Hear it From the Horses' Mouth: Listening to African Professionals in Australia
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24

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Abstract

The study investigated the growing concern of the African professionals who arrived in Australia since 2007. The ongoing concern was based on the lack of job opportunity in their nominated skilled occupation in post arrival in Australia. The study used demographic questionnaire and semi-structured interview to elicit information from forty (40) participants from Western Australia and Northern Territory cities and regional areas. The data analysed provided the needed perspectives about the extreme frustration of the African skilled migrants lack job opportunities in the post arrival in Australia. Based on the findings, the study made some recommendations, including counselling implications on several pathways on how African professionals could gain recognition for opportunities in their professional areas.

Introduction

Since the abandonment of the white policy barring the non-white settlers in the 1960s', Australia has become a more multicultural society nation (Bolaji, Jalloh and Kell, 2020; Castles, Vasta & Ozkul, 2014). African continent remains one of the continents that has benefited from the post white policy settlement. The 2016 census listed South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Nigeria and Somalia as countries in Africa with substantial population in Australia (Productivity Commission, 2016). Literature review on immigrant settlement in Australia revealed that Melbourne has over 48000 migrants, including African migrants. Thus, outpacing Sydney's international immigrant intake of about 40 000 per year (Productivity Commission, 2016). Globally, the World Bank's Global Skilled Migration Database (2017) reported that Australia and Canada have a relatively high share of highly skilled African immigrants.

Forshaw (2011) stressed that Africans in Australia are diverse, and from a range of African nations, but their resettlement pathways have been quite different. Reports on Migration trends from Africa to Australia listed South Africa and Zimbabwe as dominant African countries with more presence in Australian when compared with other nationalities from the continent. As reported in the ABS (2016), the first set of African settlers in Australia were originally from South Sudan, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, implying that they have entered Australia as humanitarian

migrants. Subsequently, the arrival of African professionals to Australia in the last ten years has changed the narrative from humanitarian to highly skilled immigrants (Bolaji et al., 2020). A huge number of settlers have gained visas under the Skilled Migration Stream (SMS) (Forshaw, 2011). Capps, McCabe and Fix (2012) noted that Black immigrants from most African nations are well educated among the OECD countries, but the employment rate has not been encouraging. As over seventy percent or higher of black immigrants from all African origins are not in the desired occupation of their choice (Capps, McCabe and Fix, 2012). In Australia, the story has not been different (Lim, Gemici, & Karmel, 2013, p. 8).

This narrative explains the rationale for this study which was premised on the ongoing concern of African skilled migrants who arrived in Australia under skilled streams visas but unable to secure employment in their nominated skilled occupation. This study was designed to understand how skilled pathway to Australia enhances job opportunities for African skilled immigrants. It investigated why African skilled migrants were not working in their nominated skilled occupation in Australia. This study provided understanding on how African professionals under skilled streams could gain recognition for opportunities in their professional areas. The participants for the study were drawn from the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The justification for the choice of the two states was because the states attracted more African professionals through the regional skilled migration pathways. In addition to that, the weather condition, and rich diversity policy made the states a preferred destination for most Africans that arrived in Australia within the period of study (2007-2019).

In a nutshell, this study highlighted the travails of the African professionals' lack of job opportunities in their post settlement in Australia. The participants' stories documented in this study are captured and organised in the sub-sections below for readers to gain a shared understanding of the issues as it relates to African migrants in Australia.

Contextualising the study

In 2016, the lead investigator in the study had ethics approval for a community-based research project titled 'It takes a village: Listening to the Village' a research project designed to improve the higher education aspirations of members of the NT African community group aged 15-18 years to transit from high school to tertiary education. The study was a three-phase projects, the first phase involved African parent session or interview, the second had high school participants and the final phase was engagement with African undergraduate students at the university in the Northern Territory. Following two forums with leaders and parents of various NT communities, the overarching findings from the study was the expression of frustration among the parents about the lack of opportunity to flourish their career in Australia.

The parental concerned informed the researchers to seek to know why the lack of job opportunities was an issue in the NT African professional community. More importantly, was to find out if the problem was just an issue in the NT. An extensive literature exploration with some African scholars, both in Australia and Africa revealed that the issue raised at the community consultative forum was not limited to a jurisdiction. The preliminary findings provided shared understanding that the issue was not peculiar to the NT. Thus, necessitated the need to have both WA and NT as the field for the data collection for the study. As stated in the introduction section, the choice of the two states was because of the regional skilled sponsorship scheme that attracted most of the African professionals to the regions. This informed why the cluster of participants for the study were drawn from the two states.

Statement of the problem

A wide range of studies have shown that overseas professionals in Australia are faced with myriad of problems (Marschhausen, 2014), especially in skill recognition, and those who gained recognition are in jobs that does not match their qualifications (Lim, Gemici, & Karmel, 2013, p. 8), African professionals are not exempted from this problem. Despite positive skilled assessments by the Australian skilled assessment agencies, many of these immigrants are forced to take a low paying job or work two or more jobs to make ends meet (Stayner, 2021). This

study arises from the growing concerns of the African professionals about the lack of professional recognition of their overseas skills and qualifications. This issue could be one of the factors for lack of aspiration for a higher education among the children of the people from African communities drawing on the outcome of findings on the relationship between parental job opportunities educational aspiration of their children (Bolaji et al., 2020). African high school students "have lower rates of Year 12 completion" (Lim, Gemici, & Karmel, 2013, p. 8) and are persistently "underrepresented in higher education" (Robson et al., 2008, p. 3). The African youths are disenchanted towards higher education seeing their parents not getting desirable jobs despite their educational qualifications and skill recognition by Australian assessing agencies. Thus, the lack of success in post-arrival of African professional immigrants in Australia remains a challenge and it is difficult to shift the focus beyond the challenges. This necessitated the need for the study.

Significance of the study

This study was significant in the light of the disenchantment of the African youths towards higher education as their parents with positive skilled assessment have no success stories in Australia. This study contributed to knowledge why high-skilled African migrants in Australia are struggling to get jobs in their skilled occupation. This project informed policy makers of the current institutional or structural barriers facing African professional immigrants entering the professional community. It deepened understanding of young professional immigrants and African-Australian high school leavers to understand the multi-faceted approaches to attain professional fulfilling roles and recognition in Australia. This study made substantial contribution to the existing body of literature on challenges facing skilled immigrants in Australia and to understand the issues affecting these populations thereby removing them from obscurity and validating their experiences.

Purpose of the study

This study sought to understand why African skilled immigrants who had their qualifications assessed and recognised as comparable to Australia standard were without employment, and why those employed were working in unskilled jobs. The study investigated if credentialing and discrimination were potential factors reducing the African immigrant opportunities for skilled employment. This study sought to ascertain if the language barrier was applied to those skilled immigrants from the African continent. Also, the study helped to know if years of residence in the country a catalyst to employment opportunities for high-skilled African immigrants. The outcome of the study helped to recommend or suggest a model or a program that could assist at operationalizing opportunities for the African skilled immigrants in Australia.

Research question

The research questions that guided the study were:

- Why African skilled immigrants in Australia were working in unskilled jobs?
- Did years of residence in the country impact on employment opportunities for African skilled immigrants in Australia?
- Did language or communication skills affect African Skilled immigrant's job prospect?

The research questions guided the exploration of issues facing African skilled migrants working in unskilled jobs in Western Australia and Northern Territory. The research investigated the impact/effect of language, years of residence, qualifications and experience on employment opportunities for African skilled immigrants arriving in Australia and post-arrival. And questions helped in gathering adequate and appropriate data to investigate the impact of economic, socio-cultural, and political conditions in general skilled migration process in Australia. The research questions also guided data collection to reveal the knowledge and skills of those charged with the policy implementation.

Theoretical Framework: Sarah Song (2017) and Irene Bloemraad (2011)

The study explored the work of Song (2017) and Bloemraad (2011) on multiculturalism as the theoretical framings to understand the issues of immigration and post arrival of migrants to their new settlement. The two theories unveiled the politics, philosophy and policy of multiculturalism to deepen understanding of issues associated with skilled migration. In Song (2017) the idea of multiculturalism in the contemporary discourse and political philosophy was about the assimilation, integration and acceptance of the new immigrants in the society. Thus, the study was designed to know how the policies of multiculturalism have provided fairer opportunity and foster the integration of new immigrants into the society in Australia. Multiculturalism has been used as an umbrella term to characterise the moral and political claims of a wide range of marginalised groups, who are ethnic and religious minority groups, including Africans, Indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities (Glazer, 1997; Hollinger, 1995; Taylor, 1992). This assertion aligned with the view of Bloemraad (2011) on multiculturalism as a platform for social cohesion, value laden and appropriate way to ensure diversity and integration of people which affirmed the Commonwealth of Australia's perspective on diversity.

The two theories have shared commonalities that aligned with eight goals articulated in the National Agenda and the first three are summarised as follows: (i) cultural identity- the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and religion; (ii) social justice- the rights of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth; and (iii) economic efficiency- the need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background. These definitions of multiculturalism indicate equal opportunity to all whether Aboriginal, Anglo-Celtic, or non-English speaking background; and whether they were born in Australian or overseas. The interpretation of this statement gives allusion to the fact that all skilled migrants have equal rights to opportunities regardless of their backgrounds. The notion seems contrary to the narratives of the African skilled migrants in Australia, who find it difficult to get a professional job in their chosen areas. Investigating the above issue was crucial in the light of the understanding of multiculturalism as a philosophical orientation which gives recognition to pluralism in a society and celebrates diversity. Songs (2017) guided the researchers to understand pluralism and diversity of society as an essential area of public policy. The two theoretical frameworks helped to understand the old age phenomenon of immigration as controversial as it has been over decades, and why the influx of highly skilled workers to developed countries has not been abated. In a nutshell, the theories have provided much needed knowledge on skilled migration, mobility, economic narratives, nuances and how the program could foster professional opportunities for the African skilled migrants in Australia.

Methodology

The study used qualitative research approach to deepened understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011, p. 5). Qualitative data provided the basis for a range of factors affecting employment of highly skilled African immigrants in NT and WA. The approach helped to analysed responses to survey and interview questions, and to focus on the issues responsible for the unemployment of the African skilled immigrants. The researchers used complex data analysis locating themes from the interview data around three issues: (a) educational qualifications and (b) barriers to gaining desirable or professional jobs, and (c) skill assessment, knowledge, experience and qualifications (formal or tacit) that might be used to contribute to a program to enhance employability of the African skilled immigrants in Australia. This stage of analysis provided information on the factors responsible for lack of professional jobs for the African skilled immigrants. In addition, it informed the investigators of the African skilled migrants' skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications assessed as comparable to Australia's qualifications. The data provided a complete and detailed picture of the nature and composition of the African skilled immigrants in the NT and WA that can be used for community-based studies in the future.

The survey and interview design used in the study addresses the research questions of a long-standing interdisciplinary research interest of a global phenomenon like skilled immigration or mobility (Visser, Krosnick

Hear it From the Horses' Mouth: Listening to African Professionals in Australia
Stephen Bolaji | Stella Anyama | Olabisi Kuteyi-Imonitie | Olaoluwa Ibilola | Sulay Jalloh

28

& Lavrakas, 2000). Survey design informed how the African skilled immigrants are influenced by their new environment socially, culturally and, their prospect of getting jobs in their area of specialisation. As skilled immigration has become the subject of regular debates at local, regional, national, international and even supranational governing bodies, each of them addressing various immigration issues from their own perspectives and with various concerns and interests, the design enabled the researchers to understand factors or underlying questions affecting the African skilled immigrants in Australia (UN Report, 2009). The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the African immigrants in Australia on a skilled visa but working in a low pay job considered incommensurable to their professional qualifications. The approach gave the researchers the opportunity to understand factors responsible for lack of professional engagement on the part of the African immigrants. And availed the investigators the opportunity to seek clarification on some language issues generated in the process of gathering data for the study. The semi-structured, one-on-one taped interviews employed a powerful way in which we tried to understand our fellow humans, even on issues not anticipated that would be generated in the cause of investigation (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997; Fontana and Frey, 2008; Bitchener, 2010; Cresswell, 2013; Flick, 2014). Gubrium & Holstein (1997) defined interview as a universal mode of systematic inquiry. The approach afforded the researchers to elicit adequate information, even on things that cannot directly observe, such as feelings, thoughts and intentions (Bitchener, 2010). The semi-structured interview permitted greater flexibility and a more valid response from the informants' perception of reality on the issues of the study.

Participants

There were forty (40) active participants interviewed, and these participants arrived in Australia within the timeframe of the study 2007 to 2020. The participants were drawn across various disciplinary or professional areas. For instance, ten (10) of the participants were qualified medical doctors, twenty (20) were qualified engineers fully registered with Engineer Australia Association, five (5) had a doctoral degree (PhD) in science related fields and others (5) in the different allied health related areas. The setting of the timeframe and choice of participants was designed to help the investigators understand, capture and properly document participants' stories of migration and how they gained skilled recognition in Australia from their home countries. It helped to understand how the participants were able to navigate the complex contextual terrain of skilled assessment to become fully recognised professionals in Australia. Also, the timeframe enabled the team to elicit more information from the participants that could be useful to those African professionals who aspire to immigrate to Australia in the future. As there are dearth of information about the challenges of African skilled immigrants in Australia, therefore, documenting their experiences for future generation would be a worthy venture.

Table 1: Participant interviewed, criteria, procedure and the numbers.
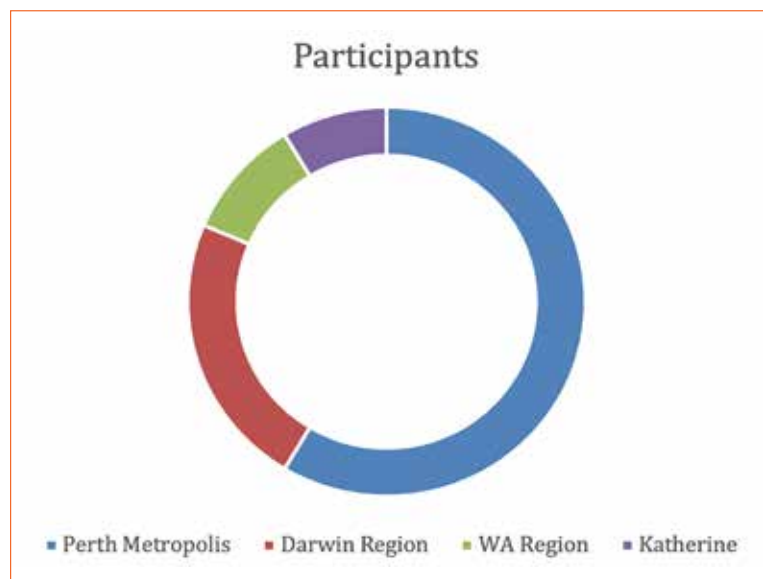
The above chat represented the spread of the participants in the study. Twenty (20) participants were drawn from Perth metropolis, ten (10) were from Darwin region- including Palmerston, six (6) from WA region, precisely from Kalgoorlie, Broome and Port Hedland, and four (4) based in Katherine. The criteria for the selection of the participants were based on the following (i) the participants must be people that reside either in WA or NT (ii) with a minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree assessed as comparable to the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level 7, and (iii) available to be interviewed through any online platforms due to the COVID 19 restriction.

Analysis of Data

The study took the form of qualitative research and thematic analysis based on the key themes emerged from the semi-structured interview guided by the research questions. Using this approach for the data analysis was because qualitative research has several strategies by which data collected can be used to create a single comprehensive dataset. One of the more common strategies used in the study was to counts the number of times a qualitative code occurs (Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib & Rupert, 2007). The investigators used four-digit numeric code to de-identified participants to protect their identity in the analysis process and research report. The approach helped to interpret and better understand the complex reality of a given situation of the study (Marshal, 2003; Rudolph, 2006), from a rich and descriptive data. The thematic method helped to understand a clear procedure of data analysis and to make sense of the complex data. The element of the emerged themes helped to find, build, clarify, illustrate, explain and interpret the data as accurately as possible. In a nutshell, the study helped to interpret and better understand the complex reality of the employability of African skilled migrants in the study (Marshal, 2003; Rudolph, 2006).

Limitation of the study

There are a number of limitations in this study. The first was that some of the target interviewees did not participate in the interview due to the sensitivity of the study. Secondly, out of the 40 participants, it was only 15 that were courageous enough to discuss the issue of unpronounced subtlety bothering on discrimination and racism. Lastly, the study was considered a case study limited to two regions in Australia. All these are taken into consideration as possible constraints in this study.

Findings and Discussion

The study investigated the challenge facing African skilled professionals that came to Australia through a number of skilled visa schemes, but unable to secure employment in their skilled area. Forty (40) participants across WA and NT regions were interviewed in this study. The overarching finding in this study was that all the participants met the English language requirements for their nominated occupation and had positive assessment from the assessing agencies regulating their occupation in Australia. Thus, the study participants had overseas qualifications that satisfied the minimum Australian AQF level 7 qualification required for the skilled migration scheme. There were three main themes that emerged from the study and presented as follows: Assessment, job opportunity and unpronounced subtlety.

Theme One: Assessment

The participants were very precise on their skilled pathways, which elicited a number of questions around the criteria or requirements for the positive assessment they alluded to, as the first milestone for any visa application to be considered as approved or granted. Based on the analysed interview data, the participants mentioned three stages of assessment that any prospective migrant must attain before they can be invited to come to Australia. The stages mentioned were as follows: (i) qualification assessment by relevant agencies of the

Hear it From the Horses' Mouth: Listening to African Professionals in Australia
Stephen Bolaji | Stella Anyama | Olabisi Kuteyi-Imonitie | Olaoluwa Ibilola | Sulay Jalloh

30

Australian government, (ii) a test of English language IELTS with a band component of 7 in each language skills-reading, speaking, writing and speaking (iii) a huge visa fee requirement. Until the three conditions are met, the Department of Home Affairs responsible for visas would not be obliged to consider any application without meeting the conditions. In fact, about ten of the participants mentioned other conditions attached to their visas. One of those that was relevant to the study was getting a job in your area of assessed qualification upon the migrant arrival in Australia. Especially, for those that arrived on a work visa. There were others that had living in the remote areas attached to their visa conditions. Some of the literature examined in this study (Shachar, 2006, p.151; Bolaji, Jalloh & Kell, 2020; Stayner, 2021), discussed the issues of migration, categories of skilled visa available to migrants and the process involved in getting the skilled visa but the conditions and challenges associated with the skilled visas were not adequately reported. While the process of attracting "the best and the brightest" skilled immigrants (Shachar, 2006, p.151) has not really change, the assessment process has been made more rigorous and competitive. The challenges and pitfalls associated with the visa conditions informed the expression of frustration of the African communities about the lack of engagement of African skilled migrants in their occupational area (Bolaji, Jalloh & Kell, 2020). The comment of one of the participants captured the level of frustration experienced by the African professionals in Australia. The participant represented as 1902 asserted that:

> I arrived in Australia on a competitive skilled migration process…My skilled nominated occupation was medical doctor..take your time to check the conditions, you will understand that the process' of my nomination. Is not as easy as you may think. I had to do academic IELTS English with a Score band of 8 in each of the components. In addition to that I have to sit for AMC 1 and 2 before I could be allowed to practice. After completing the stages. I end up as disability support worker here in Darwin because I cannot get any clinic or Hospital to employ me. The clinic that was close to given me a job said I don't have enough experience (1902)

The story of 1902 was not different from other participants about their experience in getting positive assessment in their field of engagement. From the analysed data, the issue was not about the rigorous assessment process or outcome but getting a job in the nominated skilled assessment area remains an issue according to the participants.

Theme 2: Job Opportunity

Similar to the story of the participant 1902 was participant 1910 who was interviewed by one of the researchers not from the same country as the participant 1910 to avoid conflict of interest as identified in the ethics approval. The researcher came from Sierra Leone and participant was from Nigeria. The story was that the participant had no choice than to move to middle East -Saudi Arabia to be precise because he was unable to get a job as a doctor despite meeting all the examinations and registration requirements in Australia. In 1910 words:

> It so sad that my five years working experience back home in Nigeria was not taken into account when I was searching for job as a doctor…after over 1 year 6 months that I couldn't get a job, I was advise(sic) by a friend to go outside of Australia for more experience before I could be recognise for a position…I wasted money and time believing I have a future in Australia (1910)

Stayner (2021) acknowledged that a positive assessment outcome does not translate to a job opportunity for skilled migrants in Australia. As majority of the skilled migrant in Australia are over-qualified for their current job. This seems to provide the needed understanding to the research question (RQ1) that African skilled professionals are in jobs beneath their skill level because there are no available jobs in their skilled nominated areas. Thus, informed the understanding that assessment could be regarded as a decoy of income for Australian agencies or institutions, and not necessary to enhance skilled opportunities for migrants. The data collected on this theme did not suggest any level of relationship between the number of years of participants residing in Australia and job opportunities. The researchers did find out that majority of the participants in the data set have been in Australia since 2007 and have been searching for jobs in their occupation areas since then.

One particular story that catches the attention of the researchers was the story of a participant 1930 which other participants experienced as well. This participant was after skilled assessment positive outcome, he was nominated by WA government on a regional nominated sponsorship as a university lecturer. Since 2010, the participant has been looking for a job in his nominated skilled area but without success. He was advised to go and study to become a teacher and that is what is currently working on at the time of data collection. There were over 15 participants in similar situation that relayed their experience about how they eventually went back to school to gain a qualification outside their skill set areas. In fact, 1928's story captures the story of other fifteen here:

> I arrived in Australia in 2010 as a business analyst and ICT developer in science related field… because I couldn't get a job, I have to take up security for five years and when I got my residency, I opted to go back to school to do nursing…I am sure if you find out from your other interviewees….. our story would be similar… (1928)

Cebulla and Tan (2019) reported lack of job opportunities for skilled migrants in Australia, and that the skilled program seems to be failing to achieve its full potentials, dashing people's hope and personal dreams of advancing their careers in their new home. The research findings from the work of Cebulla and Tan (2019) on skilled migration program revealed that more than 1,700 skilled migrants living in South Australia found 53% felt they were not utilising their skills and abilities, with 44% working in a job different to what they nominated in their visa application. About 15% reported being unemployed at the time of the survey or for most of their time in Australia − double the South Australian jobless rate. This was despite having skills deemed by government planners to be in short supply. The analysed data was direct on lack of job opportunities for the migrants, especially the African migrants in Australia. It was interested to see how the data affirmed the position of Cebulla and Tan (2019) on this issue. From the analysed data on job opportunity, it has been established that years of living in Australia could not determine how successful one would be in securing a job in their skilled areas. If the employers do not want new migrants (Cebulla and Tan, 2019), skilled migration could then be regarded as a sham.

Theme three: Unpronounced subtlety

When the researchers asked the participants to define or explain what they meant by unpronounced subtlety? The interpretation was that even their names and qualifications give them away easily before any employer. When the researchers probed further to understand what was it that gives them away easily, the story of 1940 captured the definition further:

> As a former university lecturer back home in Africa, upon my arrival in WA, a university with a religion connotation advertised for lecturing position in education through a recruitment agency and I applied. The response that I got from the agent was unbecoming of a recruiter….Asking me if I have a work right in Australia and if I have a doctorate…this suggests to me that he didn't even check my resume to find out those information he was asking for. He eventually came out to say it that my name is not a typical of an Australian name (1940)

Peterie and Neil (2020) explains the story of the participants 1940 above as a 'fear of the stranger' that has become a pressing issue in a range of discipline, including those migrants in the asylum category. Jackson (2018) affirmed the issue of Anglo-centric narrative deeply rooted in the formation of the country as a systemic problem that would continually impacting on opportunity for skilled migrants in Australia. Linke and Smith (2009, p.11) captured the concept of unpronounced subtlety as an ideological labelling rooted in the theory of blackness that perceived people of colour of colour as "illegal alien", the enemy "outsider", the "welfare sponger", "pimp", "drug dealer" and the "diseased body". Kosny, Santos & Reid (2017) acknowledged that discrimination remains an issue for a job opportunity among the people of diverse backgrounds in Australia. The study revealed that discrimination based on a person's race or ethnicity impacts on opportunities for newcomers to find good quality jobs (Kosny et al., 2017).

Hear it From the Horses' Mouth: Listening to African Professionals in Australia
Stephen Bolaji | Stella Anyama | Olabisi Kuteyi-Imonitie | Olaoluwa Ibilola | Sulay Jalloh

32

Several studies have reported how people of diverse cultural backgrounds have been singled out and subjected to all sort of discrimination and racism. Much has been said about the Indian community, and other Asian countries in Australia. This study was an eye opener to understand the travails of African professionals in Australia regarding their skilled opportunities in Australia. While some factors such as language barriers has been widely reported as reasons for the lack of opportunities for the Asian migrants, there was no record of language as a problem among the skilled migrants from the African sub-regions. The major reason that could be deduced for this was because majority of the African professionals represented in the Northern Territory and Western Australia are members of the Commonwealth countries that recognise British English Language as their official language of communication even across all levels of educational attainment.

Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

This study has contributed to knowledge on the issue of skilled migration studies and the anticipated challenges facing migrants in their new home. More importantly, it has provided opportunity to document the story of the African skilled professionals and their post arrival in Australia since 2007. The key themes that emerged from the story has informed understanding of the extreme difficulty and frustration experienced by the target participants towards achieving their aspiration of working in their nominated occupations. This study has provided the needed understanding which may have implications on young people's choice as their no success story recorded by their parents. While it has been difficult to shift focus from the challenges facing the African professionals for their lack of job opportunities in the post arrival in Australia, this study recommended some ideas that could be implemented on how to leverage on the pool of skill sets of migrants coming to Australia through the skilled migration pathway.

- A clear policy statement to be included in the skilled assessment result stating that a positive assessment outcome does not translate to a job opportunity for skilled migrants in Australia.

- Australian government through the universities or industries should develop a year work-based training program for skilled migrants in all skilled nominated areas as pathways for future job opportunities.

- Upon successful skilled assessment, applicants should be encouraged to look at the possibility of retraining program to suit in the critical areas of need rather than focusing on their nominated occupation. This can be an incentive needed to motivate people to fill the skill shortage in the regional Australia.

- The study exposes the frustration experienced by African skilled migrants in Australia and the adverse effects on their level of professional success and fulfillment. The findings of this study have implications for counselling. For example, career counselling should be mandatory for every skilled migrant within three months of post arrival in Australia. This would guide migrants to know where they are best suited to advance their career and professional engagement in their new home.

- Through counselling, intervention measures would be planned and integrated into a program to enable African migrants recognise and understand how to develop new beliefs that can influence their perceptions of and interactions with others, and thus affect their new personal and professional lives.

- Counselling programs would help migrants to develop coping strategies to enhance their proper adjustment to their new lives.

- Periodic workshops for employers on workplace diversity should be encouraged to positively influence employers' consideration of the benefits that skilled migrants can add to Australian organisations. This can enhance skilled migrants' contributions to the socio-economic development of the Commonwealth of Australia.

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34

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