Entering the Workforce in Halifax: Strategies and Coping Mechanisms Among the

African Migrant Community

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the experiences of Sub-Saharan African migrants entering the job market in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Informed by Bourdieu's concept of habitus and the Labour Market Segmentation theory, this study examines the experiences, strategies used, challenges and barriers faced, available support, and coping mechanisms of the migrants. An online survey of 30 respondents and a key informant interview were used. Findings from the study showed that they use strategies such as volunteering, multiple applications, course certification, networking and using job fairs and job search engines, and sometimes settling with the jobs with lesser qualifications and language competence. The barriers identified were systemic discrimination and racism, cultural/social differences, and individual limitations. The available support for them was found to be inadequate due to growing numbers of migrants and reducing job opportunities in the province. They drew on the support of the black communities, their social networks, and native-born Canadians as coping mechanisms. The study highlights how interconnected relationships between the individual, group, and systematic factors shape the experiences of labour market integration of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Halifax.

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Reaching the end of the process of this research work was very humbling. Looking at the final product, one may think of all that has gone into getting to this last stage; This of course carries special debts.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Introduction

In this chapter, the circumstances and demographic background of African migrants in Canada are discussed to set the context for the study. The United Nations Migration Agency; International Organization for Migration (UN IOM, 2020: para.1) defines a migrant as "any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of the person's legal status; whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; what the causes for the movement are; or what the length of the stay is. This reflects the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons". Migrants in this study thus encompass individuals with temporary or permanent resident status in Canada, which include temporary workers, international students, working holiday visa holders, and asylum seekers, and also includes immigrants – who are permanent residents or naturalized citizens. In this study, I focus on Sub-Saharan African migrants in Canada. First, the research background is discussed, focusing on key points such as immigration, the labour market in Canada, and Nova Scotia, in particular, with some pulling factors that attract migrants to the province. Some recent policy and immigration programs for migrants are reviewed and the condition of African migrants in the Canadian labour market is also captured. Next, the research purpose is discussed, where I find the need to investigate what fundamental problems undermine the achievement of Sub-Saharan African migrants in the labour market in Canada and Nova Scotia. The research questions and the significance of the study are also discussed. Lastly, I present the organization of the thesis.

1.2. Background of the Study

Canada has increasingly become the destination of choice for many migrants, including African migrants, in the last decade. This is due to the existence of different policies that encourage the employment of migrants in Canada. A clear example of this is the Atlantic Immigration Pilot program. The Atlantic Immigration Pilot program enables Atlantic Canadian employers to recruit foreign qualified employees who would want to move to Atlantic Canada, and it extends to international graduates who after graduating want to remain in Atlantic Canada. These candidates may be abroad or maybe temporarily residing in Canada. Atlantic employers can recruit workers through three programs under the pilot scheme; Atlantic High-Skilled Program, Atlantic Intermediate-Skilled Program, and Atlantic International Graduate Program. An employee might be eligible for more than one program, but he/she is required to send in an application to only one program. Nonetheless, one must demonstrate evidence for all three schemes that they fulfill the language, schooling, and job experience criteria and that they have ample funds to help themselves and their family when they move to Canada (Government of Canada, 2020).

It is important to examine the context of labour market changes in Canada in recent years. Digitalization has resulted in a surge of computer system design jobs over the past five years in Canada. Health-related jobs have also boomed, particularly for the elderly (Jobs Report; State of the Canadian Labour Market, 2014). Nearly all of the jobs created in services were full-time, and about two-thirds were in companies paying higher than average wages. Pay gains in the service sector have been much higher than those in the goods sector over the previous year (Jobs Report; State of the Canadian Labour Market, 2014). However, even if these regional and sectoral factors are considered, overall wage growth is still a little short of what one would expect. According to

Komarnicki (2012), Canada is in the middle of a skilled labour shortage and the issue has been limiting the growth of businesses. This is consistent with what has been reported by other institutions such as the Business Development Bank of Canada (Agopsowicz, *et al*., 2018). One reason why policy analysts have been intrigued as to why Canadian wage growth has remained sluggish over the last few years is the relationship between lack of skilled labour, even though the rate of unemployment lingered around a low point (Agopsowicz et al., 2018).

Certain variables, however, must be holding back wages otherwise the national statistics would be higher. The first is that finding the right person for the job may be difficult. Estimates according to Wilkins (2019) suggest that about 1 out of every 10 workers in Canada are influenced by differences between the skills required by the position and the skills employees currently have. In a similar report by Jones *et al.* (2020) the sectors that experience skill shortages are no surprise: top of the list are health care and the digital economy. Meanwhile, other sectors such as manufacturing and natural resources have a surplus of people with the skills needed (ibid).

Despite the skills underutilization somewhat present, the labour market in Canada continues to be attractive for African migrants for different reasons. For instance, the labour market in Canada is argued to have high 'survival employment' opportunities for migrants in general and African migrants to get on their feet (Do, 2020). Again, the dominant language within the Canadian labour market also favours African migrants. Canada is predominantly a bi-lingual country with English and French languages driving the labour market. Both languages naturally favour African migrants to Canada because English and French are the most spoken lingua franca on the African continent. Apart from that, there are opportunities for African migrants in Canada to upgrade their education

and skills, thereby enhancing their income. Many African migrants in cities such as Halifax, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and others are found to experience significant improvement in their education and income within five years of entering the labour market (Do, 2020). Therefore, regardless of the skills underutilization phenomenon in the Canadian labour market, African migrants are able to find jobs in Canada because they are able to get access to and accept jobs that require less skills – the kind of jobs that average university-educated Canadians would probably not go for.

It can be said that the government took several steps to reinforce the labour market conditions in Canada and to create an atmosphere that encourages economic development, new investments, and the creation of jobs. Canada has undoubtedly greatly enhanced its corporate tax competitiveness. It has also enlarged trade and opened up new markets; encouraged research, advanced Canada's infrastructure; creativity, and the development of large-scale venture capital funds. The Canadian budget initiated acts to link Canadians with jobs that fit their skills and ensure that the employment insurance policy or program is equitable and where and when required, helps unemployed Canadians (Jobs Report; State of the Canadian Labour Market, 2014).

The government has also taken major measures to match preparation and training with private sector needs. It has also encouraged post-secondary education and training and has directly sponsored apprentices and recruiting workers (Jobs Report; State of the Canadian Labour Market, 2014). Cukier and Stolarick (2020) have indicated that there was substantial funding from the Government of Canada to increase the representation of sub-represented communities in the labour market. Ultimately, many measures have been launched to draw international skilled workers to the country.

Reflecting on one of the reports presented by the Department of Finance Canada (2019), in recent years, Canada has demonstrated an excellent job growth record. Canada has also been doing well in terms of post-secondary educational achievement relative to other countries. Overall, Canada has a fairly mobile population and is well matched to economic opportunities and regional labour market disparities. To face tomorrow's challenges, Canada will continue to draw upon these achievements and strengths. Given the stresses on the job market, however, some sectors should be improved. While there is tremendous labour diversity across Canada, it is somewhat tedious for Canadian businesses to recruit more workforce to fill job openings. The unemployment rate in 2019, by contrast, outstripped population growth over 2019 (Bernard, 2019).

Nevertheless, a closer look into the Halifax job market and the impact of the global pandemic on the labour market in the year 2020 is noteworthy. The global COVID-19 pandemic has however increased unemployment globally. In Canada for instance, the unemployment rate reached at an all-time high of 13.7% in May 2020, falling marginally to 12.3% in June 2020 (Jones *et al.*, 2020). This points to the fact that unemployed individuals now have more difficulty filling vacant positions than before the recession. The reason could be on the part of the employers (e.g. employers might have hesitations in recruiting because of economic uncertainties) or on the part of workers having a reduced job search seriousness or a lack of skills between the jobless and those requested by employers.

The Halifax employment market is dominated by the service sector. More than 85 percent of workers serve in this capacity – far higher than the rest of the province. Businesses or industries such as healthcare are also improving greatly (Nova Scotia Immigration, 2020). The March (2020) labour force survey however estimated that the labour force for Nova Scotia decreased from 510,900 in February to 490,200 in March by 20,700 (-4.1 percent). The labour force fell by 7,500 (-1.5%), compared to a year earlier, due to reduced inclusion in the workforce (-1.7 percentage points). In March, jobs dropped by 24, 800 (-5.3%), down from last month to 446,200 and down by 20600 (-4.4 percent).

The annual fall in the number of jobs was found in all ages and even more for younger employees. Young people (aged 15-24), who were most likely dropped from their work due to Covid-19, suffered the biggest career loss (-12,100, - 17,7 percent). The number of employees of the core age (aged 25-54) was also down to or by 11,400 (-3.9 percent). Accommodation and food utilities, school services, and wholesale and retail trade all experienced a substantial drop in jobs relative to 12 months earlier. The monthly rate of unemployment rose 9% from February to 1.2% as 4,300 more citizens went out of work. The unemployment rate was 2,8 percentage points higher than in March 2019 (Labour Force Survey, March 2020). This phenomenon tends to create a more difficult situation for migrants to get a job considering the pandemic has affected all businesses and thus has forced many companies to lay off many employed workers.

1.2.1 Halifax, Nova Scotia as the study site

Nova Scotia is located on the south-eastern coast of Canada, as one of the Canadian provinces. This is the most populous province in the Maritime region and since its formation, its capital,

Halifax, was the region's main economic center point and the conduit to immigration. Nova Scotia, with a land area of 55,284 km^2, is the second smallest province in Canada. Its population of 921,727 is Canada's second-smallest province (AK Canada, 2020). Concerning geography and immigration, the province's coastline is Nova Scotia's Peninsula with its numerous estuaries and bays and surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean. For more than 400 years, Nova Scotia and the provincial capital, Halifax, have become a gateway for immigrants worldwide. Nova Scotia draws and support immigrants, respecting their important economic, social, and cultural contribution. Nova Scotia as a province faces a number of economic and demographic problems, thus sluggish population growth, relocation of young people, low birth rates, ageing demographics, urbanization, low levels of immigration – all of which could lead to labour shortages, slow demand for services and products, and increasing fiscal pressures within years (AK Canada, 2020).

The Black populace have added to Nova Scotia and Canada's history since the arrival of Mathieu Da Costa (a navigator and translator for Pierre Du Gua de Mons and Samuel de Champlain), whose existence in Canada dates back to the early 1600s. Black people in Canada have varied origins and perspectives – while some have been able to trace their heritage to Canada for generations, some have immigrated in recent decades. They have contributed to the country's prosperity, diversity and progress in many respects (Statistics Canada, 2019). The history of Africans in Nova Scotia date from as early as the late 18th and early 19th centuries when freed black slaves from the United States arrived in Canada and settled in Nova Scotia (Hamilton, 1991). In the 1970s, immigration reforms such as the immigration act 1976, somewhat led to growing numbers of migrants including that of African population in Canada and also to Nova Scotia and established themselves within rural settings.

The population of African migrants in Nova Scotia has grown since 2006 census. Statistics from the 2016 Census of Canada indicates that there is an estimation of 21,915 Africans living in Nova Scotia (Statistics Canada, 2019). In Halifax in particular, prominent black neighbourhoods include Mulgrave Park and Uniacke Square. The growing number of black communities in Halifax and Nova Scotia also serve as a factor that attracts more African migrants to the province as a point of settlement and social support to get established in Canada. African migrants are drawn to the province of Nova Scotia and Halifax due to favourable immigration policies and programs available for migrants whether being an economic migrant, family reunion migrant, or refugee migrant.

The year 2018 was a milestone year for Nova Scotia immigration and migrants as well. Nova Scotia's population, because of immigration, is at a historic level. More than ever before, Nova Scotia Office of Immigration (NSOI) has accepted 2,272 individuals through immigration programs and received 5,970 newcomers in terms of the number of landings, and up to 65 percent of the 2017 year's newcomers were approved through NSOI services, a greater portion than ever before. Interestingly, with 872 people approved and 737 employers assigned to recruit and fill vacancies under the initiative, Nova Scotia exceeded its Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program goal. Nova Scotia was the first province to launch a Physician Stream and the Labour Market Preferences Stream. Not only is Nova Scotia hiring more candidates to fill persistent job shortages, but there are also initiatives to ensure that new Nova Scotians are doing well. Nova Scotia's latest immigrant unemployment rate was 8.7 percent in 2017, 1.7 percent lower than the Canadian

average of 10.4 percent, and Nova Scotia has the lowest income gap in Canada between university-educated landed immigrants and non-immigrants (Nova Scotia Immigration Office, 2019).

In order to advertise the Province as an ideal destination for immigration and to facilitate all immigration routes to Nova Scotia, immigrants are chosen through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program and the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, which will help meet the labour market needs and add to the economy of Nova Scotia. Immigration and settlement planning, strategies, and services in the Province are also improved in order to promote integration and retention. Nova Scotia is also committed to the promotion of inclusive cultures, including raising awareness and appreciation of immigration and diversity issues. The key functions of NSOI include welcoming and recruiting immigrants to Nova Scotia, providing strong and responsive selection services, promoting the incorporation and retention of immigrants and their families, and finally heading and supporting immigration policy and advancing provincial immigration goals (Nova Scotia Immigration Office, 2019). All these programs serve as pulling factors in attracting many migrants to the province of Nova Scotia and Halifax, and African migrants are no exception.

1.3 Research Purpose

African migrants in western countries face multilevel obstacles in securing employment in general, particularly jobs that match up with their qualifications, skills, and/or experience. The labour market in high-income countries has always been racialized (Babis, 2016). People of colour have encountered structural barriers in integrating into the labour markets in host countries (Kingston, 2016). Migrants, including African migrants, begin the processes and practices that will help them smoothly integrate and adapt to their various host nations almost immediately upon arrival. As

they try to mingle and become members of the local ethnic communities, they look for ways as well to also infiltrate the labour markets of such nations, including Canada. A large number of immigrants and migrants now dwell in Atlantic Canada (since the 1980s), and a large number of immigrants, about eighty- five percent (85%) remain in Nova Scotia. Approximately ninety percent (90%) of African immigrants in Nova Scotia live in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), whilst 10% live in other parts of the province (Nova Scotia Education Department, 2004:28).

Despite a large number of African immigrants in Halifax, female immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa are considered outsiders with forces at play in the intersection of ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, and immigrant status (Topen, 2006). To a large extent, this situation can be said to be a major phenomenon faced by many African migrants irrespective of gender in the Canadian labour market. Mainstream Canadian society is synonymous with ideas, opinions, and aspirations from the dominant community. The minority groups who are separated from the mainstream and predominantly immigrants have common cultural or social traits that differentiate the group from the broader group and might either be directly discriminated against or passively ignored by the larger society (Elliot , 1971). This undoubtedly could lead to the discredit of job experiences, skills, and international education credentials of migrants despite the "point system" which brings many migrants annually to Canada; a lot of them are said to be skilled workers and technical personnel (Topen, 2006). Despite all the barriers that some migrants face in the Canadian labour market across many provinces, a lot of migrants every year are immigrating to Canada and many of them end up living in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

A lot of migrants are landing every year with the hope of getting better jobs in the Canadian labour market through the "point system" as one of the routes African migrants immigrate to Canada. The "point system" underpins the belief that attracting highly qualified immigrants would lead to economic development and boost the healthy growth of the immigrant himself/herself (Salaff and Greve, 2006). Yet, the reality of the situation is that the ideologies and practices of the white British nation characterize that of the Canadian society and being a professional or expert thus ends up reflecting these written and unwritten practices of that of a predominantly white settler society (Slade ,2004).

As a result, female immigrant skilled workers, and professionals, and especially Africans, have had greater trouble developing themselves in their various careers in Canada. Hope is somewhat frail for these immigrants when it comes to them seeing their aspirations and goals materialized in Canada due to various institutionalized discriminatory and gender-based mechanisms in the context of failure to consider foreign education credentials, not valuing international qualifications and experience, and the labour force dynamics that prejudice against them (Tastsoglou and Miedema, 2005). Nova Scotia is confronted with a huge challenge in the area of an aging populace and the economy predominantly relies on a qualified and competent labour or workforce (Akbari and Mandale, 2005). Many African immigrant women and to a larger extent men in Nova Scotia, and across Canada, have the idea that when Canadian employers mention the shortage of qualified employees, their expertise and schooling are being ignored (Danso and Grant, 2000). They hardly get the chance to learn or exercise their expertise in their area of the profession since they are mostly the last to be recruited or hired in many fields and jobs (Kofman *et al*., 2000:132). In

despair, quite a number have taken positions beneath their credentials, since the work experience earned in Africa is not recognized as equal qualifications and skill in Nova Scotia.

As the world becomes more globalized, there is a strong call to address racialized narratives in employment opportunities (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2018). Employment is one of the most critical areas where structural racism can be challenged and dealt with (Loxley *et al.,* 2015). There has been increased research attention towards migrants' integration into the job markets in high income countries (Ganassin & Young, 2020). However, there have been some critical gaps in the current research. For instance, existing studies treat migrants as passive and victimized job seekers, who are at the mercy of structural barriers. How migrants exercise agency in their efforts to overcome structural barriers in the labour markets has received limited empirical analysis (Brännström, *et al.*, 2018).

The current study therefore responds to this gap in research by drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus and two approaches of the Labour Market Segmentation Theory. The new version of the labour market segmentation theory known as the cultural capital/cultural judgments approach and then the migrant, immigrant, or social network approach. These approaches are considered to tell more on how agency (migrants social capital networks) and structural barriers (hiring processes, policies and employers' judgment) shape labour market integration experiences among African migrants in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. There is not enough research on African migrants' labour market experiences in Halifax, with many focusing on how the issues of immigration, policy, and citizenship affect African migrants in the labour market with less emphasis on addressing how migrants act as agents themselves and eventually

enter the workforce. This research gap results in limited insights on everyday experiences and the challenges of African migrants in the labour market in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This study thus explores the lived experiences of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in seeking to enter the job market. A focus on their lived experiences and how they navigated the labour market aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the challenges of African migrants in the processes of economic integration.

The purpose of this study is to identify and document the barriers and challenges that Sub-Saharan Africa migrants face in securing employment which is proportionate to their qualifications. I also examine the diverse strategies and coping mechanisms that African migrants coming from Sub-Saharan Africa undertake to enter the Canadian labour market. Another objective of this research is to address how Sub-Saharan African migrants experience the processes of economic integration in Halifax and to examine how these processes are racialized. In the following sections, I will discuss how this study contributes to the literature on labour market integration and economic integration studies theoretically and empirically.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions are examined;

i. What are the barriers in the Canadian labour market that hinder the successful labour integration among African migrants in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada?

ii. What are the strategies that African migrants adopt in the process of getting jobs in Halifax?

iii. What provincial government policies and settlement programs are available to support the equitable economic integration of migrants?

iv.   What coping mechanisms do African migrants adopt to overcome job challenges in Halifax?

The strategies Sub-Saharan African migrants adopt in the processes of entering the labour market in Halifax, Nova Scotia, will look at the resources factors these migrants have and use to get a job while the coping mechanisms will focus on the support they rely on when they faced with the challenge of not getting a job.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The strategies employed by the participants when facing the challenges in the Canadian labour market might help to educate and inform other African migrants in Halifax. I plan to do knowledge dissemination in Ghana, and some Sub-Saharan African countries, through online platforms such as webinars, webcasts web meetings, and some NGOs websites in Ghana; so the information from the study will be available to potential migrants searching online for knowledge about the labour market integration and experiences of African migrants in Halifax. As an international student myself, I had to go the internet for information about Halifax; the weather, the people; market conditions, and immigration policies for students after school before I applied for school eventually. This helped me to make an informed decision about finally choosing Halifax among other cities. African migrants who chance upon this study will learn from the research findings and migrate with informed preparations about better ways to negotiate the Canadian labour market. The study also aims to aid government and policymakers in shaping and making pragmatic policies that will hopefully create the platform for equitable economic integration, especially for African-born migrants.

Moreover, the findings in this research will shed more light on the way Canadian societies treat Sub-Saharan African migrants in the labour market integration process. It is also important considering that Nova Scotia is now rolling out the opening scheme to attract more migrants to the province, thus this study may be an initial step towards seeking a permanent solution in the workplace in Canada to the issue of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and African migrants. The policymakers of the Atlantic Provinces could use the findings of the research in an optimistic way to help develop policies for handling migration and cultural diversity. The study somewhat could also help promote and enhance the integration of African migrants on the workforce and foster a more friendly atmosphere in Halifax, Nova Scotia for migrants. This research could therefore add to the policy dialogue when it comes to labour market integration regulations for policymakers to review and develop new initiatives to ensure that the concerns of migrants, particularly those from Africa, are heard.

1.6 Thesis Organization

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One sets forth the context of the study. Chapter one discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem and research purpose, research questions, the significance of the study, and organization of chapters. Chapter Two provides the theoretical background of the study through the literature review. It elaborates upon the analytical categories from the labour market segmentation theories and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus: the new version of the labour market segmentation theory known as the cultural capital or cultural judgment approach and the migrant social network approach. This approach suggests that the cultural capital which represents the embodiment of migrants through accent, dress, bodily behaviour, and foreign origin of credentials among others is significant in producing certain kinds

of labour market outcomes for migrants. The migrant, immigrants, or social network approach elaborates on how migrants act as an agency and change the outcomes of the market for themselves through their social networks. Chapter Three presents the research methodology. In the current study, a qualitative research design was used. The chapter, therefore, discusses the procedures used to gather data and provide a comprehensive overview of the research area, the recruitment of participants in the study, and also how the surveys and interviews are performed. Chapter Four provides an illustration and analysis of the challenges that confront African migrants in the Halifax labour market. It provides descriptions of the various strategies and coping mechanisms they adopt to maneuver the barriers and the government policies in place to help migrants settle down well in Halifax: in order words, it examines the findings and the discussions of the results in the Halifax labour market obtained from the experiences of African migrants. Chapter Five provides a review of the results and recommendations based on the study findings and suggestions for future research direction.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the literature on migrant integration into the job market is discussed, paying attention to the cases in the Canadian job market. It provides the literature context which underlines this research and situates African migrants' lived experiences in Halifax Nova Scotia, in their pursuit of integrating into the workforce. First, the theoretical framework for informing the current study is discussed. After that, the context of migrants and the labour market in Canada is discussed. Then, empirical studies on migrants' entry into job markets are reviewed, followed by a synthesis of the general literature relevant to the thesis.

2.2 Theories of migrant labour market integration

I draw upon economic integration and labour market theories that incorporate various levels of analysis: macro and micro scale of labour market operations for the thesis. I elaborate on the analytical categories and utilize the labour market segmentation approach. This is because the integration experiences of these migrants are largely contingent on their cultural heritage or backgrounds, their country of origin, ethnic constituents, and also their race (Akkaymak, 2016). Thus, Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus and the Labour Market Segmentation Theories are utilized for this study. These theories are selected because integration provides a compelling and holistic framework to explore the experiences of migrants as they struggle to enter the job markets in the host countries. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus provides a framework for

understanding how the agency is shaped within structures of social space and the resources of social capital (Fowler, 2009). The labour market segmentation theories explain how the labour outcomes of migrants are influenced by the cultural judgments of employers, and how these migrants act as agents and are able to negotiate these challenges by utilizing their social networks. The theories are combined into a framework to explain the space of African migrants' agency in the Canadian labour market.

2.2.1 Bourdieu's Concept of Habitus and Cultural Capital/Cultural Judgments Approach

Bourdieu's concept of habitus provides a framework for understanding the significance of structural practices (Kelly & Lusis, 2006; Mouzelis, 2008). Bourdieu defined habitus as the skills, practices, and actions that individuals and groups engage in as they participate in their societies (Bourdieu, 2014). Bourdieu argues that habitus is dependent on social class and social groups, such that a specific set of habitus shapes specific rules of engagement for different social groups within social spaces (King, 2000). The ability and skills of individuals to follow and play by the rules of engagements within a society are shaped by structural codes of conducts, norms and conventions that signify membership within social groups (Kelly & Lusis, 2006).

In this study, habitus is operationalized in structural terms, specifically focusing on the culture of hiring processes exercised by the employers and the mainstream labour market. In extending to African migrants in Canada in general, and Sub- Saharan African specifically, it will analyze how the beliefs, mindsets, and policies of employers, and government regulations constrain or enable efforts of migrants at entering or integrating into the Canadian labour market. Conceptualizing habitus in structural terms helps to examine how the structures promote or undermine the agency of African migrants in integrating into the labour market in Halifax.

The new version of the labour market segmentation theory known as the cultural capital/ cultural judgments approach explains that the cultural capital embodiment of migrants such as accent, dress, bodily behaviour, and foreign origin of education credentials among others are significant in producing certain kinds of labour market outcomes or results for migrants/immigrants (Bauder, 2006). Bauder based his analysis on Pierre Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital to formulate this approach. Bauder concluded that the cultural judgment of employers greatly and significantly impacts the extent to which migrants experience the labour market. What then is the premises for this theory; it emphasizes how immigrants/migrants are denied certain kinds of job opportunities and lose out on certain employment positions and promotions due to the assumption that immigrants do not somewhat satisfy the cultural appropriation of employers either in the process of hiring or promotions at work. This depicts that some employers in the Canadian labour market are thus looking out for job seekers with unique features/traits for certain types of jobs; there could be more to the situation than just the question of race and stereotype.

Nevertheless, the cultural capital of migrants/immigrants is not uniform throughout all settings and some exceptions are at play. For instance, Bauder (2006) shows how the situation is different in Vancouver, Canada, recording that a lot of Sikh men who are taxi drivers do so mostly with their turbans on. This cultural difference instead of it being treated as one of the "many others" by passengers in the community, it was rather seen as a virtue; thus, they come across as reliable and possess integrity, making travelers more confident and assured when they see that their drivers are Sikh men with a turban on. What then creates these differences in the labour market experiences for different nationalities and ethnic groups where one culture is perceived as an advantage and

the other is seen as a liability and what market integration experience does it portray to these immigrants. It can then be argued that the integration experiences of these migrants are largely reliant on their nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, racial composition, national, and cultural heritages (Akkaymak, 2016).

In the application of this theory to the current study, the theory helps to analyze how efforts of African migrants to enter the job market in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada get constrained or enabled by the broader structural orchestrations of the labour market with more emphasis on the cultural capital or cultural judgment of employers towards migrants in Canada and also how these migrants can secure employment, what types of jobs they end up getting and if there is a space for improvement or advancement aside all this diversity. This theory then places less emphasis on how migrants themselves can work as agents or actors and change the market outcomes in the labour market for themselves through their social networks; this then brings me to the next theory that this study engages to help understand how social networks of migrants becomes a needful asset or capital in the processes of economic   and labour market integration.

2.2.2 Migrant, Immigrant, or Social Network Approach

In the migrant, immigrants, or social practice approach, the prominence is mainly on the migrants or immigrants' exercises of their social networks. It is particularly based on the social networks of co-nationals (individuals of the same nationality or national origin) or co-ethnics (immigrants of the same ethnicity) involved in securing jobs and making available other resources, such as housing and legal assistance (Boyd 1989). Furthermore, these social networks add to numerous

aspects of social capital where migrants and immigrants get the avenues to help and receive help from one another (Ledeneva, 1998). The idea of co-ethnics or co-nationals can be termed as a form of bonding social capital which is different from bridging social capital which talks about the making or extending a form of communication beyond the immigrant or migrant's ethnic circle or nationality. This then boils down to the establishment of contact between a migrant or immigrant with a citizen (Lance, 2010; Putnam, 2000).

Bonding social capital and bridging social capital networks both can result in the formation of either strong or weak ties. There is a chance for the provision of resources such as jobs and housing among others in both cases. In certain times, one would probably expect the networks between co-national or co-ethnic to be the stronger ties since they share a lot of things in common and thus makes it easier for any assistance when needed, but that's not always the case. Sometimes, some networks with weak ties are even more efficient in providing help than networks with strong ties which sometimes makes it more tedious for one to get help like getting a good job or housing, which conveys the idea that not all ties among co- national or ethnic groups networks are strong; most times they are separated based on gender, class and among other social differences (Samers and Snider, 2015). An example can be seen in (Allen, 2009) who reports that bonding capital is said to affect the incomes of refugee women as time passes by compared to at least the incomes these immigrants might have acquired if they had more contact or networks with citizens in Portland, Maine. Waldinger and Lichter (2003) also highlight how a certain workspace or an industry is dominated by immigrants might wind up preventing other immigrants' groups from entering these same jobs or employment avenues. Notwithstanding, migrants and immigrants are undeniably encountered with labour markets demands, not forgetting the issue of immigration and

other policies, the presence of discriminatory practices, the embodiment of their human capital, and the existence of cultural judgment in the labour market impact the experiences and thus create a certain type of labour market outcome for these migrants and immigrants.

Although, Sub- Saharan African migrants are of the same race, but their positionality in life is diverse and individually construed (being it language, education and literacy, gender, ethnicity and religiosity, class etc.). The intersectionality of the above-named factors impacts them thus creating different experiences and challenges for them in their labour market entry and integration in Canada. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), a black feminist and legal scholar, developed the term "intersectionality," in which she argued that black women are discriminated against in the ways that do not ascribe to the effects of racism or sexism separately but as a result of the intersections of their gender and race. Intersectionality thus defines the diverse ways in which cultural, social, economic, and political identities accumulate to produce the conditions and experiences that give certain people more access to authority, right, privilege, resources, life options and opportunities than others. Though Sub-Saharan African migrants might exercise their agency and utilize their social networks to help them navigate the labour market challenges, it is noteworthy to acknowledge how the intersectionality and interplay of factors such as race, language, age, religion, class and gender play a critical role on the group and individual lives of Sub-Saharan migrants in Halifax. This interwoven power dynamics converge to impede efforts of Sub-Saharan African migrants in their pursuits of getting employments in Halifax. Notwithstanding these migrants are able to maneuver these barriers and challenges thereby landing a job, not necessarily one that is   commensurate with their skills, but it would go a mile to help them survive and pay their bills.

Drawing from this approach for the current study, it will provide the framework to understand how Sub -Saharan African migrants, particularly the social networks of co-nationals (individuals of the same nationality or national origin) or co-ethnics (immigrants of the same ethnicity) are utilized in securing jobs and making available other resources in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The combination of the theories will complement one another and provide the lens for understanding how African migrants in the process of getting jobs and securing employments are marginalized and discriminated against by the cultural judgments of employers and institutions, immigration policies, and how these migrants are able to negotiate and end up infiltrating the Halifax workforce in Nova Scotia by utilizing their social networks and agency.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

This section presents a discussion of empirical studies regarding the integration of migrants into the job market, focusing on high-income countries. The discussion is organized around three thematic areas. First, empirical studies on factors that contribute to migrants' integration as a strategy for infiltrating into labour markets in high-income countries are discussed. Next, the focus is on the studies on barriers and challenges to migrants' integration into labour markets in high-income countries. Lastly, I examine the literature on the coping mechanisms adopted and then, on policy and regulatory supports.

2.3.1 Resources of Migrants as Strategies Utilized in Labour Markets Integration

Research on how migrants in western high-income countries integrate into the job market of their host countries have seen rising interest. Different studies have focused on examining strategies

used by migrants to secure jobs. African migrants infiltrate the Canadian labour market in one way or the other. They devise numerous strategies by either reskilling (by learning new skills), or multi-skilling among others. Findings from previous studies have indicated different strategies through which migrants integrate into the labour markets.

There are three main pathways of migrant economic integration, which are through entrepreneurship, investment, or wage employment (Kerr & Kerr, 2020; Schans, 2012). Resource factors for integrating into the job market, based on a diversity of studies from varied geographic locations indicate the importance of the following; having education, language, skill, social network, cultural capital, financial capital, and maintenance of transnational ties with countries of origin (Bussi & Pareliussen, 2017; Hebbani & Khawaja, 2018; Oreopoulos, 2011; Senthanar, *et al.*, 2020; Schans, 2012), development of ties with host-country nationals (Schans, 2012; Snider, 2017), education and literacy skills (Bussi & Pareliussen, 2017; Oreopoulos, 2011; Senthanar, *et al.*, 2020), contracting intermarriages with host-country nationals (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014), and having pre-emigration paid job experience (Cheng *et al*., 2019; Lens *et al*., 2018). Deducing from the above studies and findings, it is clear that for migrants to have a successful labour market and economic integration in their host nations; there should be some form of leverage they possess that is relevant to the labour market. For example, a migrant who is highly educated has the needed skill, equipped with the language competency, and possesses some form of social networks is more likely to have a smooth economic integration in their host nations compared to a migrant who lacks all these resources and is trying by themselves to infiltrate the labour market of their host nations.

Entrepreneurship emerges strongly as one of the strategies for entering labour markets globally. This has been observed in different countries such as Japan (Schans, 2012), the United States (Kerr & Kerr, 2020), and Australia (Hebbani & Khawaja, 2018). For instance, Schans (2012) examined employment practices and pathways of labour market incorporation of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Japan. Data from the study was drawn from secondary information and also five months of ethnographic fieldwork in Tokyo and its suburbs. Findings from the study showed the importance of entrepreneurship in facilitating labour market integration. In a more recent study, Kerr and Kerr (2020) examined entrepreneurship as a route to enter the job market in the United States. They assessed how the enterprises or business ventures created by migrants are similar and diverge in relation to natives owned businesses, drawing on data from 2007 and 2012 surveys of business owners. The conclusions indicate that the majority of the influence of migrant hi-tech entrepreneurship on technology centers is due to the quantity dimension. Thus, Silicon Valley and other common tech centers draw many founders who are migrants' founders. However, immigrant-owned firms were found to be smaller than native-owned firms in terms of staff size. Hebbani and Khawaja (2018) have also reported in Australia that many African migrants wanted to pursue their own business.

Developing strong ties with host-country nationals also emerges as another strategy through which migrants enter the job markets in western countries. Evidence of this comes from countries such as Japan (Schans, 2012) and Canada (Samers & Snider, 2015). Schan (2012) for instance has reported that migrants in Japan draw on transnational ties with the country of origin and ties with Japanese nationals in securing jobs. Samers and Snider (2015) have also reported in Canada that relying on both ties with Canadian citizens and other nationals in Canada determines whether or

not migrants will be able to secure employment and what kind of job they will eventually perform in the job market (Samers & Snider, 2015).

One of the ways of building strong ties with host-country nationals to make securing a job not tedious has been through inter-marriages (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014). These authors conducted a comparative analysis of the jobs and earnings of migrants who inter-marry natives versus those of migrants who intra-marry other migrants in Sweden. Findings from the study showed that inter-married migrants outperformed the intra-married group after marriage in terms of job outcomes, wages return, and salary gains, in 1997 and 2007 accordingly, and it was common and uniform across the three -subsamples(job outcomes, wages return, and salary gains) that the analysis was performed on. Further, inter-married migrants had statistically significant higher income growth. These findings show how marriage is used as a way of establishing networks with people in the host country, which enhances the possibility of getting jobs.

In the UK, Campbell (2014) argues that the real intentions of migrants (being work/student migrant, family reunion migrant or refugee migrant) in terms of migration abroad to their host nations are strong prognosticators of wages, jobs, and the issue of taking up the native's national identity. It was revealed that those who initially landed with job/work or student permits are the most efficient and achieve success and do well in the labour market in terms of jobs and salaries, while family migrants do well but not much as the worker/student permit group and refugees migrants were found lagging among these three motives for migration. Kyeremeh *et al*. (2019) have also explored perspectives of African migrants in Ontario, London specifically regarding what effective incorporation/integration means to them. The minds and views of these African

migrants in Ontario were captured using in-depth interviews. The discoveries illustrated certain viewpoints of what fruitful integration implies to them. They proposed that the foundation of stages for self-awareness, individual development and improvement in a setting where migrants have resources and avenues for progression could be a critical and important step or milestone in the processes of integration. In terms of understanding the concept of integration and incorporation amongst migrants, the study found it to be contingent on factors such as the attainment of migration goals, such as dreams, aims, and goals set before arrival in the host country. Migrants consider integration as a continual phase in which migrants constantly react to the progressing dictates of the host country's labour market.

Lens *et al*. (2018) have also examined how migration motives affect the employment chances of refugee migrants, family reunion migrants, labour migrants, and natives in Belgium. The findings from this research showed that the probability of family reunion migrants and migrants who in the refugees' category employment opportunities is minimal compared to that of the natives and the economic class of migrants. Concerning human capital, data analyzed shows that migrants who worked before migration and also migrated as work migrants and student migrants are comparatively highly educated, compared to migrants from family reunions. Labour migrants without jobs previous to migration and refugees encounter a double drawback, both with comparatively poor educational qualifications and limited host country language proficiency. Temporary jobs are prevalent across the migrants who are in the work permit group who had no job or work experience before their migration and then among the student migrants, those who are males are mostly overqualified in relations to jobs available to them and that has become a challenge for these male student migrants. Notwithstanding, the overall regression findings from

this study suggest that there are higher job rates for migrants who have migrated to Belgium for work-related or educational purposes compared to migrants who have migrated for reasons of family reunification or foreign security. Thus, when it comes to labour market experiences of migrants in their country of residences, the aim and motive and resources (human capital) of migrants before migrating goes along to influence whether these migrants would to have a smooth or rough labour integration in their respective country of residences (Lens *et al*., 2018).

The other labour market entry routes that emerge from previous studies include having education and language competence (Bussi & Pareliussen, 2017; Oreopoulos, 2011; Senthanar *et al.,* 2020) and pre-emigration paid job experience (Cheng *et al.,* 2019; Lens *et al*., 2018). With regards to education and literacy skills, Bussi and Pareliussen (2017) examined how schooling, literacy skills, and migrant history have had an impact on jobs in Sweden. The results of the study demonstrate the presence of significant job penalties, all but vanishing while monitoring the low literacy skills of migrants. However, participation in training and education activities in Sweden enhances, particularly if such practices are demonstrated in the form of formal qualifications or credentials. Senthanar *et al.* (2020) have also investigated language competence and job transition interactions of women refugees from Syria landing in Canada. The researchers concentrated mainly on refugees from four sectors, private sponsorship, Mixed/Blended Visa Office referral, government-assisted, and then on refugee applicants. Among the key findings in the study was that refugee women who had language competence and work experiences integrated into the job market easier compared to the other groups. Aside from the structural barriers they face, those with language proficiency were more likely and have the flexibility to make a decision in terms of the time, how and the kind of work they accepted than those who were not competent in the language.

Apart from pre-emigration educational achievement, Cheng *et al*., (2019) have shown that structural level pre-immigration opportunities enhance the chances of migrants entering the Australian job market. The research by Cheng et al., (2019) investigates the commonalties that exist between the workforce involvement and that of acquired human resources of migrants in relation to the current jobs they hold or are engaged in. The study participants were humanitarians' migrants also known as refugee migrants who had arrived not long ago. For migrants who had acquired job experiences, had some for education or learned some skills before migration; the study reveals that these migrants with such human resources had a higher or greater chance when it comes to securing a job and doing well in the labour market since they seem to be proficient in speaking the English language, they can vigorously search for employment and know how to apply for jobs compared to other refugee migrants who lacked all these human resources. There was a downward trend between having a proper education prior to migration in relation to paid jobs in Australia. Again, when it comes to engaging in volunteering works without pay, gaining experience on the job and also being good at searching for jobs and maintaining a healthy condition which; there was a positive correlation. In order words, if a migrant from the humanitarian category who volunteers and works to gain experience in Australia without wages or salary, learns the ways to look for employment and possesses improved wellbeing, the likelihood of having a job increases for such a migrant compared to those who lack all these resources. It can be said that the resources or human capital of migrants become a significant factor in their processes of integration into the labour market of their host nations.

High pre-migration education undermining job chances reported by Cheng *et al.* (2019) in Australia aligns with Bussi and Pareliussen (2017) who have also reported that high education poses a disadvantage to migrants in their job search in Sweden. This may be explained by the fact that on one hand, having high education reduces the kind of jobs a person can apply for. On the other hand, most jobs reserved for immigrants are the ones that require less skill and qualifications, and therefore having high education may not be necessary for many jobs. The challenge may however be reduced by in-depth knowledge of the job market in the host countries. Having good knowledge and understanding of the job market can offset any form of pre-migration factors that undermine chances of finding jobs. This shows that having the needed resources to negotiate the labour market isn't always smooth for migrants in their host nations. Nevertheless, the factors that contribute to labour market entry and integration for migrants are highly dependant on the context of each country's definition of what successful labour market integration embodies.

2.3.2 Challenges and Barriers in Migrants' Integration into Labour Market

This subsection presents a discussion of empirical studies that focus on the barriers to migrants' integration into the labour market in high-income countries. There are structural factors including discrimination, opportunity structure, policies, programs, and regulations that shape the labour market conditions of migrants. The key challenges and barriers that have been identified and narrowed down include; institutional/structural discrimination (Garcia, 2017; Hooijer & Picot, 2015; Udah *et al.*, 2019b), employer discrimination (Allan, 2014; Blit, 2017; Dietz *et al.,* 2015; Oreopoulos, 2011; Reitz, 2001), and socio-demographic challenges (Khawaja *et al.*, 2019; Kotyrlo, 2014).

Immigrants Skills Underutilization

According to a study conducted by (Creese and Wiebe ,2012) in the Greater Vancouver area, well-educated migrants from sub-Saharan Africa encounter major problems in establishing themselves in the labour market. Many African migrants in this study are said to be engaged in work or jobs well below their prior -migration experiences, qualifications, and aspirations; thus, relegated to low-wage low-skilled jobs. Furthermore, the study reports how about three-quarters of the participants who took part in the study encountered falling job trends, with many of them finding themselves working in employment requiring low skills compared to their acquired skills, received low wages, and also engaged in precarious types for work normally referred to as 'survival jobs" to keep them going. Failure on the side of Canadian employers and professional accreditation boards to accept and recognize foreign work experiences and educational certificates acquired in Africa was determined to be a key factor in the downgrading occupational mobility among these migrants. These kinds of jobs only make it possible for them to be able to survive for a while but leave little or nothing for them to save for the future and grow their finances. In the context of gender segregation in the labour market, it is less marked than a few years in the past which showed a reduction in the labour market segregation between men and women, nevertheless, it persists as the main attribute of the labour force in Canada (Creese and Wiebe, 2012).

The difficulties that migrants experience in converting their human resources to their host nations have indeed been described in several foreign instances, including the United Kingdom (Bachan and Sheehan, 2010), Canada (Creese and Wiebe, 2012) and Norway (Christensen and Guldvik, 2014). Creese and Wiebe (2012) note some systemic problems to reiterate the obstacles that migrants encounter in transitioning their qualifications, abilities, and insights, comprising of shortages of labour force required in sectors that pay less and economic structural change. Bachan

and Sheehan (2010) examine considerable factors relevant to the agency of migrants, which consist of the ability of migrants to work or accept jobs for that which are well below their qualifications, more than possibly due to lack of preference and options, and the use of recruiting firms that do not make attempts to locate positions that fit their skills.

Structural/Institutional Challenges

Institutional discrimination emerges as the strongest barrier to migrants' successful integration into the labour market. Reitz (2001) has argued that Canada is committed to immigration and continues to pursue mass immigration amidst declining employment outcomes for migrants. There is however a lack of adequate institutional programs to facilitate the effective utilization of immigrant skills. The institutional inadequacy in addressing structural barriers in Canada is reflected in the broader structural architecture of high-income countries, particularly when it comes to migrants from low and middle incomes countries, such as those from Africa. Quillian *et al*. (2019), postulate that there is ubiquitous institutional discrimination against non-white groups in hiring in Canada.

Drawing on the findings by Reitz (2001), the wider issue of using immigrant expertise involves non-recognition by licensing bodies for international qualifications but also goes beyond it which is in agreement with OECD (2019). Employers require academic prerequisites and other credentials for many types of jobs, not just for licensed trades and professions, but also for non-formally regulated semi-professions, as well as for other positions at different skill levels. Also, under-utilization of skills will influence the types of work that migrants do and their career paths in occupations.

There are also instances of non-recovery by Canadian regulatory authorities for occupations and trades with international technical or trade qualifications (Suhasini *et al*, 2019). This situation arises when a duplicate job permit in Canada is refused to migrants who have been licensed to work in a particular field in their country of origin. Many refugees who have worked as doctors in other countries, for instance, have been refused licenses to practice their trade in Canada. Some migrants who worked in other countries as nurses or professional engineers were denied licenses to work in their field in Canada. This results in the under-utilization of expertise where the foreign trade or professional standards in question are essentially equal to Canadian standards (Reitz, 2001).

Racial Discrimination

Reitz (2001) stated that some migrants have earned Canadian licenses but still experience non-recognition of international academic or business credentials by employers. In this situation, the relevant Canadian licensing body has recognized immigrant credentials and issued a license, but the immigrant fails to get a job in the field because employers believe that the foreign background of the immigrant is of lower quality than the corresponding Canadian background despite the license. Again, this is underutilized skills if there is no difference between Canadian and foreign background quality. Many Canadian employers tend to discount foreign experience. In many occupational sectors, the employer's desire for "Canadian expertise" is commonly observed (Allan, 2014). In reality, the foreign experience extends to the Canadian workforce, and the demand for Canadian experience results in skill underuse. A study conducted by Dietz *et al.* (2015) also indicates, however, that companies should be able to take effective action against such

discrimination. These measures have less to do with helping migrants adjust to the host country (e.g. through cross-cultural training), but rather with the basic corporate philosophy to treat employees.

Oreopoulos's study (2011) confirmed how employers' marginalization and categorization contingent on one's country of origin and ethnic disposition affect job applicants in Canada. Oreopoulos records that, in a response to online work postings in Toronto, thousands of arbitrarily manipulated resumes were submitted to investigate why immigrants who are skill-based face difficulty in the labour market. Compared with English names, the report found significant prejudice against candidates with foreign experience. There was no declining impact on mentioning of the competency of language, work experience gained internationally, qualifications obtained from colleges that are deemed highly rated schools, or successful extracurricular activities. Recruiters then defend this activity based on questions regarding language abilities, but where listed, they do not adequately account for offsetting features. It was also revealed that employers substantially discriminate by name and appreciate the Canadian experience even better than education in Canada. When this happens, the human capital of migrants is downplayed and not recognized because even the sight of a name is a huge determining factor if one will be called for an interview or even offered a job and not based on their assessment on their acquired credentials.

On racial discrimination, Udah, *et al.* (2019b) have also assessed the job acquired knowledge and skills in the Australian labour market of migrants of African origin. Study results have shown many obstacles and difficulties faced by Africans to sustainable jobs and progress in the labour

market. The challenges comprised racial prejudice against skin tone, dialect, and linguistic skills, devaluation and non-acceptance of foreign credentials, lack of Australian job experience, and lack of local ties and networks. These results indicate that the schooling and expertise of migrants may not have a substantial impact on the experience of work. As years of Australian residency grew, although the difficulties encountered by migrants were more toned down, several participants nevertheless indicated high unemployment rates irrespective of how they reached the country or how long they had lived there.

Hooijer and Picot (2015) have argued that migrants in some European countries are discriminated against as an unwanted group and therefore face severe challenges in getting a job. The integration of Argentine migrants in Spain was also discussed by Garcia (2017). The research was based on a case study of Aguaviva, Spain, a rural area with substantial reduction of inhabitants comprising of both migrants with similar ethnicity from Romanian and Argentine. The findings of the study showed that, in binary labour market systems, migrants encounter a number of barriers and challenges to enter the labour market, describing the pattern where there is a breakdown of the characteristic habits or qualities of race (deracialization) in terms of immigration and citizenship regulations. This thus shows that the processes and attainment of integration is not universally supported by optimistic preferences. Migrants with similar ethnic background don't perform well in market with binary structures on the basis that these migrants are not convincingly distinct enough for occupations or jobs found in the developed sectors. There are some other jobs which they classify as meant for foreigners termed as others and even with this kind of job they hardly perform well since these migrants are considered not foreign enough to qualify and end up contesting with the local people for the jobs found at the basic sectors. Conclusively, this leaves

no doubt that Argentine migrants in Spain face multiple challenges in securing employment in both the secondary and primary sectors.

In a related study done by Dietz *et al. (*2015), they realized evidence of job discrimination against skilled migrants, on the one hand, but, on the other, also showed that companies can minimize such discrimination through their human resource management (HRM) strategies. It is counter-intuitive that professional migrants should be targets of any discrimination in employment when they possess highly sought-after skills. Nonetheless, their study showed that even migrants who are highly qualified for a job are judged less favourably than their local counterparts are. Ultimately, this skill paradox results in migrants being excluded from the labour force, ironically because these migrants are too skilled and over-qualified.

The participation figures of women in the labour market especially for women with children about to start school are in a range close to men in Canada. Nevertheless, females tend to be still characterized by job and employment with lower wages and very feminized (Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Man, 2004). It is also evidenced that aside from all globalization and immigration processes going on from many parts of the world, it is surprising how the labour market is clothed in excesses of racialization (Tastsoglou & Miedema, 2005). When migrants, migrants of colour, and Canadians who are Aboriginals were compared to Canadian born women and men who are white in terms of those who do well in the labour market, it was realized that the white Canadian born men and women group do well despite they all have similar educational qualifications or credentials and an equivalent set of skills (Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Li, 2000; Man, 2004)

Social and demographic challenges

Historically, there has been a lower rate of employment among new arrivals – new migrants compared to other migrants who have landed for a long time. Those who have landed for quite a long time considering ten years and above have the likelihood of seeing much results in the labour market with their outcomes assimilating that of the Canadian-born in comparison to very recent migrants who are now finding their feet and getting familiar with the labour market.

Social and demographic challenges constitute another level of barriers faced by migrants in western countries. Kotyrlo (2014) investigated the earnings development and labour force participation of female migrants compared to Swedish-born women in Västerbotten and Norrbotten, Sweden. The participants were 10% of the women residing in these two counties who have a foreign background, using data for the period 1995–2009. The female migrants were mainly coming from Finland, Norway, Thailand, Iraq, and the former Soviet Union. Findings showed that differences in earnings and labour force participation can be related to individual characteristics such as age, education, civil status, and years of settlement after migration. Further, the study found ethnic differences are also less pronounced for female labour migrants.

Abur and Spaaij (2016) have also investigated unemployment and barriers to employment among South Sudanese migrants in Australia. South Sudanese in Australia were recruited for the study and the participants named factors such as being isolated socially from the mainstream, the breakdown among families, the issue of conflicting interest inter-generationally and them being prejudiced against as the main challenges they encounter in their process of securing a job. Khawaja *et al*. (2019) have also reported that certain factors such as one's gender, educational background, age, and nationality did not correlate with one securing employment. Hebbani and

Khawaja (2018) also concluded that one not being proficient in the English language, not having enough information and knowledge about job searches, unwellness oneself and members of his/her family had a strong influence on the ability of participants to obtain their desired jobs.

Findings from these previous studies show the multi-faceted challenges that characterize labour market integration among African migrants in high-income countries. Racial discrimination feeds into institutional and employer discrimination, which pose significant challenges to African migrants successfully finding jobs. As the black community keeps increasing in Canada in general, and Halifax in particular, it is imperative to understand the nuances in multilevel barriers to their successful labour market integration. Beyond racial discrimination, other challenges differentiate access to African migrants in their labour force integration. For example, there are evolving policies and programs in Canada that focus on the skill set of migrants. This means that African migrants, depending on their skill set and experience, may face the challenges differently, in terms of how their skillset structures their opportunities at finding jobs.

Due to the multiplicity of challenges and factors that structure job opportunities for migrants in Canada, it is essential to explore individualized experiences of African migrants, to understand how their structural forces (i.e. racial discrimination, employer discrimination, institutional discrimination) and individual factors (e.g. educational background, skills set, social networks) shape the challenges they encounter when seeking for jobs in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Understanding the complex and nuanced experiences of African migrants in Halifax would provide in-depth insights into the challenges faced by migrants in integrating into labour market in mid-size cities. This would also help to deeply understand how government policies and programs enhance or

undermine their labour market integration of migrants. In the next sections, the coping mechanisms utilized by migrants when confronted with labour markets and the context of policies and regulations of migrant labour market integration is discussed, paying attention to the Canadian government's policies and programs for immigrants' labour market integration.

2.3.3 Coping Mechanisms among Sub-Saharan Migrant Workers

In the processes of achieving resilience and adjusting psychologically when it comes to adapting strategies, it is important to take into consideration the coping capabilities and the resources (both social and human capital) of migrants (Kuo, 2014). In this regard, it is vital to discuss how African migrant workers plunge themselves into survival mode to maintain their sanity while striving to earn economic freedom on Canadian soil. For instance, Okeke-Ihejirika *et al*., (2019) underscored the need to actively engage African migrants in the process of policy formations and norms and customs that influence their daily lives in Canada.

According to a number of researchers (Kim, 2012; Souza, 1996; Verwiebe *et al*., 2016), migrants often resort to seeking social support, and generally avoid problems, using coping strategies such as wishful thinking, and emotional encouragement of family and friends and psychological self-thinking in a social environment to cope with the situation and successfully integrate themselves into their host nations. This is consistent with the study conducted by Opoku-Dapaah (2017) which revealed social support networks, problem-focused, emotion-focused, and relaxation techniques among others, as coping strategies adopted by migrants in Canada. Social aid supports those in difficult circumstances by offering mental and physical means of support.

A study conducted by Ncube *et al.* (2019) also revealed that once African migrants successfully cope and adapt, they managed to obtain a living and not be a burden on the government once they had been able to achieve a coping mechanism. Some tended to be entrepreneurs and in turn provide other local nationals with employment opportunities. In an integrative review of literature, Babatunde-Sowole et al. (2016) highlight more on the resilience and adaptation strategies of African migrants. The research analysed underlined a prominent element in communalism. The sense of communalism was interwoven with the aid/help received by some of the participants in attaining resilience in their new country to adapt to life. Being an African was perceived to be a group bond, though migrants originate from diverse African countries. Factors include local and larger migrant populations, which are used to maintain balance in migration and relocation and to produce productive results. These studies indicate the fact that there are individual and collective elements of coping mechanisms used by migrants in dealing with the structural difficulties in finding jobs within their host countries.

Africans in particular are described in cultural terms as collective people by the fact that Africans actively live and practice extended family systems (Bussi & Pareliussen, 2017; Kyeremeh *et al*., 2019; Opoku-Dapaah, 2017; Schans, 2012). This suggests that connectedness is fundamental to meeting their individual and collective needs (Kyeremeh *et al*., 2019). What this also suggests is that African migrants are likely to draw on the black communities in Halifax as a resource for finding jobs to successfully integrate into the labour market. However, the assumption of connectedness and how that is used in practice in labour market integration is not adequately explored among African migrants in Halifax. This study, therefore, probes into the participants'

connectedness with the black communities in Halifax, the social capital of migrants, and how that potentially helps them cope with and overcome the structural barriers in labour market integration.

2.3.4   Policies and Programs for Migrants Integration into the Labour Markets

This subsection presents the discussion of the policy and regulatory context of migrants' job market integration. The policy and regulatory support for migrants' integration into the labour market have focused on employment protection (Buzdugan, 2009; Ulceluse & Kahanec, 2018; Yssaad & Fields, 2018). The purpose of the employment protection law or legislation is to help shield workers from unlawful dismissal from work and loss of wages or salaries , to keep employers in check from meting out unfair treatment to employees. , and to correct or revise the inaccuracies in financial markets that limit workers' ability to insure themselves against the loss of their jobs. Nevertheless, unless a perfect market exists, the effects of these regulations somewhat affect the trends and dynamics of the results of the labour market. Another act to consider which protects employees is the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) which forbids discrimination of any kind based on one's gender, race, ethnicity, age and numerous other instances. One would ask, how effective are these legislations to the migrant worker looking for a job compared to one already employed (Government of Canada, 2018). Ulceluse and Kahanec (2018) for instance have also explored the impacts of the Employment Protection Legislation (EPL) using European Union Labour Force Survey and a range of control variables on self-employed workers in a comparative study among natives and migrants. The conclusions have shown that EPLs of regular contracts have a positive impact on native self-employment, with some substantiation that migrants experience a negative effect. On the other hand, the EPL of temporary employment contracts positively affects the self-employment of migrants. Employment Protection Legislation analysts

with different views also contend that employment levels are declining, since it poses a threat to these employers to recruit new workers, given the costs of firing employees, and so employers are unable to hire more of employees or job seekers. Therefore, costs on companies to adjust to alterations in demand and technology might tend to increase, when this happens, the issue of job loss and creating of jobs may all be impacted by the employment rules. The preposition from this analysis is that current or incumbent workers are more likely to benefit from these stricter rules of the EPL compared to their counterparts who are now search who might lose out. This might go a long way to exacerbate the issue of inequalities amongst these evenly groups in an environment since they are all not evenly affected (Ulceluse & Kahanec, 2018). Djuve and Kavli (2019) have also reported in Norway that the major driver behind the intensification of migrant employment policies help migrants to integrate into the labour market.

In Canada, regulation for immigration processes is specifically intended to respond to a need Canada is faced with to preserve economic/financial competitiveness in the international market (Buzdugan & Halli, 2009). In terms of finding a cheap option or a response to improving the economic growth in Canada, the issue of skilled immigration is accepted as an option since it adds up to the level of human resources in the workforce and the Canadian labour market. As part of Oreopoulos's research (2011), it was made known that Canada's immigration strategy supports highly educated and skilled migrants, as industries try to recruit highly qualified workers to accelerate economic development. Over the last few years, more than half of all migrants have reached Canada under a point system that scores applicants on criteria such as schooling, age, job experience, and language skills. Most of these migrants come from China, India, or Pakistan.

Almost all recent migrants joining through the point system have at least obtained an undergraduate degree.

According to the Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration (2018), which is presented to the Canadian Parliament yearly, it was evident that Canada's distinguishing characteristic is immigration, which now constitutes one in five Canadians. Migrants - this means people born outside Canada are one out of five. More than six million new migrants have arrived in Canada since 1990. Immigration undoubtedly contributes significantly to the Canadian economy, community, and culture and bears with it short- and long-term social consequences. Among other items, the report shows that immigration is a core pillar of Canada's success story, either by family reunification immigration, economic immigration, or the security of refugees and marginalized citizens.

Yssaad & Fields (2018) study continued to establish that more than one in ten migrants (10.9%) were employed in vocational, science, and technological sectors in 2017. Also, migrants' jobs in these industries have risen by 10.0 percent compared to the prior year. On the other hand, nearly 8% of Canadians were working in this sector, and their job growth has changed little. Moreover, there were increased jobs in vocational, science, and technological services which were shared between new migrants who recently arrived, and those migrants already established in the country.

According to a study conducted by Yssaad and Fields (2018), there have been good performances in the Canadian job market for the entire population (those of the working-age) of the workforce

(15 years or older). Almost 20 million people were employed in the labour market – which includes those already working or those actively looking for work. The proportion of migrants from the core working age, (25 to 54 years) and Canadian-born employees aged 55 and older accounted for the gains from 2016 to 2017. In the main age working group of 25 to 54 years, landed migrants accounted for the bulk (60%) of job growth in 2017. Migrants thus represent much of the demographic increase in this age group. By comparison, the greatest share (74 percent) of job growth for those aged 55 and older was due to the Canadian-born population. These changing trends in employment suggests that migrant populations are contributing immensely to productivity in Canada. There is therefore room for a revision or expansion in immigration policy and regulation to ensure that migrants accesses to job opportunities are made flexible and widened and their qualifications, skills and work experiences are recognised and treated fairly.

Beyond legislative support, Canadian immigration has been changing over the years to focus on a skilled workforce. Since 1967 when the points system was adopted, the interest of the Canadian government in the labour force/labour market is evident in the changes that have occurred in its immigration policies and programs. Several policies and programs have been enacted, which increasingly focuses on the skilled workforce in migrant populations. For example, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2002) was passed to replace the Immigration Act, 1976. In September 2008, the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) was also implemented to ensure that only migrants with relevant work experience are transitioned into permanent residents, and eventually Canadian citizens. There have also been other programs such as the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP), all of which are meant to focus on migrants with relevant skills, education, and work experience to transition into permanent residents. These

policies allude to the Canadian government's interest in shifting towards a skilled labour force (Government of Canada, 2012).

Ethnic churches are playing critical roles in ensuring that migrants can acquire the necessary skills and experience both to help them integrate into the labour market and to help in their permanent residency applications (Couton, 2013; Reimer *et al.*, 2016; Tsang, 2015). Some studies also indicate that churches and other organizations also offer support to migrants when they are trying to enter the job market (Couton, 2013; Reimer *et al*., 2016). Reimer, *et al*. (2016) for instance have assessed the services offered to migrants by ethnic churches. Drawing from a mixed-method study, they found that church assistance to migrants appears to be impromptu, qualitative, and malleable. Also, their research shows that churches strive to fulfill short-term needs. The statistics show a common reaction to the needs of migrants to learn the official languages of Canada. The researchers also presented how the unequal supply of resources from neighbouring organizations impacts churches to aim at particular niches. The specific assistance or services offered by the churches in their sample differed based on a situational and competitive setting.

In Halifax, there is concern among black communities to support fellow African migrants to integrate successfully (Topen, 2006). Religious organizations and other temporary job agencies within the black communities encourage African migrants to register with them to help them in securing employment. These jobs tend to be low-wage and insecure jobs, but at least could serve as transitional income as they find their way into more secure and good-paying jobs within the province. However, there is limited understanding concerning how effective this temporal assistance has been, from the perspective of African migrants. Despite the limited foresight,

migrants with limited options resort to assistance from religious and other temporal job agencies in helping them integrate into the labour market in Halifax.

2.4   Theoretical framework

The review of empirical studies shows that three pathways emerge in labour market integration; entrepreneurship, investment, or wage employment. Having education, language, skill, social networks, cultural capital, and financial capital are all resource factors. Insights from previous studies show the difficulties migrants face in their integration into the job market in high-income countries. The literature further illustrates that the difficulties are shaped at the structural levels including racial discrimination, immigration policies, and support program availability amongst others, such that African migrants bear the highest burden.

Drawing on the concept of habitus and the labour market segmentation theory, the current study undertakes an individual-level analysis of how agency and structure shape labour market integration among African migrants in Halifax, Nova Scotia. There are limited studies that have looked at the labour market integration experiences of African migrants in Halifax. Again, how African migrants exercise individual and collective agency, in the face of structural barriers is also explored.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodological processes involved in gathering and analyzing data for the study are discussed. The research approach and design are first discussed, followed by discussions of the study population, study participants, selection of participants, data gathering procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis.

3.2 Research Approach and Design

The research design used for the study was an exploratory qualitative design. An exploratory qualitative design is defined as the type of design that allows researchers to explore research questions that are less understood within particular study contexts or among a particular social group of research interest (Braun & Clarke, 2013). There is a rich literature that examines everyday experiences of migrant economic integration. However, I have not found much scholarly attention paid to the African migrants' experiences in a mid-sized city like Halifax. By examining their labour market experiences, this study aims to add to the growing literature which examines complex and nuanced experiences of migrants by taking qualitative approaches and this study also adds to the case studies that are conducted from mid-sized Canadian cities.

Using qualitative methods therefore would help to delve deeper into subjective experiences and accounts, which is very critical in developing policy (Senthanar *et al.*, 2020). First of all, qualitative methods allow a deep analysis of the subjective views and perceptions of participants (Creswell,

2009). This reflects or centers on the point of view of the targeted population when confronting bigotry is useful, since it can contribute to a greater comprehension of the current and real experience of racism and marginalization faced by members of the minority community (Crang, 2009). Second, qualitative approaches are ideal for studies in situations where institutional and cultural disparities undertake an important function, as such studies often deal with nuanced and somewhat discreet complexities which other methodologies are difficult to catch (Hay, 2016). Third, the ability to capture a finer depth of knowledge renders qualitative approaches especially useful for the creation and development of theories (Patten & Newhart, 2017).

Since there is little established theory that discusses the subjective perspectives of sub-Saharan African migrants (Kyeremeh, *et al*., 2019; Senthanar *et al.,* 2020), conducting in-depth interviews to properly capture and analyze the perspectives of the subjects is needed. The data for this study was gathered by combining two qualitative data gathering techniques: an open-ended survey and a key informant interview with a representative from the Immigrants Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS).

3.3 Study Population

 The population of Halifax in 2020 grew to 440,332, reflecting 45.3% from 2018 or 2019 of the provincial population (Statistics Canada, 2020). Populations between 15 and 39 years of age are decreasing in many other provinces, with noticeable exclusions in Cape Breton, Halifax and Annapolis counties, with strong increases in populations between 15 and 39 years of age in larger counties. The total population of Nova Scotia is growing among the group of 15 to 39 years of age (+2.2 percent).

Unemployment increased from 8.7% to 9.1% between 2018 to 2019 (Statistics Canada, 2019). Available data from the Labour Force Monthly Survey shows a significant rise in unemployment in the Halifax region although unemployment was low over other provinces in Canada (Do, 2020). The rise in the unemployment rate in 2020 is also attributed to the global COVID-19 pandemic which brought economic activities in many sectors to a halt across the world (Jones *et al*., 2020). This means there were about 4,700 people unemployed in Nova Scotia in 2020. This number excluded the number of desperate job seekers who probably gave up searching for jobs or people who work part-time because they can't find full-time work. Where these individuals are included, the rate of unemployment is in the double digits. The employment environment in Halifax might be providing jobs to absorb the surging job-seeking population, however, the jobs being provided fall far behind the total number of those who are desperately seeking employment.

The population of African migrants in Canada has been increasing in the last two decades. According to Statistics Canada (2019), in the last 20 years, the number of Africans migrating to Canada doubled, from 573,860 persons in the year of 1996 up to 1,198,540 persons in the year of 2016. Africans currently make up 3.5 percent of the total population of Canada and 15.6 percent of the population as black people. The number of Africans in Canada is also expected to continue to grow and will constitute between 5.0% and 5.6% of Canada's population by 2036 (Statistics Canada, 2019).

According to the 2011 National Household Survey conducted by Statistics Canada, there were 20,790 African migrants in Nova Scotia (Jones *et al*., 2020). African migrants in Nova Scotia

increased to 24,158 with a percentage increment of 16.2% in 2018. African migrants make up the largest (estimated 44%) racially visible group in Nova Scotia, making up 44%. Unemployment is highest among African migrants in Nova Scotia. In 2018 for instance, unemployment in Nova Scotia stood at 9.9% while unemployment in African migrant Nova Scotians stood at 14.5%, being even higher among male groups at 17.2% (Statistics Canada, 2019).

3.4 Study Participants

In the current study, a total of thirty (30) African migrants in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada was engaged as the participants. The guiding principle for gathering qualitative data is the concept of saturation where adequate information is available or collected for the study, when the capability to obtain additional new information has been limited, and when further coding is no longer feasible (Creswell & Clarke, 2017). Therefore, the data gathering process in this study was guided by the concept of data saturation. In the current study, an online platform; questionnaire through google surveys was used in gathering the data and the participants' responses were screened as they came in, to identify how well they were responding to the items and the depth of the responses.

Using this technique, data were gathered from the participants until no new insights were arising. In this study, I detected saturation after the 27th participant. However, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2013), it is essential to test if saturation is truly achieved, by conducting a few interviews after saturation is detected. Therefore, after detecting saturation with the 27th participants, data were gathered from three additional participants, where responses were repeating, confirming that indeed saturation was reached. I, therefore, ended the data collection process after the 30th participant, making the sample size of 30. The sample of 30 participants for the current study was

also found to be enough after subjecting the number of participants to recommendations made by qualitative researchers on the acceptable number of participants.

Different sample sizes are suggested by scholars for conducting qualitative studies. For example, while Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Morse (1994) recommended 30 – 50 participants for ethnographic or grounded theory research, Creswell (1998) recommended 20 – 30 participants. Also, while Morse (1994) recommends a minimum of six participants for phenomenological research, Creswell recommended between 5 – 25 participants. It is, however, worthy to note that the face-to-face method of interviews used by these studies is different from the online open-ended surveying which was finally used in the current study, the principle nonetheless applied to the qualitative method used in the current study.

3.5 Selection of Participants

In the current study, convenience and snowballing sampling techniques were combined and utilized to identify participants for this study. Convenience sampling (also known as availability sampling) is a particular form of non-probability sampling process that relies on gathering data from participants or members of the population who are available to take part in the study conveniently. The convenience sampling technique was utilized to get access to the first ten (10) participants through the alumni network of Saint Mary's University. After having access to the first 10 participants, their networks were utilized through referral to find additional participants. In total, twenty (20) African migrant participants were reached through the snowballing sampling technique. Due to the reflexibility in the selection procedure; more males responded to the questionnaire compared to females and with the researcher being an insider; majority of the

participants were Ghanaians. To be qualified for the study, participants had to be a Sub-Saharan African who has migrated into Halifax directly from an African country and lived in the city for at least/more than one year. Also, participants must have been actively working or searching for a job in the Halifax job market for at least six months. For this reason, all Africans who migrated to Halifax just before the COVID-19 global pandemic and its associated lockdown measures were all excluded from the study. This is because this group of African migrants did not have enough experience with the job market in Halifax.

3.6 Data Gathering Procedures

The initial plan of data collection was to supplement the online surveys with face-to-face semi-structured individual interviews. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic increased and lockdown and social distancing measures were implemented, results for the thesis could only be gathered virtually. Therefore, data collection involved administering open-ended surveys to participants using Google Forms. In addition to the survey, one face -to face interview was done with one key informant and audio-taped. The combination of these procedures was used to gather the data from the 30 African migrants who have been living in Halifax for at least one to five years after their arrival. Specifically, thirty (30) participants were reached through Google Forms survey, and one (1) participant (a representative from an NGO - ISANS was reached through face-to-face interview. All interviews/surveys were conducted in English and were recorded (with the consent of participants) and transcribed verbatim.

An open-ended survey questionnaire (see Appendix A) and a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix B) were constructed, based on a thorough review of the relevant literature and

observations regarding African migrants' integration in the labour market of Canada and casual interactions with this populace based on the approach suggested. by Creswell (1998). Participants were asked to answer 10-15 key questions that relate to their experiences with job seeking, specifically, concerning the strategies of job search and coping mechanisms of un/underemployment.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

All ethical concerns regarding approval, informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality were duly adhered to in the current study (Creswell, 2009; Kamanzi & Romania, 2019). Ethical consent was first obtained by the Research Ethics Board (REB) of Saint Mary's University (see Appendix I). Following the acceptance of the REB, an introductory letter was given to all participants with the informed consent form. In terms of informed consent, approval was first requested from all interviewees before the start of the interview.

With regards to autonomy, all appropriate information was given to the participants about the study available for decision-making or not. The researcher also ensured that respondents were guaranteed that their anonymity and confidentiality would still be respected and protected. No names or codes were traceable to each participant were employed for the privacy of the respondents. Participants were therefore made to recognize that they had the right to choose to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time. No participant has been compelled, pressured, or financially enticed to engage in the study. There were also no follow-up benefits for participants

3.8 Data Analysis

The data gathered were individually analyzed, and after that, synthesized in presenting the findings (Silverman, 2015). This is to help give a holistic view or perspective of the key issues in the job market integration. The audio interviews were first transcribed before being analyzed. The thematic analysis process of Braun and Clarke's (2006) was employed for the data analysis and Braun and Clarke's (2013) procedure. The thematic analysis was performed with the help of Atlas Ti software.

The first stage involved getting used to the data. This involved reading and repeated reading of the data, which were transcribed, searching for meanings and patterns (Clarke, *et al.* 2015). The second stage involved coding across the broader themes with regards to perspectives on job search experiences and employment history (Braun & Clarke, 2014). This was accomplished by translating and coding all the transcripts in the sense of the goals of the analysis and the questions the research set out there to answer. (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

The third stage involved refining codes and themes within groups, in the thematic areas by noting areas of consensus, conflict, and absence (Clarke, *et al.*, 2015). At this stage, all the codes that spoke to the various objectives were grouped before proceeding with the analysis. The fourth stage involved refining codes and themes across groups, noting areas of consensus, conflict, and absence. For instance, concerning research question one, all the codes that spoke to barriers in the Canadian labour market were grouped. The last stage involved working out cross-group inter-sections by examining the nature of themes running through all narratives around which ideas and opinions of the participants differed. In this process, minor themes were grouped into key themes in ways that provide an overview of the study questions under review.

3.9 Conclusion

Qualitative methods were adopted for this study, combining face-to-face interviews, and open-ended surveys for participants. Qualitative methods were adopted so that detailed subjective experiences of the participants could be explored. These methods contribute to the literature in the area of immigrant labour market integration, by providing a depth of individualized experiences to complement the dominance of quantitative methods that are often used in previous studies.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings of the study and discusses the findings within the context of the literature reviewed. The demographic profiles of the participants are presented first. After that, their employment profiles are presented. The remainder of the sections presents findings based on the objectives, which are; i) the strategies adopted by participants in entering the job market, ii) barriers to job market entry, iii) structural support for job market entry, and iv) coping mechanisms in overcoming job market entry challenges.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The demographic profiles of the participants are presented in Table 4.1. In terms of nationality, Ghanaians were in the majority (66.7%). The rest of the participants were from Nigeria (10.0%), Botswana (6.7%), Kenya (3.3%), Gambia (3.3%), Niger (3.3%), Liberia (3.3%), and Mali (3.3%). Majority of the participants (73.3%) were male migrants, and 23.3% were female migrants. One participant preferred not to indicate a gender category. The gender imbalance is a reflection of demographic profile migrants from Sub-Saharan African countries to Canada and Halifax, where males have more opportunities for migrating than females. The ages of the participants ranged between 20 – 50 years, with the majority of them (66.7%) being within 20 – 29 years, 30% being between 30 – 44 years and one participant being between 45 – 56 years.

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage

Nationality	Ghanaian	20	66.7%
	Nigerians	3	10.0%
	Botswana	2	6.7%
	Kenya	1	3.3%
	Gambia	1	3.3%
	Niger	1	3.3%
	Liberia	1	3.3%
	Mali	1	3.3%
Gender	Male	22	73.3%
	Female	7	23.3%
	Prefer not to say	1	3.4%
Age	20 – 29 years	20	66.7%
	30 – 44 years	9	30.0%
	45 – 64 years	1	3.3%

Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of participants Source: Primary data (2020)

4.3 Employment Profile of Participants

This section presents the employment profiles of the participants of the study, in Table 2.

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Employment status	Currently employed	17	56.7%
	Not yet employed	11	36.7%
	Not specified	2	6.6%
How long did it take to find first job of any kind?	< 6 months	8	47.1%
	6 – 11 months	5	29.4%
	1 – 2 years	4	23.5%
Current jobs	Customer Service / Call Center	7	41.1%
	Food server / Waiter	4	23.5%
	Security	4	23.5%
	Retail / Salesman / Cashier	4	23.5%
	Cleaning/Washing/Laundry Attendant	3	17.6%
	Factory / Production Work	2	11.8%
	Labour Work	2	11.8%

Caregiver		1	5.9%
IT		1	5.9%
Library Assistant		1	5.9%
Student Assistant		1	5.9%

Table 4.2: Employment profiles of participants Source: Primary data (2020); *

As indicated in Table 4.2, slightly more than half (56.7%) of the participants indicated being currently employed, 36.7% indicated being unemployed. Two participants did not disclose their current employment status. Among the 17 participants who are currently employed, 8 (47.1%) found employment within six months of looking for jobs, 5 (29.4%) found jobs within 6 – 11 months, and 4 (23.5%) found jobs between 1 – 2 years. The jobs of the participants are spread across customer service, retail, cleaning and laundry, factory work, caregiving, Information Technology, Student, and Library Assistants. Many of the participants indicated working multiple jobs.

4.4 Entering the Job Market in Halifax

The participants described the strategies they employed in looking for jobs in Halifax, as well as their experiences of the job-seeking process which answers the first objective of the study about what kind of strategies African migrants adapt in the processes of securing employment.

4.4.1 Strategies adopted in finding jobs in Halifax

The strategies adopted by the participants in finding jobs revolved around seven themes; volunteering, multiple applications, course certification, networking and job fairs, jobs with lesser qualifications, language competence, and job search engines. The participants used a combination of these strategies in securing or still looking for jobs. The strategies are described below:

Job search engines: Using job search engines emerged as the most popular strategy adopted by the participants in searching for jobs. When asked if participants had any job search engine accounts, the majority (96.7%) of the participants indicated YES. The job search engine platforms used by the participants included Indeed (90%), LinkedIn (33.3%), Career-beacon (23.3%), and Job Monster (10%). When asked to rate the efficiency of the job search engines (on a scale of 1 – 10) in helping their efforts in entering the Halifax workforce, the mean score of their rating was M = 6.73 (SD = 1.22). This suggests that the participants find job search engines to be moderately efficient in helping them find jobs in Halifax.

Volunteering: Volunteerism emerged as a strong strategy adopted by the participants in finding jobs in Halifax. A total of 60% of the participants indicated being involved in volunteer work in their communities in the process of looking for jobs. The reason for their volunteering activities was to get work experience and references. Some of the participants indicated that:

>*I found jobs by volunteering with small business to get some experience [Female Salesperson]*
>
>*I did volunteer works to get references [Female Caregiver]*

When asked to rate their experience with that voluntary service on a scale of 1-10, they rated the experience as more satisfying, with a mean score of 7.62, (SD = 1.44). However, the volunteerism did not translate into job opportunities for many of them. When asked whether or not the volunteer work impacted them landing a job or paid work, the majority (60%) indicated NO, with only 40% indicating YES, suggesting that their volunteerism helped them land a job.

Multiple applications: some of the participants (8, 26.7%) indicated adopting multiple applications as a strategy in finding jobs. The participants kept applying to different companies and employers simultaneously, hoping one would work. For example:

[I] Applied to a lot of companies and uploaded my resumes to a number of job search engines [Female Customer Service]

I wrote more than a thousand applications, doing that on daily basis [Male who worked as a Professor but now still looking for a job]

I had to keep on attending so many interviews and not giving up hope on finding a job [Male Customer Service]

Course certification: Few of the participants (about 5 of them) indicated enrolling in some certification courses to get the Canadian training or education experience before landing their jobs. For example:

I decided to get more Canadian education to help me find a job [Male Dishwasher]

I took courses at ISANS [Male Professor]

I did some course certification course and through that I was able to get a job [Male Security]

Networking and job fairs: Some of the participants also indicated that they networked to get jobs. Their networking tactics included attending workshops, job fairs, and making friends with Canadian citizens. Sample quotes from the participants are:

[I] Attended workshops and other job fixing bodies like Nova Scotia works [Male Professor]

[I] Went to a resume and cover letter workshop [Male Customer Support Personnel]

I Got help from an employment agency [Male Customer Support]

I made friends with Canadians to know the way [Female Caregiver]

Language competence: all the surveys and interviews were conducted in the English language. All the participants were fluent in the English language. However, some of them (about 3) expressed concern that 'accent' and 'style of speaking' mattered in successfully finding a job. They, therefore, mentioned that they use language competence as part of their strategies in finding jobs in Halifax. These participants indicated learning the English language to enhance their chances of getting jobs in Halifax. Sample quotes of the participants indicated:

> *Secondly, I learned so hard to try and speak like a Canadian before I was able to secure a job* [Male Customer Support]

> *I learned to pronounce words like people in Halifax generally do. That helped me in my job search* [Male Waiter]

Jobs with lesser qualifications: A few of the participants (about 3) also indicated focusing efforts on jobs with lesser qualifications. They suggest that such jobs are less competitive and easier to get. The pay may not be much, but as long as it helps to pay the bills, searching for jobs with lesser qualification is a good way of entering the job market in Halifax:

> *I applied to jobs with lesser qualifications [Male Customer Service]*

> *I look for even little jobs…. I accept to do any jobs as long as it can pay the bills [Male Customer Support]*

The participants however did not indicate whether or not focusing on jobs with lesser qualifications led to deskilling.

4.4.2 Experiences Looking for Job in Halifax

The strategies used to acquire employment shaped different experiences among the participants. In terms of the experiences of looking for jobs, the narratives from the participants could be organized into three thematic areas; those who describe the experience as extremely challenging, those who describe their experiences as very easy, and those whose experiences are somewhere in-between challenging and easy.

Extremely challenging experiences: More than half (18, 60%) of the participants described their experiences of finding jobs in Halifax as extremely challenging and frustrating. The experiences came from both those who are currently employed and those who are not yet employed. The participants cited factors such as systemic racism as making the experience very frustrating for African migrants to find jobs in Halifax. Sample narratives from the participants describing these experiences are provided below. Identities of participants who made these statements are put in parentheses at the end of each statement

> *Hugely frustrating. Despite my qualifications (and work experience) -- which were obtained in Europe (not Africa) -- I was deemed unqualified to do any kind of work! I was constantly told I also lacked "Canadian work experience" and so could not be employed -- even for the most menial of tasks! [Male Customer Support]*

> *Being an immigrant made it more difficult for me to secure a good job that measured up to my educational qualification and years of work experience even in the same field [Male Security]*

> *It's a frustrating experience looking for jobs in my area of expertise [Male Security]*

> *It's been hard. I think there is systemic racism in the workforce [Male doing Dish Washing]*

It wasn't really easy [Male in his 20s working as Security]

It was quite stressful [Female Student Assistant]

It was not easy. I wrote more than a thousand applications, doing that on daily basis [Male who worked as a Professor but now still looking for a job]

Very easy experiences: Few of the participants (5, 16.7%) described their experiences of finding jobs as very easy for them. These participants cited factors such as a fair recruitment process that made the process of finding jobs easy. Sample quotes from these participants are provided below [identities of participants in parentheses]

The recruitment process is fair [Male working IT]

It wasn't difficult finding one [Male Factory Worker]

It has been great so far working in Canada [Female Customer Service]

In cross-checking other factors of these participants, it emerged that some indicated having wide social networks, and also, they were not so specific about the kind of jobs they got, and therefore went in for jobs that are below their qualification.

Somewhere in-between: Seven participants (23.3%) described their experiences of finding a job as being somewhat difficult. These participants, many of whom have found jobs, indicated that landing the first job or seeking jobs in specified areas of expertise make the process a little bit difficult, but manageable.

It took a while before getting a job but was relatively easier after I got my first job [Male Cleaner]

It can be challenging getting jobs in your field of study [Male working as CSC]

It was a bit challenging because I did not find work in my field of study [Male Customer Service]

It was manageable. Just had some rough time getting what I wanted [Male Waiter]

4.5 Barriers to Labour Market Entry in Halifax

The second objective explored the barriers and challenges the participants encounter in their search for jobs in Halifax. Three overarching thematic barriers emerged from the participants' narratives; structural barriers, cultural barriers, and individual barriers. Each of these themes is described below, with the sample quotes from participants provided.

4.5.1   Structural barriers to finding jobs in Halifax

The structural barriers encompassed systemic challenges that work against migrants in general and African migrants in particular, in their job search efforts. The elements of structural barriers that emerged included racial discrimination and difficulty in securing a work permit.

Racial discrimination: the participants indicated experiencing racial discrimination, which makes searching for jobs extremely frustrating and difficult. For instance, a man who works as a dishwasher indicated that:

It is systemic racism. It makes it difficult finding a job here [Male Dishwasher]

Another man who works as customer support recounts how he was constantly discriminated against, and his education and experiences were disregarded in Halifax:

It is hugely frustrating. Despite my qualifications and my work experience, which were obtained in Europe (not Africa), I was still deemed unqualified to do any kind of work, just

because I am an African. I was constantly told I also lacked "Canadian work experience"
and so could not be employed -- even for the most menial of tasks [Male Customer Support]

Work permit: the participants also recounted the difficulties involved in securing work permits in Canada, which makes their job search efforts in Halifax challenging.

The work permit type is an issue. It is very difficult getting a work permit, which can help you get a job [Male working in IT]

I had all the qualifications they needed. I came here because I wanted something better for my kids. Things are heading in the wrong direction back home. Poor education, no health services to talk about, bad politics, looming ethnic war, etc. But when I got here too, I don't have a work permit. It is very difficult getting a work permit [Male Still Searching for Job]

The experience of the work permit relates to the issue of migration status. Migration status has a huge influence on labour market integration. In this study, however, the migrant status of the participants could not be explored because some of the migrants and participants might have undocumented status thus participants would have found such probing invasive and uncomfortable to participate in the study.

4.5.2   Cultural (Social Capital) differences as a barrier to finding jobs in Halifax

The participants also recounted the cultural barriers they experience in the process of looking for jobs. The cultural/social capital differences in language and accent were mentioned by the participants as impeding their efforts at getting jobs in Halifax:

My accent. People found it hard to understand me fully because of differences in pronunciations [Male Waiter]

Language barrier -- despite me speaking English quite well! You have to speak like a Canadian (accent) here [Male Customer Service]

Knowing what the Canadian employers wanted from you and other cultural and acclimatization factors [was a challenge] [Male Factory Worker]

4.5.3   Individual-level barriers to finding jobs in Halifax

Apart from the systemic and cultural barriers, the participants also mentioned other barriers in their individual lives that created difficulties in securing jobs in Halifax. Among the individual barriers mentioned were; being fixated on job preferences, limited work experience, and limited networks and social support.

Being fixed on job preference: being fixated on getting a particular kind of job based on their previous work history and experience. They indicated that looking for jobs that fit their experience and preference delayed them from getting jobs for a long time. For many of the participants, they had to forgo their preferred jobs before they were able to get jobs. These are reflected in the experiences of the following participants:

> *Even though I have a professional qualification, I had to take the job of warehouse cleaner before getting employed* [Male Labour Work]
>
> *I had experience in teaching the English language as a second language in China for 3 years but had to take the job of customer service before being employed* [Male Customer Service]
>
> *I worked in a bank for about 8 years in my country before I moved to Canada. I worked with Target CW, TD Bank, and ADP Canada. All in about 2 years combined. In the end, I had to accept the job of security officer before getting employed* [Male Security Officer]

A male participant still looking for a job describes his past experience as;

> *Having experience in customer service, lecturing, and insurance but still hasn't found a job [*Male, still looking for a job]

Another participant working in customer service described his part experience as;

> *Having previous work experience that includes assistant lectureship, public information assistance, and client support executive but found a job as customer service [Male Customer Service]*

A male dishwasher also described her experience as:

> *Associate counsel, research assistant, and adjunct faculty in a university in his home country but is now a dishwasher in Canada [Male Dishwasher]*

Limited Work Experience: the participants indicated that not having work experience was one of the major barriers that made it difficult for them in securing jobs.

> *I had no work experience. That made it very difficult for me in getting a job [Male Cleaner]*
>
> *Lack of experience makes it very difficult getting a job here [Female Student Assistant]*
>
> *I wasn't qualified and had no experience. That is what made it very difficult for me to get jobs [Male Customer Service]*
>
> *The challenges I had to overcome was to have experience [Female Salesperson]*
>
> *I had no Canadian work experience and it delayed me from getting a job for months [Male*
>
> *Customer Service]*

Limited network and social support: the participants also indicated having limited networks and social support in Halifax. This made it difficult for them to get information on job openings so they could apply:

> *No local connections -- most jobs here are "hidden". Never advertised. You need to know someone to reveal these openings to you [Male Customer Service]*
>
> *Lack of family/friends for support [Male Customer Service]*

4.6 Support for African Migrants' Integration in Halifax

The research questions explored the structural support available for the African migrants in finding jobs in Halifax and their satisfaction with the support. The narratives of the participants suggested

there are some forms of support for migrants in general, in entering the job market in Halifax. This support included organizations that help migrants to find their feet and get jobs within the province. A key informant interview with a representative from ISANS (Immigrants Services Association of Nova Scotia) shows that the support is meant for migrants in general, and not just African migrants in particular. The key informant indicated that ISANS deals with various migrants in Halifax. She thus suggested institutions like ADAMS (African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes), which just serves African migrants, and then, Immigration Francophone. All attempts to reach representatives from ADAMS and Immigration Francophone proved futile.

ISANS roles for migrants as indicated on their homepage as listed below:

The key information indicated that the services provided by ISANS to migrants include:

- Providing an avenue for new migrants and migrants to settle down well in Nova Scotia

- Helping new migrants to be more focused and independent in their job search

- Matching job seekers with employment specialists so they can talk more about their experiences and their goals. Since some migrants are either open to more other opportunities and others are inclined to specific field and profession that is regulated, thus they choose to do other alternatives until they are ready for jobs in those regulated professions; thus these specialists can assist clients or migrants in clarifying their goals and also provide them with areas of jobs in relations to clients line of profession. Migrants (Clients are also assisted with the correct presentation of their resumes and how well they can present themselves to employers in the job market.

- Migrants are also provided with a workshop called Job Search Strategies; which is run a few times a year which talks about targeting your resume to the specific job that one is

applying for; thus every job application and cover letter should change based on the specific job, how best they can transfer their skills attained and how best they can pitch themselves to employers in Canada. There is also a workshop on interview development skills for migrants and working in Canada. Working in Canada targets areas such as employees' and employers' rights, employment insurance, and taxation. Clients are also assisted with six weeks of unpaid work placement period for people with specific job professions and they would like to continue. Employers are required to give these people real work which they are under no obligation to pay the clients but in turn provide the clients the avenue for them to gain the Canadian work experience and offers a reality check for clients and boost their confidence and employers also get to trust these migrants with foreign work experience and credentials. There is also a mentorship program whereby a client is connected with a mentor to help answer their questions. Clients are also provided with practice interviews with Human Resource personnel, where they get to practice interviews and it's taped and reviewed and they are updated on the areas they could develop more to stand out among the crowd.

- The eligibility of clients is determined by the government (the founders) and usually are meant to be for newcomers usually 1-3 years and people that have been more than 3 years and already have work might get help, but they are not a top priority.

- The chunk of support is usually towards the regulated professionals and thus a group was created called the Profession Multi-stakeholder groups, about 10-15 years ago so stakeholders like associations and universities, so specific professional stakeholders could map out the pathways for an immigrant, putting in support when needed so about 14 professions got their ways mapped out for migrants.

- There are other services like the workshop, interview practice among others that are open to all people with different and general backgrounds and not just for the regulated profession.

- ISANS services all the government-assisted refugees to Nova Scotia and a lot of people had come from the Congo, Nigeria, Eritrea among other African countries.

When asked how people who migrate to Canada learn about ISANS, the key informant indicated that:

> *ISANS has been in existence for about 40 years this year. A lot of migrants come to Nova Scotia through the economic streams and mostly required most migrants not all to have had job offers and mostly come with family and most spouses come without job offers. Most people get to know about ISANS through word of mouth through families, friends, and colleagues. Mostly partners also are available to refer clients to ISANS and through the use of social media, a mostly larger percent of new migrants to Nova Scotia do patronize the services from ISANS, and services provided to migrants are mostly free of charge. Few limited services such as translations mostly incur few nominal fees.*

There were however differing views regarding the participants' satisfaction with the existing level of support for them. The participants were spread across those who were dissatisfied with the support, and those who felt they could not be helped by the existing support systems, and those who were satisfied.

4.6.1   Dissatisfaction with available support

Many of the participants (about 12, 40%) indicated being dissatisfied with existing support available for migrants to enter the job market. Some of the participants indicated that they were

dissatisfied with delayed responses. from support organizations like ISANS and potential

employers. The fact that it can take months and they would not have responded:

> *It is delayed responses. They never get back to you and you never hear from them* [Female
> Student Assistant]

> *They will tell you that they will get back to you, but they never do. I was told that we will
> review your resume and call you if are qualified. After several months, they have not got
> back to me* [Male Cashier]

Some also indicated that the available help seems to be reserved for those who are able to enroll

in or complete Canadian courses or study programs:

> *I only got interviews after I stated on my CV, I was done with my study program* [Male
> Security]

4.6.2 Those who could not be helped

Some of the participants indicated that they could not be helped with the available support for

helping migrants enter the job market. They indicated that factors such as the high numbers of

migrants seeking help, and the limited number of growing job opportunities, made it difficult for

the existing support to help them:

> *They did their best though we were much so could not satisfy all of us. We are always many
> [Female Caregiver]*

> *They helped where they could. It is difficult helping everybody when we are that many
> [Male who worked in retail but still looking for work]*

> *They were willing to help but limited jobs in the growing province [Male who worked as a
> professor]*

4.6.3 Satisfied with support for entering the job market

Some of the participants indicated being satisfied with the support available to migrants for

findings jobs in Halifax. The participants indicated that several temporary job agencies offer

supports to migrants to help them find jobs in Halifax:

They were proactive in responding [Male Customer Support]

A lot of job agencies are available to help people land a job [Female Customer Service]

Good and was responding faster [Male Security]

The participants made several suggestions regarding ways to sustainably support migrants in general, and African migrants in particular in Halifax:

> *I will suggest an agency for African migrants that will guide them through integrating into the Canadian society and help them through their employment processes as well [Male Security]*
>
> *Through institutions such as your university, or work-giving companies like Talent works Inc., I feel African migrants should be more involved in social activities going on and team bonding exercise at workplace [Female Customer Care]*
>
> *The only way is to make a deliberate policy that will encourage the employment of qualified Africans in various jobs in both public and private concerns. This will bring about inclusiveness and robust development [Male Customer Care]*
>
> *The province should revisit their Tax regime to encourage businessmen and women to come to the province and establish industries. The province is growing geometrically and needs to cope with the population by providing them with jobs. If we have more companies at a reasonable tax rate, more people will be employed, and the government will make more money in terms of tax revenue [Male still looking for a job]*
> *Provide ways (financial) to enable new migrants to go back to school. Fees here are quite prohibitive [Male Cashier]*

4.7 Coping Mechanisms in Overcoming Job Search Challenges in Halifax

The final research question related to coping mechanisms that African migrants adopt to overcome

job challenges in Halifax. The representative from ISANS for instance indicated that

> *Migrants do well in their area of profession and smaller cities like Halifax compared to larger cities like Toronto that has larger ethnic associations and groups. People usually get jobs faster in larger cities, but they are most likely not to move up speedily unlike the smaller cities with no or few ethnic communities available. There are language programs available for new migrants and childcare available for people who take language programs. International students are mostly not covered in the programs, but exceptions*

are made available to international final year students who have applied to become permanent residents.

The respondents also indicated that their coping mechanisms focused on seeking support from black communities and making friends with native-born Canadians.

4.7.1   Social support from black communities

Some of the participants indicated that they seek support from the black communities to assist the long periods of seeking jobs:

My relationship with the black community has been great, I have friends who are indigenous blacks and we get on well [Male Customer Care]

I have built a well enough relationship with them [Male Customer Service]

They have been helpful in times of need [Female Cleaner]

Nonetheless, others indicated that they did not have any links with the black communities:

I have no relationship or experience with the existing indigenous community in Nova Scotia [Male Security]

I have not had any relationship with the indigenous black community yet [Male Customer Care]

I have no experience with them [Male Factory Worker]

I do not have any relationships with the indigenous black community [Female Customer Service]

Never had contact with the aboriginals yet but there is a perfect coexistence with other blacks especially Nigerians through our Association where we exchange ideas [Male Dishwashers]

Here, a nationality-specific organization is mentioned as a coping mechanism. The nationality-specific organization provides support for migrants from specific African countries.

Few of the participants also indicated making friends with native-born Canadians so they can assist them to cope with every aspect of their lives.

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> *Have Canadian friends to help me out and dress appropriately for every weather [Female Customer Care]*

The participants also made some suggestions for successfully coping during the job search process. The participants for instance suggest an attitudinal shift to successfully cope with the challenge of looking for jobs, particularly shifting attitude of looking for office jobs to being comfortable with informal sector jobs:

> *Attitude changes. Most Africans come here with the "office" mentality. They all want to work in offices. The reality here is quite different* [Male Cleaner]

> *Don't be frustrated when and if you don't get the formal jobs here in Canada. Canada has a mostly informal workplace* [Female Salesperson]

One participant also suggested unity among African migrants, as a way to successfully cope with the job searching face:

We need to be more united by creating organizations to help each other out. Study the labour market and know the areas in demand [Female Student Assistant]

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the concluding insights of the study. First, the research questions are revisited to provide a summary of the key findings from the study. After that, the limitations of the study are discussed, and then suggestions for future research are presented.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

This study set out to investigate the experiences Sub-Saharan African migrants in entering the job market in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Fundamentally, their experiences, strategies used, challenges, and barriers faced, available support, and coping mechanisms were examined. The following research questions were posed:

i. What are the strategies that African migrants adopt in the process of getting jobs in Halifax?

ii. What are the barriers in the Canadian labour market that normally hinder the successful labour integration among African migrants in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada?

iii. What government policies and settlement programs are available to support the equitable economic integration of migrants?

iv. What coping mechanisms do African migrants adopt to overcome job challenges in Halifax?

Findings from the study provide a multilevel understanding of the participants' experiences of entering the job market in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

5.2.1   Strategies used in entering labour market in Halifax

The strategies adopted by the Sub-Saharan African migrants in finding jobs in Halifax, Nova Scotia have been presented. In terms of strategies for getting jobs, the participants were found to use seven different strategies, which are volunteering, multiple applications, course certification, networking and job fairs, jobs with lesser qualifications, language competence, and job search engines. The effectiveness of the strategies used, shaped the experiences of the participants. Slightly more than half of them described their job-seeking experiences as very challenging and frustrating. The remaining participants (many of whom had secured jobs) described their experiences either as very easy or relatively difficult.

With the declining job prospects for everyone in Canada, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, African migrants did not only need diverse strategies in entering the Halifax labour market but also, more importantly, the strategies had to be very effective. With the coming of the global pandemic, job prospects for African migrants have been significantly reduced, and their experiences of entering the labour market during and post-pandemic are going to come to bear (Borjas & Cassidy, 2020; Kellock & Ntalianis, 2020).

When asked about their experiences of entering the labour market, two key findings emerge regarding the participants' acquiring jobs in Halifax. First, slightly more than half of the participants find their experiences of entering the job marketing to be very frustrating. The frustration was often expressed concerning several institutional and employer discriminations that directly and indirectly restrict their entry into the labour market. For instance, some participants in this study allege that their qualifications and experience are always downplayed by employers

because of them being Africans. This finding is commensurate with Topen's (2006) observation about how Sub-Saharan African immigrant women in Halifax, Nova Scotia named employers devaluing their international work experience and foreign education in their attempt to secure a job because, with all the skills sets and education acquired, the participants faced a tough task in securing a job which leveled up with their skills and education. With that said, comparing the year difference, there seems not to be much change in how education credentials and foreign experiences of African migrants are valued or accepted in Halifax, Nova Scotia. They also experienced head-on prejudice and bigotry as they are readily recognizable based on their physical features such as the complexion of their skin compared to other sets of immigrants who would have to speak before one would notice their background, thus, separating them from the mainstream society which makes it easier for them to be discriminated against and somewhat face hostility.

In the literature on migrants' labour market performance, frustration is reported to characterize experiences of African migrants in entering the labour market in western countries. The frustrations experienced by more than half of the participants of this study, therefore, align with previous studies that have reported that the experience of findings jobs in high-income countries is always frustrating for migrants in general (Dietz *et al*., 2015; Oreopoulos, 2011) and African migrants in particular (Quillian *et al*., 2019; Udah, *et al*., 2019a). In the current study, however, not all the participants found their experiences very frustrating. Those who have wider social networks and are ready to settle for any jobs are able to find jobs relatively faster and easier than those with limited networks or those who want jobs that match their skill set and educational qualifications.

There were close to half of the participants who find their experiences to be either relatively easy or less frustrating. This also contradicts previous studies that report largely gloomy experiences for African migrants. This study has thus shown that not all African migrants go through struggles in securing jobs in Halifax. However, the positive experiences of migrants in general and African migrants in particular are rarely highlighted or represented in the literature. The structural forces that shape negative experiences override positive ones (Udah, *et al*., 2019b), which lead to any account of positive experiences being treated as isolated individual cases. This prevents opportunities from learning from the strategies used by these individual migrants who recount positive experiences.

The question then emerges as to how strategies for securing jobs are enabled. The study shows that the participants adopted seven different strategies in looking for jobs; volunteering, multiple applications, course certification, networking and job fairs, jobs with lesser qualifications, language competence, and job search engines. Some of the strategies used to align with what is usually reported in other studies such as education and literacy skills, networking with host country nationals (Bussi & Pareliussen, 2017; Oreopoulos, 2011; Senthanar *et al*.,2020). The strategies used by the participants differ in terms of their frequency of use and their effectiveness. For instance, the use of volunteering and job search engines appear to be generic, as most of the participants indicated using both. However, less than half of the participants who used these generic strategies indicated that the strategies contributed to their access to jobs. Therefore, the experience of looking for jobs in Halifax is tied to the effectiveness of the combinations of strategies used.

The participants who found their experiences easy are mostly recommended by people already working in Halifax, and they have targeted CVs tailored to specific jobs, did great in interviews, and have a good accent or good work experience. They combine all these strategies to make it effective and fast in securing a job in Halifax. This suggests that relying on one strategy normally results in wastage of time and makes it difficult to reach many opportunities, thereby increasing frustrations. Many strategies provide a wider avenue for employers to see their resume and reach out to them.

5.2.2 Barriers in entering the job market in Halifax

When it comes to barriers to entering the job market in Halifax, the participants were found to face three main barriers. These were structural, cultural, and individual barriers. The structural barriers included racial discrimination and difficulty in securing a work permit. The cultural barriers encountered were differences in language and accent which posed a severe challenge to them securing jobs in Halifax. The individual-level barriers including overly focusing on particular job preferences limited work experience and limited networks and social support.

Understanding their challenges and barriers constitutes a critical step in improving labour market performance of African migrants in Halifax. The findings show that the participants experience three main barriers to securing jobs in Halifax; structural barriers, cultural barriers, and individual barriers. In broader terms, the findings show how labour market integration of African migrants in Halifax is framed by the unique and intersecting institutional and employer discriminations at the structural level. Particularly, the participants in this study experienced several structural barriers

encompassing institutionalized and systemic challenges such as racism, discrimination, and frustrating work permit documentation. Studies such as Man, 2004; Danso and Grant, 2000, shed more light on my current study by showing how Sub-Saharan Africa immigrant women and Africans (migrants & immigrants) generally, have been characterized by racialized and gendered institution processes and procedures. The specific inference could be made to government policies and professional accreditation protocols and nonetheless, employers require Canadian work experience, thus producing certain market outcomes. These barriers are reported to render migrants in general and African migrants in particular, unable to find jobs in high-income countries (Garcia, 2017; Hooijer & Picot, 2015; Udah *et al*., 2019b).

What emerges from this study is also the relevance of cultural and individual level experiences. This suggests that African migrants seeking to find jobs in Halifax do not only face structural challenges but also importantly, they face cultural barriers and their own individual limitations.

Apart from the structural barriers (which are obvious), the participants also indicate several cultural and individual barriers that impede their efforts at finding jobs in Halifax. The cultural barrier aligns with Bourdieu's concept of habitus in his theory of practice (Bourdieu, 2014; Kelly & Lusis, 2006). Bourdieu uses the concept of habitus to encompass the cultural skills, practices, and actions that make it easier for individuals to participate in groups or societies (Bourdieu, 2014; Mouzelis, 2008).

In this study, language and accent emerged as a critical commodity. African migrants who are competent in the language and accent find it easy to get jobs. Those who are not able to speak the language and practice the accent find it very difficult to get jobs. This finding confirms the

observation that was made by Topen (2006) that accent is a major challenge that most of the Sub-Saharan African immigrants' women and migrants in general encounter in securing paid employment in Halifax. Language competency and formal education are the prevalent determining factors in the successful integration of immigrants and migrants in the Canadian economy.

A study carried out among African migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa highlighted that the variance presents the stride or tempo the variation in speaking, intonation, and grammar, indicates how deficient the one talking is being perceived by the white employers. Therefore, it can be said that dialect might be a reason for the shortage of employment corresponding with the qualifications and seasoned experiences of Sub-Saharan immigrants and to a larger extend African migrants in general without distorting the discourse of equity. (Creese and Kambere, 2003). Topen's (2006) observation again resonates with this current study about how the majority of her participants mentioned how they were not mostly scheduled for interviews and even with the few times they had the chance to appear for interviews they could not secure the job due to their accent. In terms of the accents, bias is the core concern, provided that it is not the tone itself that presents a technical problem. Racialization and marginalization thus affect social contact, classifying immigrants, and migrants in one form of labour market, particularly women from Sub-Saharan Africans. (Tastsoglou and Miedema, 2005). This, coupled with individual level limitations, makes it difficult for African migrants in the Canadian labour market. Lack of experience (much more Canadian working experience) emerged as a key barrier to successful integration. Not being able to find jobs because of accent means that the participants get no experience to leverage for other job opportunities. They are therefore exposed to cyclical barriers where structural and cultural barriers produce individual limitations that compromise job seeking efforts.

Unfamiliar job conditions for migrants lacking the same social or cultural capital that the native workers take for granted must be negotiated. Migrants' social capitals tend to be established in networks of other migrants of a common ethnic background; useful guidance and connections can be given, which are especially significant in seeking entry-level jobs (Creese and Wiebe, 2012). As a result, several migrant settlement companies are at the forefront of facilitating global integration.

5.2.3 Support systems in entering the job market in Halifax

In this section, I explored the support systems available for Sub- Saharan African migrants in integrating into the labour market in Halifax. Some researchers have suggested that in all high-income countries, migrants often face a greater risk of poverty than locals by objectively controlling the makeup of the immigrant community.

In terms of support, the participants indicated some form of support available for entering the job market in Halifax. However, the available support systems were not necessarily for African migrants. They were support systems that help migrants, in general, to adjust in the province, as they keep looking for jobs or assisted to find jobs. The participants had different reactions to available support systems. Almost half of the participants showed dissatisfaction with the support, citing issues of delayed responses. The remaining participants indicated either being satisfied with the support or alluded to the fact that growing numbers of migrants in the province meant that not all of them could be helped by the available support.

However, the position of migrants differs relatively greatly over nations (Hooijer & Picot, 2015). While other studies have looked at support systems for refugees in Canada and African migrants in other parts of Canada (Hooijer & Picot, 2015; Senthanar *et al*., 2020), studies on African migrants in Halifax are in a modicum form.is limited. This study provides rich insights into existing support systems for African migrants in integrating into the labour market in Halifax.

The findings show the existence of some forms of support for migrants in Halifax. However, support is limited when it comes to African migrants. A non-profit organization like ISANS (Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia) provides support for all migrants, and not exclusively for African migrants alone. The participants allude to the fact that there are growing numbers of migrants in Halifax, and job opportunities are limited in the province. Therefore, not all migrants are able to receive their support. What this means is that the support might be available but might not be accessible to all migrants in different migration streams. There appear to be no supports that are geared towards African migrants in particular. The African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes (ADAMS), which   provides support for African migrants is less sorted out for help by these migrants, could it be that this organization needs to do a bit more by putting in place measures and support programs that are easily accessible to African migrants? . Attempts by the principal researcher to engage with representatives from the ADAMS for face to face interviews as a researcher proved futile. With no or little available support from the black community tailored for African migrants, it means the burden and frustrations of searching for jobs will be higher.

The findings thus indicate that the participants are dissatisfied with the capacity of the existing job agencies to help them secure employment in their effort to successfully enter the labour market in Halifax. There have been reports of the proliferation of temporary job agencies in Canada, and

purport to assist migrants and refugees entering Canada to find jobs (Couton, 2013; Reimer *et al*., 2016). Several studies also show that there is a general discontentment towards these temporary job agencies (Buzdugan, 2009; Ulceluse & Kahenec, 2018; Yssaad & Fields, 2018). There is a growing concern with the practices of temporary employment agencies and how they make labour force, particularly migrant job seekers more vulnerable in the labour market (Bosmans *et al*., 2017). Despite this caveat, African migrants are desperate to use any support available to them because to some extent, they have secured jobs through the exercise of these job organizations and reacted to different employment circumstances. They have spoken out against and disapproved of racist structures and the Canadian labour market for their discriminatory practices (Topen, 2006).

5.2.4   Coping mechanisms when seeking to enter the job market in Halifax

When it comes to coping, the participants used two main coping mechanisms during the period of looking for jobs; drawing on support from the black communities (ethnic groups or co-nationals)-bonding capital and drawing on support from the native (bridging social capital Canadians. The black communities were relied on for job information and recommendations, and also for material support during long periods of unemployment. However, many of the participants indicated that they had no links with the black communities in Halifax. Some of the participants also made friends with the native-born Canadians which they rely on for support in terms of integration and coping.

The findings show that broadly, the coping mechanisms of the participants include extending their social networks, joining job clubs, and volunteering, which helps to build new friendships, gain career experience, social support, and networking opportunities. Moreover, these gendered and

racialized migration systems, job policies, and settlement methods mediate the opportunities for economic inclusion of immigrants through these. These coping mechanisms have been reported in previous studies (Kim, 2012; Opoku-Dapaah, 2017).

However, the study has also revealed complexities in using connectedness or social networks as a coping mechanism. Some of the participants have difficulty coping, particularly when it comes to drawing support from the black communities, friends, among others. This is reflected in the fact that many of the African migrants choose not to involve themselves much t with the black communities(such as the indigenous black people) and to a larger extend keeps minimum connection with other co-nationals ; the bonding capital(co-ethnic and co-nationals) but fall on the native- (bridging social capital) Canadians instead. The black communities in Halifax don't have many arrangements in place to help African migrants. The findings contradict the popular notions of togetherness and interconnectedness of migrant communities in high-income countries (Kim, 2012; Opoku-Dapaah, 2017; Souza, 1996). Opoku-Dapaah (2017) for instance reports on how African migrants draw support from the black communities to cope in Canada.

However, in the current study, many of the African migrants indicated that there is no need for involving themselves with the indigenous black community since there is no connection or relations there to be formed. This finding contradicts the dominant narratives that suggest that African migrants are inherently collective and therefore thrive on connectedness (Ncube *et al*., 2019; Opoku-Dapaah, 2017). Some researchers even argue that African connectedness is enacted even more when they migrate into high-income countries (Opoku-Dapaah, 2017).

Collectivity among Africans is more complex and goes beyond mere connectedness. The burgeoning literature on African studies shows how elements of individuality exist among Africans, and how material poverty force interdependent lives (Adams & Dzokoto, 2003). This suggests that the notion that Africans thrive on connectedness from co-nationals or co-ethnic groups is not entirely true. There is the wish to break away from such connectedness which may overwhelm them from interdependency. Therefore, when they get the opportunity, individuals in Africa like to live their independent lives. This is demonstrated well in this study where some of the participants indicate that they do not need to be connected to the black communities and organizations in Halifax.

There are weak ties that connect the black communities in Halifax. When ties are weak, individuals break away from the interconnectedness that does not serve individual interests (Adams & Dzokoto, 2003). This is reiterated in a study conducted by Topen (2006) about how indigenous Black people see themselves as more advanced than immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa due to the economic inequalities between Canada and Sub-Saharan African nations and are therefore entitled to rights that recent immigrants, who are perceived as strangers in Canada, do not posses . Sub-Saharan African immigrants are also perceived as more educated, and therefore seen higher in terms of social standing than indigenous Blacks, as a result of existing Canadian migration policies. This distinguishing factor of social disposition and shifting patterns of control between these two sets influence the connection between them which otherwise could provide help through their social networks if they had good and strong ties through these social networks.

This finding reveals that there exist weak ties between Black Nova Scotian and African migrants and immigrants in general and not just peculiar to a certain type of migrants from Africa. ADAMS (African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes), which is supposed to oversee the interest of African migrants in Halifax is somewhat not able to provide available services to the degree that African migrants are readily helped when they require support. The participants, therefore, draw from their selves, families, and other relations they form with Canadian borns for support. The findings align with migrant, immigrant theory, or social network approach where migrants benefit from their social capital or networks and exchange favours (Ledeneva, 1998).

The migrant or immigrant social network approach describes how migrants of co-nationals or co-ethnics do not always experience strong ties as compared to what one would expect but rather sometimes weak ties (bridging social capital) appear more helpful in providing help and assistance as compared to strong ties (Samers and Snider, 2015). Allen (2009) also confirmed how bonding social capital – migrants of co-ethnic and co-nationals of migrant affect the income gains of refugee women in Portland, Maine. African migrants may appear to be classified together as blacks to give them a semblance of homogeneity or strong ties at the surface levels (Duval, 2006). However, deeply, African migrants are inherently heterogenous, coming from different countries and cultural backgrounds (Dietz *et al.,* 2015; Oreopoulos, 2011).

The culturally heterogeneous nature of the African migrants means that there are many and varied differences at play when it comes to the issues of building or relying on bonding capital. The migrant, immigrant or social network approaches assume for migrants to rely on their social capital to negotiate the labour market challenges but considering the case of these participants in this

study, some resorted to their social networks for help and resources while others relied on themselves for finding their way into the labour market in Halifax, Nova scotia. This might explain what reduces the opportunities and/or increases the frustrations of African migrants in securing jobs in Halifax.

In many ways, the participants in this study appear to understand the context that constrains the ability of the job agencies to assist them in their successful integration into the labour market in Halifax.   Some also refused to take positions that would compromise their hard-earned qualifications and degrees. While this agency, which hires migrants, does not remove all obstacles that migrants face in the processes of integrating into the labour market, however, it is a strong force to encourage ongoing and revived equity and access to paying jobs, according to education and practice (Topen, 2006). The findings of this study portray how the services of these agencies and job engines are patronized in the process of migrants securing jobs, therefore be considered in the light of the increasing African migrants in Canada, and how the high numbers both provide context for growing temporary job agencies and also not undermine their ability to help the migrants secure jobs in the province.

5.3 Conclusion

The study provides a context of the broader interconnections of the structural, group, and individual factors that combine to influence the chances of Sub-Saharan African migrants in finding jobs in Halifax. Given that the data was gathered in the midst of a global health pandemic that almost shut down global economies, the reduction in job opportunities across Canada, in

general, meant that the chances of Sub-Saharan African migrants in finding jobs in the province became even slimmer.

When it comes to the labour market and economic integration or making a living from one's job, in particular, working in line with one's expertise and experience, has important implications for how migrants adapt and build a home in Canada (Tastsoglou and Miedema, 2005). How well is the Sub-Saharan African migrant equipped and prepared for the workforce in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada? This study saw Sub-Saharan African migrants engaging in various strategies such as engaging in volunteering programs, turning in multiple applications to companies, taking course certification to build upon their skill sets (to have the Canadian education credentials which turn out to do well with employers), networking, and attending job fairs to learn of companies recruiting, taking up jobs with lesser qualifications, improving upon their language competence, and utilizing job search engines available to them. Moreover, with all these strategies incorporated by Sub-Saharan African migrants in entering the labour market, they faced some challenges and barriers in the process categorized as cultural barriers, structural barriers, and individual barriers. The barriers included devaluation and not recognizing international education qualifications and foreign work experience, being discriminated against with references such as their skin colour, accent, and their dressing. In broader terms, the findings showed how labour market integration of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Halifax is framed by the unique and intersecting institutional and employer discriminations at the structural level.

So, what did they do to navigate these barriers to cope and secure a job? African Migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa adopted coping mechanisms such as extending their social networks, joining job clubs, and volunteering, which helps to build new friendships, gain career experience, social support, and networking opportunities. Furthermore, the opportunities for economic inclusion of

immigrants are regulated through these gender-based and racially biased migration systems, job patterns, and settlement initiatives. Can African migrants be confident about the support systems available for them in Halifax, Nova Scotia, if there is any to start with? As far as support for migrants is concerned, the participants indicated some form of support was available for entering the job market in Halifax. However, the available support systems were not necessarily put in place just to assist only new African migrants who arrive in Halifax, Nova Scotia. They were support systems that help all immigrants and migrants, in general, to adjust in the province, in the context of them searching for jobs or any other help they might need to settle down comfortably in the Province. The participants had different reactions to available support systems. Almost half of the participants showed dissatisfaction with the support, citing issues of delayed responses. The remaining participants indicated either being satisfied with the support or alluded to the fact that growing numbers of migrants in the province meant that not all of them could be helped by the available support currently being provided to migrants based on their status and eligibility for those programs currently being rolled out. It can be that said African migrants to some extent have to do more compared to their counterparts Canadian borns to have a successful integration into the Canadian labour market; the economy has its opportunities and challenges, thus being an African migrant with a foreign accent, foreign education credentials and international working experience affect how well and the degree to which a migrant can maneuver the Canadian economy.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations with the methodology that should guide the interpretations and/or applications of the findings in the current study. First, the data was gathered through online and in the form of open-ended survey questionnaires. Without face-to-face interaction, I was limited to further explore or probe into any issues that may have come up from their answers, and the nuances

in their emotions and tone of voice. Also, all the survey/interviews were conducted in English, and therefore the participants sampled were all fluent in the English language. For this reason, experiences of African migrants who were not fluent in the English language could not be captured in this study. Again, the sample size used in the current study was small as compared to the number initially targeted. This means that the sample is not an adequate representation of African migrants in Halifax but a fair one to tell the stories of the participants that engaged in this study. African migrants in Halifax in particular, and Canada in general, are very heterogeneous. They come across all the 53 countries in Africa, which varied socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. In the current study, the sample was predominantly Ghanaian, with a few of them in other Sub-Saharan African countries. The sample does not capture the heterogeneities of identities of the African migrants in Halifax. Therefore, the findings in the current study do not generalize to all African migrants in Halifax.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

The limitations notwithstanding, this study provides critical insight into the experience of African migrants in entering the job market in Halifax, Nova Scotia. There is a need for further studies to be conducted to deepen our understanding. There is a need for large scale future studies that use representative samples of African migrants. Such studies would provide the opportunity to conduct a finer analysis of the heterogeneity of identities of the migrants and how that shapes their experiences of seeking employment in Halifax. Longitudinal studies are also needed to shed light on how the experiences of African migrants in entering the job market in Halifax change overtime. The growing number of migrants in the province and the growing number of job opportunities, amidst global pandemics, for instance, provide a good basis for studying migrants' job prospects and experiences over time.

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<center>**APPENDICES**</center>

<center>**A. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**</center>

<center>INTERVIEW/SURVEY GUIDE AND QUESTIONS</center>

I am a graduate student doing my Master of Arts degree in Geography from the department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Saint Mary's University.

As part of my master's thesis, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Cathy Conrad, titled Entering the Workforce in Halifax: Strategies and Coping Mechanisms among the African Migrant Community. I am the Principal Investigator with no financial interest in conducting this research but in partial fulfillment of my MA degree.

You are being invited to partake in this study. Participation in this research is purely voluntary and by no means forced to participate. Inclusion in this research will not affect your work status or job and your stay here in Canada in any way. * Required

1. Email address *

2. Date *

3. As an African migrant, have you lived in Halifax for at least one year? *

    ◯ Yes

    ◯
    No

4. What is your age? (select the range your age falls under) *

○ 18-29

○
30-44
○
45-64

65+

5.   What is your gender?

○ Male

○
Female

Prefer not to say

6.   1.a Please tell me about your experience looking for work in Canada.

7.   1.b How long did it take you to find your first job?

8.   1.c What kind of work was it?

9.   1.d How long did it take for you to get a job that is commensurate with your

qualifications?

10.   1.e What were the challenges you had to overcome in order to get a job?

11.   1.f What did you do in order to overcome these challenges?

12.   1.g How did the mainstream institutions respond to your employment needs?

13.   1.h What has been your relationship with and experience of the existing indigenous Black community in Nova Scotia?

14.   2.a Have you ever been involved in any volunteer work in the community?

⬭ Yes

◯ No

15.   2.b If yes, what was your experience with that voluntary service on a scale of 1-10?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

16.   2.c If yes, did the volunteer work impact you landing a job and your paid work?

⬭ Yes

◯ No

17.　2.d Do you have any job search engine account? *

○ Yes

○
No

18.　2.e Which of the following search engines is your preferred option? *

○ Indeed

○
LinkedIn

○
Career Bacon

Job Monster

19.　2.f If yes, how would you measure its efficiency in entering the Halifax workforce?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

20.　3.a Could you please tell me about your employment history, both in Canada and before

(i.e. jobs you have held, where, for how long)

21. 3.b Are you presently working according to your qualifications? Please, tell me about your experience at your current workplace.

22. 3.c In your opinion, what are the challenges / barriers and/or opportunities at the workplace of being an African migrant?

23. 3.d How have you responded / are you responding to them?

24. 4.a Please tell me about your immigration application process. (reasons for coming to Canada)

25. 4.b Were there any arrangements in place to enable you to work in Canada by the government?

  ◯ Yes

  ◯
  No

26. 4.c Was Halifax your first place to live in Canada?

  ◯ Yes

  ◯
  No

27. 5.a Could you suggest ways you think could help integrate African migrants in general and those from Sub-Saharan Africa specific into the labour market?

28. 5.b Please feel free to make comments on issues which are important to you but were not covered by the questions.

B. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Questions

1. What are some of the measures put in place to help migrants settle successfully in Halifax, nova scotia and especially concerning African migrants (in terms of job applications and accommodation.

2. Is there any training set in place to help educate migrants (especially new migrants) about how to do well for themselves in the job market and integrate smoothly?

3. What are some of the issues so far gathered from by your organization about the challenges African migrants mostly encounter in securing jobs that somewhat commensurate with their qualifications, credentials?

4. Is there any trend of jobs you have noticed African migrants are mostly employed in here in Halifax Nova Scotia?

5. Are there any measures that the government has put in place to help successful integration of migrants especially African migrants?

6. What are the strategies and coping mechanisms you think are mostly employed by these migrants to infiltrate the Canadian labour market?

7. What are some of the things you think these migrants should do in order to integrate successfully into the labour market.

Entering the Workforce in Halifax: Strategies and Coping Mechanisms among the African Migrant Community

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Purpose of the Research: The purpose of this study is to examine the diverse strategies and coping mechanisms that African migrants coming from Sub-Saharan Africa undertake in order to enter into the Canadian labour market. The significance of this research is to address how Sub-Saharan African migrants experience processes of economic integration in Canada (Halifax, NS specifically) and ways that these processes are gendered and racialized.

Eligibility: Sub-Sahara African migrants (men and women) ranging from the ages of 18 years and above who have lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia for at least one year.

What will I have to do? The interview will last about 45 to 60 minutes. It will be conducted in public places or at a location of participant's choice in HRM and at a time that is convenient for the participant. Participants will be asked to answer 10-15 key questions that relate to their experiences with job seeking, specifically, with respect to the strategies of job search and coping mechanisms of un/under employment. The interviews will be recorded with the consent of participants. If the participants are reluctant with recording, the responses will be recorded as written notes by the researcher. There would not be any subsequent research sessions once interview is conducted as it is a one-time event.

What are the potential benefits of the Research? The research will provide policymakers with essential information about job challenges common to the African migrant community and strategies and coping mechanisms they adopt to infiltrate the Canadian labour market. In doing so, the participant and the community may be benefited by positive policy changes. A summary of the main findings will also be made available to participants with links to the websites for them to access in their convenience, the participant will gain broad knowledge about the ways they might be to maneuver the Canadian labour market.

What are the Potential Risks for Participants? There are no foreseeable risks that this research will pose on participants or emerge from this study.

Confidentiality: All information you provide during the research will be held confidentially by the researchers involved and your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. The audiotapes will be transcribed and that, in doing so, your data will be coded. Data will be kept

confidential in a secured locker in a safely locked facility with a key. The principal investigator and the supervisor would be the only people with access to the key and information collected during this research. The information will be retained for approximately three years until the research is complete. Upon completion of the research, data collected will be destroyed or shredded confidentially. Results from this study will be compiled and shared with the research community through seminars, conferences, academic presentations, journal and articles; research results will be in the public domain for educational purposes. Confidentiality will fully be incorporated possible by law. Kindly indicate below if you consent to or decline to be audio recorded in any segment of the interview.

_____I agree that segments of the interview might be audio recorded made of my participation in this research.

_____I do not want segments of the interview to be audio recorded made of my participation in this research.

What type of Compensation is available for Participation? There is no direct compensation for research participants.

How can I withdraw from this Study? The research is expected to be completed by August 2020; thus, participants have the rights to withdraw from participating in the research with no consequences before the compilation of all the parts of the research by end of January 2020. Withdrawal of participation also includes withdrawal of any form of data collected up until that point from that participant. Data collected from participants who have chosen not to continue with the research will be shredded and destroyed.

How can I get more Information? (or How can I find out more about this Study?) : If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Conrad either by telephone at 902-209-1137 or by email(cconrad@smu.ca). Also, a brief summary will be posted on the FGSR's or the IDS's website or any other website willing to share the results of the research. The links to all these websites will be provided to participants in the feedback form so they can read it in their own conveniences

Certification

The Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board has reviewed this research. If you have any questions or concerns about ethical matters or would like to discuss your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at ethics@smu.ca or 420-5728.

Legal Rights and Signature:

Entering the Workforce in Halifax: Strategies and Coping Mechanisms among the African Migrant Community

I understand what this study is about, appreciate the risks and benefits, and that by consenting I agree to take part in this research study and do not waive any rights to legal recourse in the event of the research-related harm.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can end my participation at any time without penalty.

I have had adequate time to think about the research study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

<u>Participant</u>

Signature: _____Name (Printed): _____ Date: _____

<u>Principal Investigator</u>

Signature: _____Name (Printed): _____ Date: _____