strategies is the class size.

Nig. L3: Some lecturers lack of education background and do not really know much about teaching and strategies to be used. This affects teaching strategies.

The responses from above on instructional related learning challenges show that some lecturers in the selected universities seem to have mastered the act of teaching. However, they still encounter challenges which make it difficult for them to transfer knowledge to their students. They consent that the instructional strategies adopted by lecturers affect the learning abilities of their students.

Instructional strategies influence the learning abilities of students. Hence, wrong adoption of teaching strategies by lecturers in class, affects students. Meanwhile, students get discouraged to attend some classes due to the lecturers involved. It is due to the style adopted by the lecturers. Some lecturers' lectures are considered interesting, hence students get enthuse and motivated to attend such classes.

Theme: Participatory Learning Challenge

Participatory learning is a student centred learning approach. It demands proper supervision. However, it is considered by some lecturers to constitute learning challenge. Below are comments from interviews with lecturers from the South African selected university regarding participatory learning challenges:

SA L5: Students are given the opportunity to conduct learning activities in their own way. It is expected to be a useful exercise because students easily learn from one another.

SA L8: Participatory is quite useful and interesting, though abused by both lecturers and students.

SA L3: Some lecturers feel lazy attending to their class routines, hence they hide under the guise of group work. Meanwhile, some other lecturers use this medium to educate their students.

SA L1: Students tend to abuse this style of learning. They feel less concerned, focusing on other activities of less importance.

SA L4: *Available space sometimes makes participatory learning difficult or impossible.*

SA L2: *Students do not have the same abilities and do not learn at the same pace. Hence, some students find it difficult to cope, while others dominate discussions sessions*

Below are comments from interviews with lecturers from the Nigerian selected university regarding participatory learning challenges:

Nig. L5: *Students prefer group tasks to individual, but they only try to deceive lecturers. All they do, is to leave it into the hands of one person, while others choose to pay for the printing of the assignment and lunch of the volunteering student.*

Nig. L3: *Some students prefer to keep mute in class, regardless of what is being discussed. This includes brilliant students. Some students prefer not to be known, so they feel that by not participating in class discussion, their identity is hidden. Others choose not to participate in class activities because they feel that they can be witch hunt by lecturers when they are known.*

Nig. L1: *Students seem to believe that we know everything, forgetting that we are humans and no man is a custodian of knowledge.*

The responses of the selected interviewed lecturers indicate that participatory learning literarily aims at shifting focus from lecturers to the students. It purposes at giving students the opportunity to preside over their own learning activities. Hence, the lecturer serves as a guide while students carryout activities. However, when lecturers fail to guide and supervise the process properly, it becomes a waste of time. Similarly, when students fail to contribute or participate in the process, they render the exercise useless.

Most interviewed lecturers affirm that participatory learning is good and needed in the university environment. It is believed that no lecturer is the custodian of knowledge, hence, needs to engage the students. However, a major challenge observed by most of the interviewees is that students

find it interesting to be given group task yet fail in carrying out such tasks alongside group members. Others choose not to take part in class discussion, rather they see lecturers as ‘thin gods’ who should know everything they are to teach perfectly.

Stakeholders’ involvement in Learning Challenges Experienced by undergraduate university students

Different stakeholders are involved in the learning challenges encountered by undergraduate university students. Stakeholders contribute to learning challenges experienced by students in various ways and degrees. Some of these stakeholders include: the individual students, peers, lecturers, administrative staff and the government. The reports from interviews conducted with lecturers show the various ways by which the identified South African education stakeholders contribute to the learning challenges experienced by students in the selected universities. Table 5.1 shows the report:

Table 5.1: Report on Stakeholders’ involvement in Learning Challenges Experienced by Undergraduate Rural University Students in South Africa

Students	Peers	Lecturers	Administrative Staff	Government
Failing to manage time appropriately. Upholding poor study habits.	Giving wrong counsel Discouraging hard work	Wrong adoption of the language of instruction, including high vocabularies. Poor adoption of	Admitting many students, more than the available space, equipment and resources of the institution.	Poor formulation and implementation of policies.

<p>Absconding from lectures.</p> <p>Upholding phobia for certain modules, recommended reading texts and lecturers.</p> <p>Putting up with the wrong peers.</p>	<p>Constituting distractions; before, during and after lectures</p>	<p>teaching strategy.</p> <p>Recommendation of incomprehensible reading texts.</p> <p>Poor maintenance of lecturer-student relationship.</p> <p>Inappropriate usage of assignment type.</p> <p>High volume of assignment per time.</p> <p>Poor or non-usage of instructional materials.</p> <p>Poor interpersonal relationship among lecturers, especially in modules handled by two or more lecturers.</p>	<p>Poor structuring of the time table.</p> <p>Poor staff remuneration.</p> <p>Non-recruitment of members of staff.</p> <p>Poor and wrong formulation of policy and implementation.</p> <p>Poor management and maintenance of available resources.</p> <p>Poor orientation to students.</p>	<p>Poor monitoring of activities on campuses.</p> <p>Poor motivation of members of staff and students.</p>
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			Poor monitoring of activities of staff and students.	
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The reports from interviews conducted with selected Nigerian lecturers show the various ways by which the identified Nigerian education stakeholders contribute to the learning challenges experienced by students in the selected universities. Table 5.2 presents the report:

Table 5.2: Report on Stakeholders' involvement in Learning Challenges Experienced by Undergraduate Rural University Students in Nigeria

Students	Peers	Lecturers	Administrative Staff	Government
poor study habit poor time management laziness bad association	giving wrong advice Discouraging good hard work and good manners	Wrong adoption of the language of instruction, including high vocabularies. Poor adoption of teaching strategy. Recommendation of incomprehensible reading texts. Poor maintenance of	Admitting many students, more than the available space, equipment and resources of the institution. Poor structuring of the time table. Poor staff	Poor formulation and implementation of policies. Poor monitoring of activities on campuses. Poor motivation of members of

		<p>lecturer-student relationship.</p> <p>Inappropriate usage of assignment type.</p> <p>High volume of assignment per time.</p> <p>Poor or non-usage of instructional materials.</p>	<p>remuneration.</p> <p>Non-recruitment of members of staff.</p> <p>Poor and wrong formulation of policy and implementation.</p> <p>Poor management and maintenance of available resources.</p> <p>Poor orientation to students.</p> <p>Poor monitoring of activities of staff and students.</p>	<p>staff and students.</p>
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			Politicizing of universities and positions	
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Based on the interviews conducted with lecturers, other causes of learning challenges as include: campus unrest, language of instruction, registration process, among others.

Table 5.3 shows responses of lecturers in the selected South African and Nigerian universities regarding further causes of learning challenges:

Table 5.3: Report on other causes of learning challenges

Cause of L.C	South Africa	Nigeria	Researcher's Remarks
Campus unrest	❖ When lecturers pretend and act adamant to the demands of students, learning campus unrest will be experienced and that will constitute learning challenges. Similarly, when top management staff act adamant to the demands of students or lecturers, campus unrest is	❖ Campus unrest is caused due to the insensitivity of management staff to the demands of lecturers and students. ❖ As we speak some institutions have been on strike for over three months. By the time the strike is suspended, students will be eager to write the exams. When will they be	Campus unrest constitutes learning challenges. It is caused most times due to the inability of the university management to respond to the need of staff members and students. Staff members and students do not need their requests to be granted 100 percent, however they desire to be treated as being

	<p>experienced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Strike actions slow the pace of teaching and learning activities. In the first place they are both put on hold. Only few students take the initiative to work during this period. In fact, most of the students who try to study during strike are not motivated to do so. 	<p>taught and when will they have time to practice what they have been taught.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Campus unrest destroys the future of students. It is a very good time waster. Imagine a student without carryover or extra year, spending 7 years for a 4 year programme. 	<p>important. Hence, where the management treats their demands as less important or insignificant, they resolve into strike action to get the attention of the management staff.</p>
Insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Our students experience insecurity and this affects their study habits. This is common with those off campus. ❖ Some students whom I know are willing to stay back to read and use other available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Students struggle to do certain things due to the level of insecurity experienced around campus. For instance, the library closes by 6:00 pm daily and on Saturdays by 1:00 p.m. that is unheard, but it is a reality which is caused by 	<p>Insecurity is mainly caused and experienced around the neighbourhood of the campus and it affects the study and learning abilities of students, especially those who reside off campus.</p>

	<p>resources on campus to study, find it difficult to do due to the level of insecurity experienced in the environment where they live.</p> <p>❖ The neighbourhood of the university is not safe. Sometimes people from around campus come into the campus to steal properties of students, threaten and terrorise them. This will definitely affect their study habit and learning abilities.</p>	<p>insecurity. This affects the students.</p> <p>❖ The activities of Bokoharam, Fulani herdsmen and other groups terrorizing the peace of the nation have brought about confusion and that has hindered the smooth running of activities on campus. Students who travel home sometimes feel insecure returning to campus, activities on campus have to be put on hold especially in areas where state of emergency is announced.</p>	
Language of	❖ Students have	❖ Students do not have issues with the	

<p>Instruction</p>	<p>issues with comprehending English language, they prefer lecturers using the home language. The problem is partly from high school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The language of instruction is a major challenge with our students. ❖ Our students keep battling with the language adopted for medium of instruction. ❖ It is unfortunate that even when we (lecturers) opt to lecture using the home language for them to understand, they do not write their examination in the home language. 	<p>language of instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Language of instruction is a major cause of learning challenge. This is because of the influx of foreign nationals into the country. Different people, different languages, hence, it becomes difficult for lecturers to adopt the home language which the students have been exposed to from high school and are used to. ❖ The English language is made compulsory from the secondary school level, so I do not expect anyone with poor knowledge of English language to be here. ❖ People argue that we 	
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	<p>It goes back to one and the same thing.</p> <p>❖ It is quite unfortunate that language is a serious barrier in our university. It affects all that we do on this campus, even up to administrative level.</p>	<p>are losing our heritage, but the reality is that we have students coming from different parts of the country where different languages are spoken. The only unifying language that can be adopted is the English language. Moreover, English is a global language.</p>	
Socio-economic Background of Students	<p>❖ Majority of our students are from humble background and this affects their learning abilities. For instance, it will be difficult for a student who is not well fed to comprehend whatever is taught by the lecturers.</p>	<p>❖ Students from humble background sometimes tend to be more serious and better off in terms of academics than those from wealthy homes.</p> <p>❖ Students from poor background are most times used by students from rich homes to do assignment and all sorts of tasks on</p>	<p>Students' socio-economic background influences their learning abilities. Students from low socio-economic background are sometimes hindered in the level of progress, though some students stand out despite their poor socio-economic background.</p>

	<p>❖ Thanks to the bursary providers which have helped to ease the burdens of our students, unfortunately not all of them have access to the bursaries. Finance really affects our students' learning abilities.</p>	<p>campus.</p> <p>The socio-economic background of students affects their abilities to concentrate and learn while on campus. However, those who are brilliant end up performing below expectation due to their involvement in different ventures that can fetch them money</p>	
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Table 5.4: Themes and sub-themes on countermeasures put up by undergraduates and lecturers in the selected rural South African university

Themes	Sub-themes	Related issues
Countermeasures of learning challenges	Students' perspective	<p>Internet Facilities: Sometimes students are seen sitting in corridors or around offices in order to have access to the internet facilities on campus.</p> <p>Examination Success: Some students take part in examination malpractices.</p> <p>Attempts are made by students to bribe their way through, in order to pass.</p>

	Lecturers' perspective	<p>Instructional Strategy: Sometimes some lecturers use home language to explain certain phenomena peradventure the students will comprehend what they are taught.</p> <p>Group task is used to explain certain phenomena.</p> <p>Teaching Materials: Imaginary instructional materials are adopted.</p>
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Countermeasures by students and lecturers in the selected university in Nigeria

Table 5.5 shows the various countermeasures put up by students in overcoming learning challenges. Meanwhile, some lecturers had the following to say:

“Sincerely, I pity some of the students; they sit along corridors and around offices in order to access the internet to carryout assignments due to poor internet facilities”.

“In the area of examination success, some students feel that the only way out of encountered challenges is to cheat during examinations or bribe lecturers to help them”.

“Regarding instructional style, well, some of us (lecturers) do not have options than to teach the students using the home language, since that seems to be the only way out”.

The above statements suggest that students experience poor internet facilities on campus accept examination malpractices and bribery as the countermeasure towards achieving academic success. In addition, the last statement suggests that lecturers are forced to adopt the home

language as medium of instruction in order to ensure that their students comprehend their lectures.

Table 5.5: Themes and sub-themes on countermeasures put up by undergraduates and lecturers in the selected rural Nigerian university

Themes	Sub-themes	Related Issues
	Students' perspective	<p>Internet Facilities: Students purchase personal internet data bundle to surf the internet.</p> <p>Examination Success: Some students take part in examination malpractices.</p> <p>Students get involved in plagiarism</p> <p>Attempts are made by students to bribe their way through, in order to pass.</p>
Countermeasures of learning challenges	Lecturers' perspective	<p>Instructional Strategy: Some lecturers attempt to provide their own improvised public address system in order to teach large classes.</p> <p>Assignments are used to ensure that students study personally.</p> <p>Instructional Materials: Imaginary instructional materials are adopted.</p>

5. 3. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the analysis of both qualitative data collected through the use of semi-structured interviews from lecturers in the two selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria. The analyses of the qualitative data were analysed thematically. The results are presented in different tables according to the countries. The presented results showed that the views of the interviewed lecturers from the two selected universities are similar. This suggests that the experiences in the two institutions are similar. Suffice to state that the students in the two selected rural universities experience similar common learning challenges, with similar causes. Also, comparatively, the countermeasures put-up by both lecturers and students are similar. The next chapter presents the conclusion, of the study, summary of the findings, discussion of the major findings, after which recommendations are made.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, data retrieved from academic respondents were analysed qualitatively and discussed. In this chapter, a summary of findings of the study as outlined in Chapters four and five is presented. The findings are linked to the research questions and objectives of the study. This is followed by recommendations which are made in order to inform future studies in this field. The recommendations are made in such a manner that they can be of benefit to researchers in this field or related field by providing quality information on learning challenges experienced among undergraduate university students. The results may also help to show reasons for participatory access to education in sub-Saharan African universities as against the desired access with success.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The first research question states, **“What are the experiences of undergraduate university students regarding learning challenges in the selected universities in South Africa and Nigeria?”**

The data retrieved by means of questionnaire which was administered to South African and Nigerian student respondents and interviews conducted with academic staff respondents were presented and interpreted in chapter 4. The following findings were highlighted about the views of both students and lecturers in relation to the experiences of undergraduate university students regarding learning challenges in South Africa and Nigeria. In order to avoid repetition of statements and to successfully provide summary, the researcher presented the findings from students’ responses in tables as identified in chapter 4. Moreover, the responses of lecturers were

categorized into common themes in Chapter 5, thereafter crucial issues were identified and discussed in relation to the study.

Based on the findings of the study, the experiences of undergraduate students in rural based universities in South Africa and Nigeria regarding learning challenges are similar. The experiences are as highlighted below:

- Poor previous learning experiences/ poor learning background of students: South African and Nigerian students in the selected rural universities seem to have poor high school experiences and that constitutes learning challenges for them at the university level.
- Cognitive development level of students: student respondents in the selected rural universities admitted that they encounter learning challenges due to their cognitive development of reasoning. This is based on their responses regarding the struggle they experience trying to understand new concepts.
- Feedback and assessment from lecturers: students from the selected rural universities admitted that feedback and assessment constitute learning challenges for them. However, the issue of assessment is more prevalent to the Nigerian student respondents.
- Type and volume of assignments from lecturers: student respondents from the two selected rural universities suggest that the volume of assignment given to students by lecturers can constitute learning challenges for the students.
- Instructional/pedagogic learning challenges: students from the two selected rural universities encounter learning challenges based on the instructional strategies adopted by the lecturers. The instructional pedagogic learning challenges experienced by the students include the adopted language of instruction, though it is prevalent among the South African student respondents.

- Space and facility related learning challenges: responses of the students show that lack of space, infrastructures and poor facilities constitute learning challenges for the students in the selected rural universities.
- Socio-economic background of students and their families constitute learning challenges: the responses of the student respondents suggest that the socio-economic background of students and their families constitute learning challenges for the students.
- Poor lecturer-student relationship: responses from students suggest that lecturer-student relationship constitutes learning challenges for the students in the selected rural universities.
- Recommended reading texts challenges: students in the selected rural universities also claim to experience learning challenges based on the recommended texts. This implies that the style and vocabulary of the recommended texts may pose challenges to the students.
- Cultural diversity: students in the selected rural universities experience learning challenges due to cultural diversity. Students seem to have challenges based on the differences in the cultural practices on campus and those experienced back home. Meanwhile, the differences in the culture of students in the same class also pose some forms of learning challenges to students.

The second research question states, **“What are the causes of learning challenges amongst university undergraduate students in the selected universities in South Africa and Nigeria?”**

Finding of the study shows that the causes of learning challenges in the two nations are similar. The causes can be viewed from different angles which include, student related causes of learning challenges, lecturer related causes of learning challenges, institution related causes of learning challenges, government related causes of learning challenges, as well as students’ family related

causes of learning challenges. The student related causes of learning challenges are as highlighted below:

- Poor study habit: findings of the study shows that the study habit of students is one of the factors that causes learning challenges for the students in the two selected rural universities. Responses from both the student respondents and lecturers in the study confirm that students experience learning challenges in certain areas due to poor study habits.
- Non or poor class participation: responses from respondents in the study show that poor class participation of students during lectures causes learning challenges. Findings show that some students prefer not to participate in class activities; they will rather listen to the lecturers. This leads to lecturer centred approach to teaching which is considered a poor pedagogic system of teaching.
- Poor Focus: findings of the study show that most students in the selected rural universities easily lose concentration when undertaking teaching and learning activities. This is caused by poor focus which may be an aftermath of emotional trauma, financial issues among other issues.
- Choice of friends: the study shows that friends have influence over the learning abilities of students in the selected rural institutions of learning. Hence, students who choose to make friends with colleagues who lack the interest to study well in order to excel academically may experience learning challenges.
- Poor time management cum social and religious activities: findings of the study show that poor time management is a factor that causes learning challenges for students. The responses of participants suggest that students in the selected rural universities struggle in managing time properly. They get carried away by social, political and religious activities, forgetting their primary focus which includes academic excellence. Surmise to

state that students fail in prioritizing their activities and that causes learning challenges for them.

- Failure to adapt to university' culture: the study shows that students find it difficult to adjust easily and adapt to the culture of the university. They rather seem to stick to their home culture and that causes learning challenges for them.
- Poor acceptance of feedback from lecturers: the findings of the study show that feedback from lecturers is a factor that causes learning challenges for students in the selected rural universities. Rather than accept feedback from lecturers, some students neglect the feedback and keep making similar errors.

The lecturer related causes of learning challenges are as highlighted below:

- Assignment type: the study shows that students feel demotivated to learn sometimes based on the type of assignment given to them. For instance, some students learn better when individual assignments are given. Hence, they encounter learning challenges when given group assignments.
- Volume of assignment: findings of the study show that the volume of assignment given to students in the selected rural universities causes learning challenges for the students. Lecturers sometimes assume that the more the assignment, the better the students will be. However, the results of the study suggest that the interest of students to study reduces and their learning abilities can be hampered when the volume of task to be done is outrageous/high.
- Relationship with students: the study shows that the way lecturers relate with students in and outside the class environment can cause learning challenges for the students. Lecturers sometimes choose not to relate cordially with students for fear of being disrespected and this affects the way they are perceived and accepted by students.

- Time management with regards to lecture periods: the study shows that some lecturers fail in managing their lecture periods properly. When lecture periods are not properly utilized, it hampers the learning abilities of students in such modules.
- Adopted and usage of language of instruction: the language of instruction adopted by lecturers put the students at a disadvantaged position. Thus, the students experience learning challenges because the lecturers adopted a language which they fail to comprehend. For instance, when lecturers adopt a language which they do not understand to lecture, confusion will be experienced. Similarly, when students are taught in a language that they do not understand, confusion cannot be avoided.
- Pedagogic strategy: finding of the study shows that the lecturing strategy adopted by lecturers causes learning challenges for the students. Student centred approach to lecturing may be suggested, but not all lecturers may be comfortable with such strategy.
- Absenteeism and lateness to class: the study shows that the lateness of lecturers to class or absenteeism of lecturers affects the learning abilities of students. It causes demotivation for the students and eventually contributes to the learning challenges experienced by students.
- Giving of assignment in place of lecture: finding of the study shows that sometimes lecturers issue assignments in place of lectures. This demotivates students and affects their abilities to learn.
- Poor feedback and assessment strategy: the study shows that while some lecturers assess their students properly and give good feedback, some others fail in these areas. Thus, adoption of the wrong assessment strategy and poor feedback causes learning challenges for the students.

The institution related causes of learning challenges include:

- Poor and dilapidated infrastructures: the study shows that poor infrastructures on campus affect the learning abilities of the students. Responses of respondents suggest that students may not encounter learning challenges if they were exposed to good and quality infrastructures.
- Lack of space: finding of the study shows that students lack space to study and learn due to their population. This causes learning challenges for the students.
- Lack of equipment and facilities: responses from students and lecturers suggest that equipment as well as teaching and learning facilities are lacked in the selected rural universities and these affect the learning abilities of the students.
- Students-lecturer ratio: the study shows that the ratio of lecturer to students is far apart, hence, it makes it difficult for lecturers to deliver qualitatively as and when due.
- Campus unrest: experiences of campus unrest are contributory factors that cause learning challenges for the students. Finding of the study shows that campus unrest in the selected rural universities is usually caused by students, lecturers and non-academic staff members.
- Poor formation of lecture time-tables: the study shows that students in the selected rural universities experience learning challenges due to the way and manner lecture, test and examination timetables are structured.
- Poor monitoring of staff welfare and activities: the study shows that poor monitoring of staff welfare demotivates lecturers and sometimes lead campus unrest. Demotivation of lecturers and campus unrest affect the deliverable of lecturers and that will in turn causes learning challenges for students.

- Registration and other administrative related challenges: the study shows that students experience challenges trying to register their modules. This seems to affect their lecture and study time and eventually demotivate them.
- Relationship between students and administrative members of staff: poor relationship between students and administrative staff usually causes campus unrest which eventually leads to loss of academic sessions.
- None adherence to the needs and demands of students: the study suggests that this is one of the causes of campus unrest experienced in the selected institutions. Non adherence to the needs and demands of students demotivates the students and possibly cause them to struggle. In the process of struggling, the students experience various forms of learning challenges.
- Poor response to campus unrest: finding of the study shows that poor or slow response to campus unrest causes learning challenges for students. When there is a breakout of campus unrest and the administrative staff refused to act promptly in order to ensure that such situation is addressed quickly, it may linger for long, while academic sessions are being lost.
- Poor utilization of funds: the result of the study indicates that funds are sometimes mismanaged or poorly utilized. Hence, there is lack of basic resources needed on campus and eventually causes learning challenges for the students who continue to struggle seeking for basic infrastructures which could have been provided.
- Poor recruitment of staff: the study shows that some unqualified staff members are employed by the selected institutions. This affects the level of knowledge passed to the students and causes learning challenges for the students.

Government related causes of learning challenges include the following:

- Formation and implementation of policies: the result of the study shows that some policies made by the government are not favourable to the students. Meanwhile, some that may seem favourable to the students are not duly implemented. This affects the learning abilities of the students.
- Poor funding: the level of fund received by the institutions from the government is considered insufficient based on the finding of the study. This is said to be one of the causes of learning challenges experienced by the students.
- Poor monitoring of activities of the institutions: the finding of the study shows that failure to properly monitor the activities of the institutions leads to mismanagement which eventually affects the students.
- Environmental unrest: finding of the study indicates that unrest such as: political unrest within the environment or province in which the institution is situated causes learning challenges for the students.
- Politicization of educational system: result of the study indicates that politicization of the educational system causes learning challenges for the students in the selected rural universities. Politicization comes in form of appointments, recruitments, nepotism, favouritism, among others.

The family related causes of learning challenges include:

- Poor socio-economic status of family: result of the study shows that the socio-economic background of the students can cause learning challenges. Finding of the study suggests that students with poor socio-economic background are likely to lose focus easily, have poor previous learning experiences, among other challenges compared to their counterparts with rich socio-economic background.

- Poor or non-provision of quality education background: the high school experiences of students are considered a factor that causes learning challenges for them. Hence, students with poor high school experiences are likely to encounter more learning challenges at the university level compared to their counterparts with quality high school experiences.
- Lack of parental guidance: result of the study indicates that poor parental guidance affects the learning abilities of students. The study shows first generation students are likely to experience learning challenges due to poor parental guidance, since their parents are likely to be novice in the world of academics.
- Expectations from students: the study indicates that family expectations from students cause learning challenges for the students. When the family expects much from the students, such students may encounter more learning challenges. This is because the student will struggle to meet the expectations of the family as well as his/her academic demands.

The third research question states that **“What measures can be used to alleviate undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria from learning challenges?”**

Based on the findings of this study, there is no specific design that can be appropriate to alleviate undergraduate students from learning challenges experienced by them. However, with regards to data collected from both students and academic staff members, certain recommendations will be made to students. By so doing, designs that are appropriate countermeasures to learning challenges can be formed by different students, academic staff members, institutions, policy makers and other education stakeholders in different ways. Meanwhile, a model which can serve as a guide to the different education stakeholders when attempting to put-up counter measures is designed from this study.

6.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES FROM THE SYNTHESIS OF TRIANGULATION

The data collected by means of questionnaire and semi-structured interviews which were analysed and presented in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively yielded the following findings about learning challenges experienced by students (important question 1), the causes of the learning challenges (important question 2), correlation between students' demography and learning challenges as well as countermeasures to learning challenges put up by students and lecturers. The findings outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 are as follow:

- *Learning challenges experiences of students vary*

The findings of the data from questionnaire, interviews and observation shows that the learning challenges of students vary from one student to another. However, in the South African perspective, language of instruction is a major learning challenge. Meanwhile, cognitive learning challenge, assignment related learning challenges, lecturer-student relationship, participatory learning challenge are common learning challenges which cut across both countries. Fook and Sidhu (2015) pointed out that learning challenges of students vary from one student to another. The findings on the learning challenges of students in South Africa and Nigeria are similar to the findings of Fook and Sidhu (2015) who used American student respondents.

- *Causes of learning challenges*

The beliefs of students and lecturers cause learning challenges for students. This is based on the notion that students fail to believe in themselves, the same way lecturers do not believe in the students. In addition, learning challenges of students are caused by students, lecturers, the institution of learning, family and the government. Infrastructures, food insecurity and

environmental insecurity, ratio of students to lecturer, poor learning background, and leadership strategies of administrative members of staff, poor infrastructures and facilities, etc are some ways by which learning challenges are caused. These are supported by Culter Bannes, Berry, Burton, Evans, Tate and Webb (2008), Winicki and Jemison (2003) and Souriyavongsa et al. (2013).

- ***Demography and learning challenges***

The findings of the collected data suggest that the demography of students is insignificant to learning challenges experienced by undergraduate university students. This is in contrast to the view of Alexander, West and Ebelahr (2007) who opine that the demography of students constitutes learning challenges.

- ***Countermeasures to learning challenges***

Students put up different measures to overcome the learning challenges experienced by them. Similarly, lecturers also do likewise in order to support the measures put up by students. However, the measures put up by lecturers are sometimes detrimental to the acceptance of the students in the society. For instance, the adoption of home language by lecturers to lecture students may put the student at a disadvantaged position in the midst of their counterparts in other parts of the world. Improvisation of class by students and lecturers both within and outside the classroom to ensure that teaching and learning take place are different countermeasures. This is supported by Bower (2010) and Abbasi and Mir (2012) who opine that improvisation is important for teaching to take place, especially in cases of shortage of teaching materials. In addition, students put up other countermeasures which are negative. These countermeasures include: campus unrest to get the attention of the university management and examination malpractices.

In addition, the findings of the study also suggest that while the theory of decolonization favours the South African society and system of university education, the theory of resilience favours the

Nigerian society. The theory of decolonization was once experimented in the Nigerian system of education by Fafunwa (1977), but it failed due to persistence and resilience. Hence, the recent trend from the finding of the study shows that the Nigerian university students are resilient and strive to counter learning challenges through various measures which are supported by resilience theory. On the other hand, the South African system of education is yet to be fully decolonized, thus posing learning challenges to the students. It is imperative that decolonization be fully put in place as resolution to learning challenges for South African students.

Also, decolonization can be explored again in the Nigerian system of education, however, resilience and motivation must be considered to ensure its success. In the same vein, resilience and motivation must be put in place to enhance the success of full decolonization of the South African system of education.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to different units from institution, government, lecturers and students.

6.4.1. RECOMMENDATION TO INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING:

The following recommendations are made to the institution based on the findings of this study

6.4.1.1. Students experience learning challenges based on their relationships with academic staff and tend to do better when taught by their peers. Hence, they should be given academic support in form of compulsory tutorials which are strictly monitored and constantly evaluated by academic staff. Tutorials can be organised at faculty level, overseen by the faculty academic officer or an appointed administrator who will supervise the programme. In this case senior

students who have previously passed a specific module will guide junior students to study and pass the same module. Students can also be given the opportunity to teach their peers. This is because students learn faster and better from their peers. However, at the end of every month tutors should be encouraged with a stipend. This will serve as source of motivation to the tutors.

6.4.1.2. Proper formation and implementation of student centred education policies should be put into consideration to enhance the learning abilities of students. In this regard, both students and academic members of staff should be involved or consulted before education policies are formed and implemented. This can be done by sampling the opinions of academic staff members and students randomly before reaching a conclusion on the policies to be formed and implemented. In this regards, students would have been given the opportunity to have their input on the policies before they are made and implemented.

6.4.1.3. Students should be made to familiarize themselves with the government policies on education and the policies of the respective institutions. Knowledge of the policies regarding education and how it applies to institutions help students in overcoming certain learning challenges that they may encounter in the process of learning. This can be done through periodic orientation programmes given to students at the departmental and faculty levels.

6.4.1.4. Administrative tasks should be made easy for lecturers and students in order for them to focus more on teaching and learning activities respectively. This can be done by ensuring that qualified and well trained administrative personnel are recruited, periodically trained and empowered to assist both lecturers and students in administrative exercises. These exercises include students' registration, result computing, time-table preparation, provision of functional internet service, amongst others.

6.4.1.5. Lecturers and students be motivated to work and learn respectively. This can be done through awards, provision of necessary facilities, workshops on pedagogy for lecturers especially

for lecturers without teaching experience, seminars and symposia for students on coping with challenges and succeeding against all odds.

6.4.1.6. Ensure proper monitoring of lecturers and students' progress. Monitoring of lecturers can be done through performance management agreements, line manager evaluation, while student evaluations can be done through periodic survey by the university management. This survey can also be used to get information about lecturers.

6.4.1.7. Adherence and proactive to the demands of students. These demands may include facilities on campus, behaviour of lecturers towards their duties, as well as administrative issues such as registration stress, among other forms of stresses.

6.4.1.8. Prompt punishment of erring members of staff to ensure sanity and promote good academic culture within the institution. This will help to curtail malpractices among members of staff and by so doing, academic excellence will be promoted and the learning abilities of students will be enhanced as lecturers and administrative members of staff will perform their duties as and when due. Hence, certain challenges will not be experienced by students.

6.4.1.9. Proper gatekeeping and monitoring of admission of students into the institution should be observed. Universities should be made to admit only the students who meet the admission criteria and can be catered for based on the available facilities and number of lecturers. This will help enhance and improve the learning abilities of students. Lecturers will also be able to lecture more effectively and efficiently.

6.4.1.10. Employment of qualified members of staff should be encouraged. This will help ensure that professionals are engaged and they in turn will help produce qualified professionals. In the process of recruiting, tribalism and nepotism should be kicked against.

6.4.1.11. Proper formation and implementation of time-table. All departments should be represented in the time-table committee and ensure that all modules are catered for in the timetable. Venues should also be treated as important when time tables are drafted. In addition, tutorials should be catered for in the timetable. That way, lecture time, tutorials which encourages peer learning and venues would have been settled.

6.4.1.12. Proper selection and combination of courses/modules for students. Unrelated modules should not be allowed. Students should be made to choose courses/modules in which they have background.

6.4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT

The following recommendations are made to the government based on the findings of this study

6.4.2.1. De-politicization of the educational system is needed for success to be achieved in the system. The curriculum should be designed to first address local and national issues before attention is given to the global world.

6.4.2.2. Provision and supply of adequate funding for higher education. Universities should be properly funded. The funds can be from the government based on budget for higher education and partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), business owners, companies, amongst others.

6.4.2.3. Proper monitoring of activities and spending should be checked. Every fund given to universities should be properly expended and accounted for. Hence, reports must be written periodically and carefully studied to ensure that funds have been appropriately expended. However, where mismanagement is discovered, erring staff should be consequently punished.

6.4.2.4. Proper formation and implementation of policies that will enhance and promote teaching and learning. Hence, only qualified educationists and curriculum experts should be made to design the curriculum that will inform teaching and learning activities in universities.

6.4.3. RECOMMENDATION TO LECTURERS

The following recommendations are made to lecturers based on the findings of this study

6.4.3.1. Encourage and build healthy relationship with students. Lecturers should ensure that they promote good and healthy lecturer-student relationship. This relationship will help students in developing self-confidence, expressing themselves better, participating in class activities and eventually overcoming different forms of learning challenges. However, such relationship must not be abused.

6.4.3.2. Lecturers should understand the concept ‘teaching and learning’, knowing that they are involved in the two processes and should do the following:

- Help motivate students by talking and giving them adequate feedback as and when necessary. They can do this by building cordial relationships with their students.
- They should ensure that they make their students to believe in themselves and the possibilities of achieving success against all odds. This can be done by engaging their students in conversations that are geared towards motivation for success.

- Build good and healthy relationship with colleagues. This can be done from departmental and faculty levels. Thus, lecturers psych themselves to understand the importance of good and healthy relationship with colleagues and how it can affect their students.
- Improvise to the advantage of the students, not necessarily to their own advantage. They should take time to train acclimatize themselves with recent and best global practices that can be of help to their students.
- Prepare students for future world of work, not just the present. Hence, they should be visionary and help envision their students to dream, think and work towards being great in future.
- Promote participatory and self-learning with proper supervision. Lecturers should train their students to be independent and be able to work independently with little or no supervision. This will help in preparing the students for the world of work.
- Become mentors and good role models to their students, endearing them towards being better life. They can also be mentors to their colleagues.

6.4.4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO STUDENTS

The following recommendations are made to students based on the findings of this study:

6.4.4.1. Students should believe in their abilities by building self-confidence. This will encourage them to participate adequately in group and class activities.

6.4.4.2. Students should motivate themselves to stand-out, taking a cue from success stories of successful people around the world. Self-motivation is sometimes needed by students, especially in situations where they seem to lack the necessary needs or undergo emotional challenges emerging from poor socio-economic background of parents, among other challenges.

6.4.4.3. Students should learn to associate with the right peers. Associating with the right peers will help them in making the right decisions, taking the right steps and remaining focused. It will also, enable them to study with the right people.

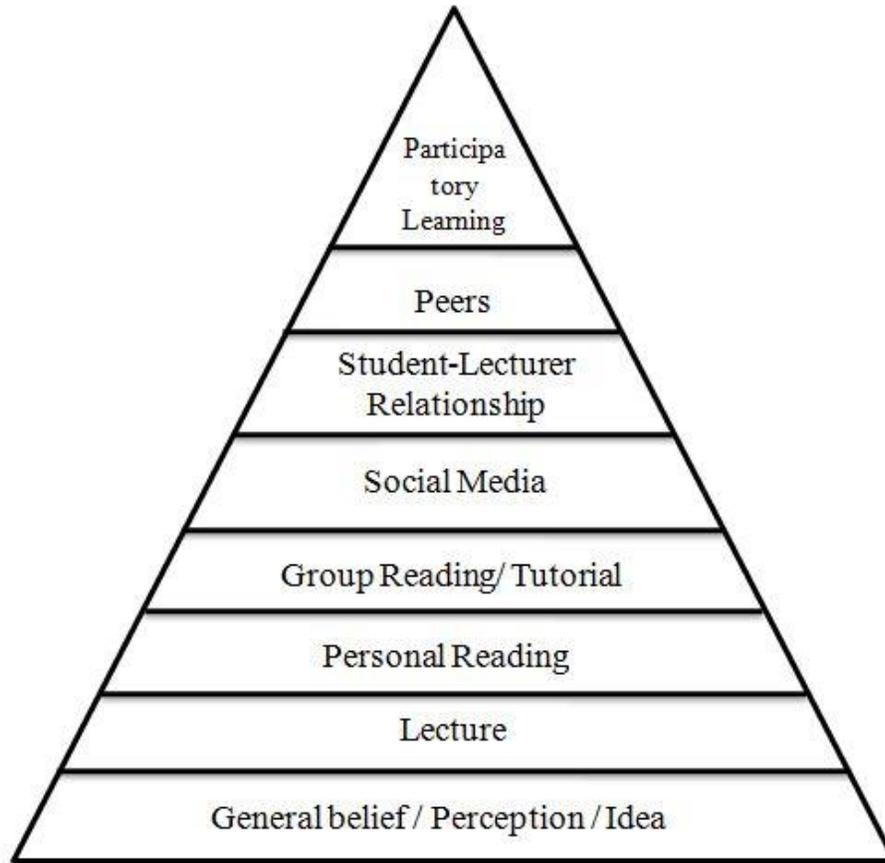
6.4.4.4. Students should learn to respect and manage time adequately by building and abiding by personal time-tables. The broad university time-table must not be left out. In this regard, students will learn to prioritize their daily activities, which will enhance academic success.

6.4.4.5. Students should learn to understand their areas of weaknesses. This will enable the students to work on their weaknesses in order to overcome them and be successful in their pursuits.

6.4.4.6. Students should learn to understand their strength and build on them. This will enable the students to become better and achieve academic success. Students should take time to study themselves, observe the things which they do with ease and the ones they struggle with, try to improve on the ones they do with ease, while they carefully work on the ones in which they struggle. They can seek the help of appropriate counsellors who will help them understand themselves better: their strength and weaknesses.

6.4.4.7. Students should learn to understand the need for self-development and work towards such. This can be done by ensuring that they engage themselves with productive activities, as well as keep the right peers as friends.

The model below is designed and recommended to help students understand learning process and try to adopt the best pattern suitable for them, as there is no excuse for failure.



Learning Model

The bottom of the model is wide, signifying that there are many students that can be found there. Several beliefs are inculcated into students consciously and unconsciously. However, these beliefs need to be verified, hence, this quest leads to lecture rooms. The model is still wide at that point, but reduced compared to the general belief column, because not everyone goes for lectures. Personal reading is next. After lecture, students are expected to engage themselves in personal reading, before going for group discussion. This is to enable them have something to contribute or questions to ask during their group reading or tutorial sessions. Social media comes next after group reading. At this stage, students can relax, internalize what they have learnt so far and possibly get more information in a more relaxed manner using social media. However, caution must be taken to avoid distraction. With all gathered from all the early stages, students can proceed to engage lecturers in a one-on-one discussion. This will be very possible and

fruitful if students have good relationship with the lecturer(s) involved. After relating with the lecturer, students relate with their peers, this include specific people who may not be involved in the group discussion or tutorial sessions. These peers are more closely related to the students compared to group discussants. All discussions from the level of general beliefs to the level of student-lecturer relationship comes to play at the level of discussion with peers. This springs the final beliefs of students which is what they transfer to others as their own knowledge at the level of participatory learning. By implication, students should be abreast of their general ideas which may be wrong or correct. Lectures and personal readings with open minds will help them to either unlearn the general ideas and learn new things. However, unlearning the general ideas and / or learning new subjects may be done through group reading and social media (if properly managed). Thus, students should be well disciplined to be able to manage group reading and social media to their advantage. Meanwhile, students should understand the roles of their lecturers, try as much as possible not to build, maintain, and not abuse the relationship which may exist between them. Such relationships should be geared towards learning new concepts. Additionally, students should be cautious of the influence of their peers on them. However, they can ensure that they convert their peers to become either their instructor or students: whom they can learn from or teach. Meanwhile, participation in class must not be overlooked. Hence, students should understand the importance of lectures, avail themselves and ensure that they actively participate, regardless of mistakes that may be made. they should rather learn from their mistakes and continue to actively participate during teaching and learning exercises. This will help improve their learning abilities and ensure their success.

It is important to note that sometimes, a level may be skipped for another, however, they all begin with the first level of general beliefs and end with the last level of participatory level. Suffice to state that, learning begins with general beliefs and remains incomplete until participation has taken place. Thus, students should be encouraged to form their own knowledge through participation.

6.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented a conclusion drawn from the findings based on the retrieved data which aimed at enhancing triangulation. These findings had highlighted the learning challenges experienced by undergraduate university students, the causes and the countermeasures put up by students and lecturers in curbing the challenges. The analysed quantitative and qualitative data collected from students and lecturers respectively showed triangulation. Suffice therefore to state that the learning challenges experienced by students in the selected rural universities are similar, the causes and the countermeasures as well. Recommendations were made based on the findings of the study in different regards to different units. The researcher believes that the effective implementation of the recommendations will help control or possibly eradicate learning challenges from rural universities, especially in universities with similar features with the two adopted for this study. The implementation can begin with proper and adequate orientations given to students, helping them understand and believe in themselves, as well as adequate provision of periodic workshops for both academic and non-academic staff members to ensure that they all know and perform their roles properly. Thereafter, proper monitoring measures can be put in place to ascertain the effectiveness of the countermeasures put in place.

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGD 2016/142				
Project Title	Learning challenges amongst undergraduate university students in South Africa and Nigeria				
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	C Uleanya				
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Prof MAN Duma		Dr BT Gamede		
Department	Social Education				
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year	Master's	Doctoral	x	Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project proposal and the documents listed on page 2 of this Certificate.

- Special conditions:**
- (1) This certificate is valid for 3 years from the date of issue.**
 - (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-31 August 2017]**
 - (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.**

The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this Certificate, using the reference number indicated above, but may not conduct any data collection using research instruments that are yet to be approved.

Please note that the UZREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the UZREC
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

Classification:

Data collection	Animals	Human Health	Children	Vulnerable pp.	Other
X					
Low Risk		Medium Risk		High Risk	
		X			

The table below indicates which documents the UZREC considered in granting this Certificate and which documents, if any, still require ethical clearance. (Please note that this is not a closed list and should new instruments be developed, these would require approval.)

Documents	Considered	To be submitted	Not required
Faculty Research Ethics Committee recommendation	X		
Animal Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Health Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Ethical clearance application form	X		
Project registration proposal	X		
Informed consent from participants	X		
Informed consent from parent/guardian			X
Permission for access to sites/information/participants	X		
Permission to use documents/copyright clearance			X
Data collection/survey instrument/questionnaire	X		X
Data collection instrument in appropriate language		Only if necessary	
Other data collection instruments		Only if used	

The UZREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Certificate if
 - Any unethical principles or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in this Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting the research


 Professor Gideon De Wet
 Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation
 07 November 2016

CHAIRPERSON UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (UZREC) REG NO: UZREC 171110-30 07-11-2016 RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICE
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ANNEXURE A: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Project Title: Learning Challenges Amongst Undergraduate Rural University Students in South Africa and Nigeria

Chinaza Uleanya from the Department of Social Science Education, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to;
 - Explore the different learning challenges among undergraduate students in the selected rural universities
 - Investigate the causes of the learning challenges experienced by undergraduate students in the selected rural universities
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards providing information that will help reduce learning challenges among undergraduate students in the selected rural universities in the South Africa and Nigeria

4. I will participate in the project by completing a voluntary questionnaire on learning challenges amongst undergraduate students in selected rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
7. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that
 - a. The following risks are associated with my participation: No risks are anticipated.
 - b. The following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: No respondent will be pressurized into participation. Respondents will not be misled into providing specific responses.
 - c. There is a 0% chance of the risk materialising
8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of a thesis and articles in learned journals and conference presentations. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.
9. I will not receive feedback/will receive feedback in the form of a full research report regarding the results obtained during the study.
10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by:
 1. Researcher: Mr C. Uleanya (0788884942)
 2. Supervisor: Dr BT Gamede (035-9026583)
11. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I..... have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

.....

.....

Participant's signature

Date

ADDENDUM 3: Letter of Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



Department of Social Science Education

D.Ed Social Science Education Research Project

Researcher: Mr C. Uleanya (0788884942)

Supervisor: Dr BT Gamede (035-9026583)

Dear Respondent,

My name is Chinaza Uleanya (student number: 201633194). I am a Doctorate student in the Department of Social Science Education at the University of Zululand. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: **Learning Challenges Amongst Undergraduate Students in Selected Rural Universities in South Africa and Nigeria**

Through your participation I hope to understand:

- The various learning challenges experienced by undergraduates in the selected rural universities.
- The different causes of learning challenges experienced by undergraduates in the selected rural universities

The results of this survey are intended to help reduce the different learning challenges experienced by undergraduates in rural universities in South Africa and Nigeria.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the researcher. If you have any question(s) or concern(s) about participating in this study, please contact me or my supervisor using the numbers listed above. It should take you about 10 - 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. I hope you will take the time to complete the questionnaire.

Sincerely

Researcher's signature _____

Date _____

ADDENDUM 4: Respondent Statement

Annexure E: Respondent Statement

For office use: Respondent number: _____

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
Department of Social Science Education**



D.Ed Social Science Education Research Project

Researcher: Mr C. Uleanya (0788884942)

Supervisor: Dr BT Gamede (035-9026583)

CONSENT

I _____ (full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant

Date

ADDENDUM 5: Questionnaire for Undergraduate University Student in South Africa

For office use: Respondent number: _____

Annexure G1: Questionnaire for undergraduate university students
**VOLUNTARY QUESTIONNAIRE ON UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING
CHALLENGES**

Learning challenges experienced by undergraduates in rural university in South Africa



Researcher: MR. C. ULEANYA
Supervisor: DR BT GAMEDE
Faculty of Education
Department of Social Science
University of Zululand

Please complete this voluntary questionnaire on Learning Challenges Amongst Undergraduate Students in Selected Rural Universities in South Africa and Nigeria.

- Complete the questionnaire by pen and please do not revise your initial answers.
 - Please sign the letter of informed consent, giving me permission to use your responses for this research project.
 - Tick or cross in the box where required.
-

SECTION A: INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

Please, answer the following questionnaire by placing a mark (X or) in the relevant block or by writing your answer in the space provided. NB: Mark only one option per question or fill in the required information

1. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

2. Age

18 to 29	1
30 to 39	2
40 – Above	3

3. Race

Black	1
Indian	2
Others	3

4. Marital Status

Single	1
Married	2
Divorced	3

5. Faculty

Agriculture and Science	1
Arts	2
Commerce, Admin and Law	3
Education	4

6. Religion

Christianity	1
Islam	2
Others	3

SECTION B: Learning challenges among students

Put a cross(X) in the relevant space

2.1 Learning challenges amongst students

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1. Students struggle trying to understand new concepts	SA	A	D	SD
2. Students easily lose concentration when teaching is on or when they are reading	SA	A	D	SD
3. Lack of good foundation in the choice of course of students constitute learning challenge	SA	A	D	SD
4. Students relationship with their lecturers influence their ability to learn	SA	A	D	SD
5. Distance to campus make students to absent themselves from lectures	SA	A	D	SD

2.2 Cultural Diversity

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1. The experiences in the university differs from the experiences at home	SA	A	D	SD
2. Students are affected by differences in culture of the institution and home	SA	A	D	SD

3. students with foreign background have difficulty studying in this institution	SA	A	D	SD
4. Lectures taught by foreign lecturers are difficult to understand	SA	A	D	SD
5. Students force themselves to learn the English language	SA	A	D	SD

Section C: Causes of Learning Challenges

Use the scale given below to indicate your analysis of how students understand the issue of policies.

Yes 3	Unsure 2	No 1
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2.3 Understanding of Policies

	Statement	3	2	1
1.	Students are familiar with the educational policies of the Nation	3	2	1
2.	Knowledge of policies on education has helped students	3	2	1
3.	The policies of the institution aligns with the national policy on education	3	2	1
4.	Students are aware of the policies of the institution	3	2	1
5.	The policies of the institution are favourable to the students.	3	2	1

2.4 Infrastructural Resources

	Statement	3	2	1
1.	Students access the library very well	3	2	1
2.	Students have access to quality internet facilities around campus	3	2	1
3.	Audio-visuals are used for lecturing	3	2	1
4.	Text materials are used for lecturing	3	2	1
5.	Students have access to equipment in the laboratories.	3	2	1

2.5 Assessment and Feedback

	Statement	3	2	1
1.	Students are well assessed every semester	3	2	1
2.	The type of assessment given to students is commendable	3	2	1
3.	The assessment given by lecturers help to make students better	3	2	1
4.	Students enjoy the type of feedback they get from lecturers	3	2	1
5.	Students enjoy feedback received through email	3	2	1

2.6 Academic Malpractice

	Statement	3	2	1
1.	Students are sexually abused by lecturers	3	2	1
2.	Lecturers victimize students	3	2	1
3.	Lecturers shun lecture periods	3	2	1
4.	Lecturers receive bribes to make pass students	3	2	1
5.	Incompetent lecturers are employed to lecture	3	2	1

2.7 Countermeasures of Learning Challenges

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
1. Lecturers teach using home language	1	2	3
2. Students use their personal data subscription to browse	1	2	3
3. Students use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught	1	2	3
4. Students teach one another by themselves	1	2	3
5. Students improvise to use different places as class-rooms	1	2	3

Section D

Please express yourself by responding to the questions below

What are the common challenges you encounter?

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What makes you lose concentration when reading and during classes?

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What makes it difficult for you to learn in this university?

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How does the lecture method of lecturers affect your learning abilities?

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Any other comment

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Thank you for taking your time in filling the questionnaire

For office use: Respondent number: _____

Annexure G2: Questionnaire for undergraduate university students
VOLUNTARY QUESTIONNAIRE ON UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING
CHALLENGES

Learning challenges experienced by undergraduates in rural university in Nigeria



Researcher: MR. C. ULEANYA
Supervisor: DR BT GAMEDE
Faculty of Education
Department of Social Science
University of Zululand

Please complete this voluntary questionnaire on Learning Challenges Amongst Undergraduate Students in Selected Rural Universities in South Africa and Nigeria.

- Complete the questionnaire by pen and please do not revise your initial answers.
- Please sign the letter of informed consent, giving me permission to use your responses for this research project.
- Tick or cross in the box where required.

SECTION A: INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

Please, answer the following questionnaire by placing a mark (X or) in the relevant block or by writing your answer in the space provided. NB: Mark only one option per question or fill in the required information

2. Gender

Male	1
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3. Age

18 to 29	1
30 to 39	2
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3. Race

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Others	3

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Single	1
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5. Faculty

Agriculture and Science	1
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Education	4

6. Religion

Christianity	1
Islam	2

Others	3
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SECTION B: Learning challenges among students

Put a cross(X) in the relevant space

2.1 Learning challenges amongst students

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1. Students struggle trying to understand new concepts	SA	A	D	SD
2. Students easily lose concentration when teaching is on or when they are reading	SA	A	D	SD
3. Lack of good foundation in the choice of course of students constitute learning challenge	SA	A	D	SD
4. Students relationship with their lecturers influence their ability to learn	SA	A	D	SD
5. Distance to campus make students to absent themselves from lectures	SA	A	D	SD

2.2 Cultural Diversity

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1. The experiences in the university differs from the experiences at home	SA	A	D	SD
2. Students are affected by differences in culture of the institution and home	SA	A	D	SD
3. students with foreign background have difficulty studying in this institution	SA	A	D	SD
4. Lectures taught by foreign lecturers are difficult to understand	SA	A	D	SD
5. Students force themselves to learn the English language	SA	A	D	SD

Section C: Causes of Learning Challenges

Use the scale given below to indicate your analysis of how students understand the issue of policies.

Yes 3	Unsure 2	No 1
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2.3 Understanding of Policies

	Statement	3	2	1
1.	Students are familiar with the educational policies of the Nation	3	2	1
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3.	The policies of the institution aligns with the national policy on education	3	2	1

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4.	Students enjoy the type of feedback they get from lecturers	3	2	1
5.	Students enjoy feedback received through email	3	2	1

2.6 Academic Malpractice

	Statement	3	2	1
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3.	Lecturers shun lecture periods	3	2	1
4.	Lecturers receive bribes to make pass students	3	2	1
5.	Incompetent lecturers are employed to lecture	3	2	1

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Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
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3. Students use the internet to educate themselves more on what they have been taught	1	2	3

4. Students teach one another by themselves	1	2	3
5. Students improvise to use different places as class-rooms	1	2	3

Section D

Please express yourself by responding to the questions below

What are the common challenges you encounter?

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What makes you lose concentration when reading and during classes?

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What makes it difficult for you to learn in this university?

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How does the lecture method of lecturers affect your learning abilities?

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Any other comment

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Thank you for taking your time in filling the questionnaire

ADDENDUM 7: Interview Schedule Guide

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE GUIDE FOR LECTURERS ON LEARNING CHALLENGES AMONGST RURAL UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NIGERIA

1. How long have you been in this institution?
2. Do learning challenges really exist in this institution? If yes, how and where?
3. Can you please, explain some of the learning challenges experienced by your students.
4. What do you think are the causes of the learning challenges experienced on this campus?
5. Can you please explain reasons for your opinion?
6. Do you think students are responsible for learning challenges experienced by them?
Please, give reasons for your answer.
7. What countermeasures are students using to combat the learning challenges?
8. What countermeasures are lecturers using to combat the learning challenges of their students?
9. What other measures do you think can be put in place by the students, lecturers, the university and other education stakeholders in order to help reduce or totally eradicate the learning challenges?
10. Any other comment?