

*Review*

## Challenges confronting African students in Malaysia: A case of postgraduate Nigerian students at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) Kuala Lumpur

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Students leaving their home countries to study abroad is a global phenomenon. African students are not exception to this global practice. Many African students do migrate to Western countries to seek for higher education, a tradition that originated during the colonial rule in most parts of Africa. The colonial government did not promote development of higher education in many parts of the continent. Africa with its rapid population growth could not meet the demands of its higher education due to certain internal and external constraints such as; anti intellectual neo-colonial leaders, economic factors, political instability and influence of the international development agencies like the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Agency (IMF), UNESCO and the OECD countries on the region, all these agencies encourage and promote policies of mass education in Africa with specific emphasis on primary and secondary education. The aftermath of the popular 9/11 attack on the US had made many Western countries to introduce stringent measures against emigrants and students going to those countries. Malaysia and other countries in Asia took the advantage and invested in international higher education by providing excellent facilities with moderate tuition fees charges attracted many students from other developing countries. Many students from Africa especially the Nigerians continue to take the advantage provided by the Malaysian higher education sector. Many Nigerian students enrol in various universities and colleges. One of the most preferred university of choice by Nigerians is the famous and prestigious International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) with its main campus located in Gombak, Kuala Lumpur. This particular study was conducted applying a case study method focusing on Nigerian postgraduate students in order to understand some of the challenges facing them at IIUM Gombak campus. A sample of 52 students was randomly selected across all disciplines as informants and their responses analyzed. The study found that the students were confronted with several challenges. The major among these challenges were financial, social and cultural adjustments, separation from families, exploitation by some landlords and their agents and stigmatization of Africans by locals due to negative media reports.

**Key words:** International education, Intercultural challenges and effect of studying abroad.

### INTRODUCTION

Acquiring higher education had continued to be an important aspect to many young and middle age people across the world in order to prepare them to face the

challenges of globalizing world. Acquiring knowledge is not only important but it has become a necessary tool/means for skill acquisition in the emerging world of

knowledge society (Evers, 2001).

Migrating for the sake of acquiring knowledge is not limited to African students only, but has been a long tradition among different communities of the world.

In the recent times many students across the world especially from the developing countries had been trooping to Southeast Asian countries to obtain university degrees predominantly postgraduate degrees such as; master and PhD's. Malaysian universities continued to be most attracting destinations to many students from the middle-east and Africa. Nigerian students were leading the race for the African countries with an estimate of over nine thousand students (9,000) in various universities in Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia (MOHE): 2010). One of the most attractive public universities is the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) which had over two hundred and seventy five registered students as at the end September 2012 (International Student Division (ISD)IIUM: 2012).

There is no doubt coming to foreign university and strange environment to study has its own peculiar social challenges; for instance, there are differences in terms of race, ethnic groups, values, traditions, customs and culture. Even though, Malaysia is classified as multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious society, it still requires a distinct strategy for black African students in order to live peacefully in a new Asian environment where black Africans are not very familiar with. It certainly requires some adjustments especially, socio-cultural adjustment or even adaptation of the prevailing values where necessary in order to fit into the strange environment. Also being a minority race in predominant Asian cultural setting there could be some prejudices or cultural shocks which would eventually needs some adaptation and tolerance in order to achieve ones objective.

The essence of this study is to examine some of the challenges confronting the Nigerian students in Malaysia with specific reference to postgraduate Nigerian students studying at International Islamic university Malaysia (IIUM). The research was carried out using qualitative approach and a sample of fifty two (52) postgraduate Nigerian students was randomly selected across various disciplines as informants and their responses was analyzed.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed in this study was divided into two broad areas; firstly it tries to identify those factors responsible for African students' migration to other Countries to seek education. The literature highlights

factors like deliberate colonial policies of not promoting higher education in most parts of the Africa continent which lead to inadequacy of higher education in the continent (Teferra and Albach, 2003). They further stated that the colonial government in most parts of Africa adopted a policy of sending few individuals to their respective metropolis, notably, Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, German, Italy and Spain in order to acquire higher education. The colonial authorities were only interested in training limited number of African nationals that can assist in administering the colonies. Some colonial powers, notably the Belgians, completely forbade higher education in their colonized territories. Others such as the Spanish, the Portuguese and the French limited the enrollment of Africans to higher education at very low (Teferra and Albach, 2003: 23).

African students population abroad has continued to increase rapidly; reports indicate that African students studying abroad have increased from 2,580 in 1970 to over 1.8 million in 2002 (Africa Statistical Year Book, 2002: 45). In 2002, the number of African students studying in various higher education institutions in the UK alone was estimated at 66,000 students. The figure suggests that one in every 15 international students comes from Africa. The UK is the most favoured destination by many African students, particularly those from the West African countries. Other destinations sought are Australia, the US, Canada, France, Germany and New Zealand (Dzvimbo, 2003: 18-19). Rodney (1972) attributed that most of the colonial policies in the region were deliberately designed to underdeveloped regions. Similarly, Barrow et al. (2003) attribute the inadequacy of higher education in contemporary Africa to those structural policies of international economic regulatory agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2006). and the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in influencing internal education policies of many African countries. These agencies only promote education at the lower level primary and secondary which they consider as catalyst for development of the African countries (Barrow et al., 2003).

The second part of the literature is in relation to challenges faced by international students; most of the literature focuses on social and cultural adjustment, racial discrimination, adaptation to new educational setting, pedagogical issues, language proficiency, weather and climate, adaptation to foreign foods; and financial challenges were identified as major problems (Constantine et al., 2005; Haiwen et al., 2006; Hayes and Lin, 1994; Huang, 2006; Klomegah, 2006; Lee and Rice,

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2007; Lin and Yi, 1997; Myburgh et al., 2006. Also in their study, Szelenyi and Chang (2002) stated that most studies on international students had been limited to socio-cultural adjustment crises, physical well-being, and differences in educational system with rare attention to how students experience challenges. In addition, Sandhu (1994) reported that most of the studies on international students focus on the United States with only few focusing on some European countries. Perhaps this could be attributed to the presence of large number of foreign students in the US than any other country in the world (Sandhu, 1994). Furthermore, beside, having large number of students, the United States is known to have some of the best universities in the world and has invested much in higher education than its European counterparts (University Continuing Education Association, 2006). On general note, finding suggests that the issues on international student are multi-faced, and study on International education is relatively new. Most of the topics remain peripheral with much of the studies done by students in education who are concerned with cross-cultural and international students' counseling (Altbach, 1991). The issues of international students challenge still lie in the hands of researchers and professionals who are communicating with these international students.

Bond and Lemasson (1999) mention that ideally higher education must do better to prepare its beneficiaries to think in both global and differentiated context, help them take a cosmopolitan view, be more aware of cultural differences and promote understanding among various people. Study found that despite the several efforts made by institutions and governments in promoting international higher education, foreign students still under-go different kind of challenges (Leong, 1984). Hull (1972) stated that the degree students experience problems varies from culture to culture. The most important problems seem to be language/communication difficulties, financial problems, adjusting to a new educational system, homesickness, adjusting to new social customs and norms, and for some students, discrimination (Leong, 1984).

### **Challenges confronting Nigerian Postgraduate students in Malaysia**

This chapter addresses several major challenges confronting the Nigerian postgraduate students in Malaysia. The major challenges identified were financial challenges, social and cultural adjustments, separation from families, exploitation by some landlords and their agents and stigmatization of Africans by locals. These challenges will be discussed in turn below.

#### **Financial challenges**

Financial challenge issue was expressed by those

informants on self-sponsorship. The informants on self-sponsorship category expressed financial problems as one of the major constraints affecting their study in Malaysia. They were expecting a lot of opportunities similar to those in European and American higher institutions before coming to Malaysia, such as, research assistant (RA), teaching assistant (TA), research grant (RG), administrative assistant (AA) and several other job opportunities that will assist them to generate extra income as obtainable in many universities in the developed world. They stated that despite it be an international university, which is supported financially by many Muslim countries, the opportunities in university (IIUM) could not match other local universities in Malaysia. In relation to this, Ramadan, one of the informants from the Faculty *Kulliyah* of management sciences had this to say:

One will naturally expect several job opportunities and other extra academic engagements that will further enhance student's financial base. Surprisingly, a reputable international university like IIUM which the name has gone into all parts of the world has very little to offer. Even the normal academic jobs that are common in most universities like teaching assistant, research assistant and others like administrative assistants or assisting staff are not very common here. This in turn has made the students to solely rely on their own finances for everything involving money. The situation is a serious challenge for many international students especially those from very poor countries and poor family background.

Kaseem, another informant from Kulliyah of Architecture had also made a similar observation and stated the following:

*The opportunities in other local universities in Malaysia are better than what we have at IIUM. I have friends who are international students in UPM and UM they are all given research assistants. They received not less than two thousand ringgit monthly and both of them confessed to me that one could hardly see a postgraduate student without financial assistants via research projects. But here in IIUM such opportunities are very few and rare.*

From the above two remarks made by the informants it indicated that IIUM had not provided much opportunities to postgraduate students to make extra-income that will further enhance financial capacity. Several local universities in Malaysia had provided better opportunities like scholarship, research grants or waiving tuition fees to some hardworking students, among others. Such opportunities are limited in IIUM as compared to other local universities. The situation had really caused some financial challenges to some of the Nigerian students that could not get government scholarship. This could be due to restricted resources available to the self-sponsored students. They also express some recent uncertainties in the economy especially, the gradually escalation of cost

of living in Malaysia. Some informants expressed fear and possibility of sudden upward review in tuition fees and other services by the university authority which could eventually jeopardize their original plan.

### Social and cultural adjustments

On socio-cultural aspects, they express difficulty in understanding the nature of the Malay people and the culture. The Malay people on average were known as very peaceful, calm, quite and highly reserved; they maintained a low level of interaction with their guests (foreigners). This has created a notion among some segments of Nigerians as not a healthy signal or simple perceived as a sign of hatred. The situation differs from what is known to Nigerians and indeed to Africa in general, where strangers would be spoken to frequently, and would be asked to feel free or even encourage to ask questions on something they do not really understand. The friendship between the Malay communities and outsiders is very minimal. Many informants believe that the Malays are reserved throughout their daily conversation with them. As one of the informants Abdulkareem from the faculty *Kulliyyah* of IRKHS puts it in the following manner:

*The Malaysian society and culture is very difficult to penetrate or assimilate. It is like a closed and reserved society. One of the challenges we faced is that being a total stranger in another country, one may not rule out the possibilities of seeking advice, assistance or help in times of need from the host community. Unfortunately is very difficult to communicate with them when there is problem. The surprising thing is not only with the foreigners, but even with the Chinese and Indians whom they had lived together for long. This was due to the nature of the Malays in general, i.e., reserved in many ways. In other words they will neither harm nor help in time of need, but in general they are very peaceful people. As long as you don't trespass to their territory you will live in peace with them.*

This statement was further corroborated by another informant who said Malaysian society particularly, Kuala Lumpur is increasingly becoming more like the Western or European societies; despite being a Muslim country, individualism is becoming prominent way of live to many. As one of the informant Abdulkareem from the Institute of education said:

*I will not be surprised when people don't care about others especially a society like Malaysia where the influence of the West is becoming increasingly part of their life. Even though Malaysia is a Muslim country but the trend that Malaysia is moving towards must compromise some its past cultural heritage and religious*

*values due to modernization and urbanization. If you look carefully at the Malay people you will understand that they are only facing their own business without intruding to other people personal affairs or lifestyle. They are not doing this because we are foreigners, but even between themselves the Malays the interaction is limited. Don't be surprised to see when someone does not know his immediate next door neighbour here in Kuala Lumpur. Things could be different in the Kampung. Therefore I will personally attribute this problem to westernization and urbanization influences that is taking over the Malaysian society.*

Even though, there is wide communication gave between the locals (Malays) and the internationals it was generally belief that the Malay people are peaceful as stated by the informants. Another thing is that Malaysia is past developing society with much attributes of Western influences and values overriding its culture and traditions. One should not expect the usual communal traditions which emphasize brotherhood, collective welfare, collective bond, common good, love, care, affection and concerned for other peoples wellbeing which are typical features of a communal societies or communality. A popular 19<sup>th</sup> Century sociologists Emile Durkheim (1997) in his book *Division of labour in Societies* postulated that the one of the most important features of organic solidarity is the emphasis on individualism rather than communalism further promoted by industrialism and urbanism. This is in contrast with the prevailing tradition of communalism persisting in many parts of Africa and Nigeria in particular. Even though, many parts of Africa were colonized for decades by the European powers (just like they did to Asia and America), including other influences like globalization, westernization and urbanization, there is limitation of these influences on African people (Mazrui, 1987). There are some interesting and unique things about the culture of people of Africa and Nigerians in particular. Nigeria people relate to each other despite the complex nature of the society: with its multi lingual and multi- religious society, the people still relate closely with one another. Another issue in general, Africa and Africans had suffered and exploited more than any other continents in hands of the European powers from the era of slave trade to colonialism and even beyond (postcolonial) (Rodney, 1972) The historical antecedents and the trauma of the past cannot easily be wiped-out nor will it be forgotten easily. It is self evident that Africans had some bitter experiences in the hands of Western powers. For that reasons up to this moment the ordinary people of Africa do not completely succumb to many Western values despite these values are being perceived as superior in parts of the world (Mazrui, 1987:26). It is obvious that communalism which is being perceived as inferior culture (primitive) still prevails in most parts of Africa. With respect to all opinions, it cannot be fair to expect same values in other societies.

## Separation from families

This is another serious challenges confronting the Nigerian postgraduate students in Malaysia. Majority of the informants interviewed in this study were married students. They migrated for their postgraduate education as a requirement for their career development, as many of them were teaching staff in various universities, colleges of education and polytechnics in Nigeria. As part of manpower development the Nigerian government has been sponsoring its teaching staff in higher institutions for training abroad through its recently established tertiary education trust fund known commonly as TETFUND. Many of the informants are beneficiaries of the TETFUND. These category of informants belonged to the elite community and were regarded as middle class people in Nigeria's structure of stratification. According to some of the informants the absence from the family for long period causes some periodic psychological and emotional traumatic effect on them. One of the informants Mohammad, a master student with the faculty *Kulliyah* of Architecture expressed his view as follows:

*It is not easy to be away from one's family. Circumstances made us to be a 'married bachelor'. Living like a single person is really a difficult phenomenon. At times I become confused, wondering and could not concentrate on my studies. Most especially, in the recent time, my mind frequently goes to family. Separation from my family is affecting me emotionally, socially and morally, furthermore, finding a suitable accommodation outside the campus is increasingly becoming expensive and difficult. It would be better if the IIUM management could provide accommodation exclusively for the married students like me on campus.*

Similarly, narrating from Islamic point. One of the informants Uztaz Habibullah from the faculty *Kulliyah* of IRKHS stated that Islam does not encourage any individual to stay away from his family for more than a year except under absolute necessity (*darura*). He said:

*Under Islamic teachings, is not ideal for a family man to stay away from his family for more than a year unless where the situation really warrants (Darura). He believed that long time detachment from family has negative implications i.e morally, mentally, psychologically and emotionally as well. Islam always has a vision, it does not create chances of falling into indecent or immoral acts, it foresees the ultimate implications of an act before it occurs. And certainly a long time absence from each other by married couple has many implications on their marital life, such situation can only be accepted on absolute necessity.*

However, the unmarried students did not express the separation from their main families as a challenging issue.

This could be attributed to lack of direct responsibility or some obligatory roles primarily bestowed on the married informants. The foregoing discussion had clearly shown that many Nigerian students can hardly visit their home countries during the vacations. Reasons for this include, distance, air fare and other travelling expenses involved. As my informant Abdurazaaq from the faculty *Kulliyah* of Engineering commented:

*No matter what home is, home is still home. At times I feel very bored and keep thinking about my family at home. It would be good to pay a visit once in a while. Unfortunately, due to the high cost of air fare, distance and other expenses involved, I have no other options, but to stay. I believed the regular visits are important in order to sustain the family tie. In fact, one of the great challenges I faced at times is being nostalgic.*

## Exploitations by some landlords and their agents

Many of the informants predominantly the married ones live off campus as there was no accommodation provided for the married students within the campus. For that reason, all married students must look for residential accommodation outside the campus. Many students prefer to have accommodation somewhere close to the campus, in order to have easy access and transportation to the campus. The high demand for accommodation was noted by many landlords and their agents within the Gombak district where the IIUM main campus is located. The recognition that many students like to live nearby the campus encourages some landlords and their agents to take advantage of the demand by resorting to charging higher rates on foreign students and particularly the Africans. This testimony was made by several informants. Expressing his views on the issue, one of the informants Abdulmumin, a postgraduate student undergoing master programme at the faculty *Kulliyah* of Architecture had this to say:

*It is very sad indeed, to see the attitudes of some local residence particularly the landlords and estate agents, exploiting the international students of African origin. They usually exploited them by charging extra rentals because they knew that the students had no other option or immediate alternative accommodation than to succumb. I suggest the university should take into cognizance the magnitude of the problem with a view to provide accommodation to its married students.*

Similarly, Mohammed from faculty *Kulliyah* of Laws, had a firsthand experience with regard to house agents in Gombak area, he said:

*I came to Malaysia for my postgraduate programme with my family i.e., my wife and two daughters. Is indeed very*

*sad and unfortunate that many landlords and their estate agents look at us either rich or in Malaysia getting free money, they always try to exploit us by charging extra. I stayed with my family in a hotel room for more than a month without getting accommodation. Later, I came across a Malay guy, Ahmad and he introduced me to some agents and eventually, secured a flat at Mutiara Gombak for RM 550 per month. At that time the actual rent payable was only RM500 per month. The agent gave me some two weeks to fix the house. After I waited for two weeks, he unilaterally violated the agreement and insisted that I must pay RM650 plus extra of RM100 for the legal documentation. The agent took advantage of my desperation.*

### **Stigmatization of Africans**

Aside from the foregoing challenges, several informants expressed their dissatisfaction with negative perception towards them. Several labels were used against them such as criminals, parasites and other derogatory names. This misconception is very much related to the role played by the media especially the electronic media particularly in disseminating news or reports on Africans particularly, Nigerians. The media usually portray Africans as leading figures in all crimes. Some of the informants stated that crime has no boundary, country, colour or ethnicity or race. Crime is a universal phenomenon. A serious crimes like drug trafficking, money laundering and scamming in general were normally organized crimes, involving chain or group of criminals in order to successfully execute it. One of the informants Hassan, from the Kulliyah of Information and communications technology (ICT) had this to say:

*Some of the Malaysian media especially the print media (newspapers) are very political and bias in portraying stories with regard to Nigerians in particular. For instance, where a crime is committed by six people and only one of them is Nigerian or African and the five others are local Malaysians, they would portray the Nigerian as the principal actor in the crime, even in a situation where he/she played a subordinate or secondary role in such crime. The unfair reports and exaggerations by some media outlets had contributed in elevating negative impression on Nigerians.*

In relation to the above, Abdulrazaq, who is currently a registered PhD candidate with the Institute of education commented:

*I will not support those Nigerians coming here to commit various crimes. In my opinion they should be dealt with accordingly and be given full weight punishment as been provided by the Malaysian law, including death penalty where necessary, so that it will serve as deterrence to*

*other people.*

It is evident from the discussion above that the media has grossly contributed in constructing an ill notion and stigmatization of Nigerians and Africans in general. Abdulrazaq with the Kulliyah of ICT said that:

*Whenever, there is ten locals and two Nigerians involve in a crime, the newspaper would only read "Nigerians and others were nabbed in drug deal". Many expressed dissatisfaction about the way reports are being reported by the Malaysian press. The most print media houses in Malaysia were not given fair treatment as far as reports concerning African communities and Nigerians in particular. Sometimes Nigerians would be caught for immigration offences such as, visa over stay but they would be portrayed the culprit as drug dealer.*

The negative stereotype against Africans and Nigerians in particular is also due to unfamiliarity and lack of exposure to other cultures. Majority of the informants believed that many local Malaysians do not know the differences of being African or Nigerian. They thought all Africans are Nigerians. Presumably, they knew Nigerians due to their high demographic composition in Malaysia, global sports tournaments like the world cup and other popular leagues with many Nigerian soccer professionals and the active role of some local media houses in propagating issues relating to Nigerians had created an impression that an average African is Nigerian. One of the informants, Mohammed from the Kulliyah of IRK narrated thus:

*Asia and Southeast Asia in particular are not a popular destination to many Africans as compared to Europe and America where they have native Africans as citizen and had many centuries of contact with Africans. The inflow of African citizens to Asian countries is very recent phenomenon, which is believed to be considerably motivated by globalization of economies. The average Asians and Malaysians in particular, have no much knowledge about Africa, many of them sometimes equate Africa with Nigeria despite, Africa, is the second largest continents of the world. In addition, there are differences between the Africans and the Asians in terms of physical traits and cultural difference therefore I will not blame them for such shortsighted opinion.*

Other informants completely looked at the whole scenario from a distinct perspective. They argued that whatever abuse or mistreatment meted on Nigerians by any foreign country is due to irresponsibility and failure of the country's leadership. Nigeria is one of the richest countries and sixth largest oil producing country in the world, but unfortunately, the citizens were rated among the most poor. The leadership of the country had failed woefully in providing their citizens with basic infrastructure for

development particularly education, health, energy and employment. As a result of these prostration and lack of confidence in the governance, many Nigerians were forced to migrate to other countries to enhance their living and to explore opportunities. Abdul Qadeer, a post-graduate student from the faculty *Kulliyyah* of IRKHS had this to say;

*No matter what kind of treatment we are given, we should not blame others for such. We have to blame our own recent leaders, they undermine the country through various corrupt practices, like self enrichment, looting the government funds and failure to enhance infrastructure in the country. Even though, Nigeria is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest oil producing country in world, but they failed to develop basic infrastructure, such as, education, healthcare, energy, employment and the country's economy at large. I am very sure in the last 20 years if you tell a Nigerian to come to Malaysia he will rather pay a ransom not to come. However, things have changed today. Many have migrated to Malaysia for education as well as other opportunities.*

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The discussion/findings above suggested that the African students, particularly Nigerian students were confronted with several challenges in Malaysia. These challenges cut across specific individual students as well as generality of the Nigerian students. The challenges include financial challenge, socio-cultural adjustment, separation from family, exploitation by landlords and their agents and stigmatization and stereotype towards Africans particularly Nigerians in Malaysia.

In relation to financial challenges, there are three categories of students, government sponsored students, family sponsored students and self-sponsored students. The latter refers to those who made their personal savings to finance their postgraduate education by themselves. The financial challenge is predominantly among the self-sponsored students as many of them had to resign from their work place to further their studies in order to attain better position and income. The expectation of these self-sponsored students was to get some part time academic or administrative jobs, like research grants or scholarships while on study. However, such expectations were not adequately provided by the IIUM; this in turn had compelled them to engage in some private tuition, proof reading or editing of thesis in order to finance their study and ultimately make some personal savings.

Aside of financial challenges, cultural barrier is also identified as another challenge experienced by many Nigerian postgraduate students in Malaysia. Many of the Nigerian students are willing to have a close interaction with the local Malay students in order to understand the

Malay culture and society through their interaction with the local students. Unfortunately, most of the local students are somehow preserved in terms of showing any interests of having close interactions with the international students. This had created a wide gap between the locals and the international students. Other challenges noted, is their inability to understand the local language particularly the Malay language which is the official and lingua-franca in Malaysia. Although Malaysia is known to be multi-racial and multi-cultural society, the fact is that there is a wider communication gap even among the local ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indians) despite they live in harmony. There is no doubt harmony subsists but also there is a clear cut difference between the major ethnics groups (the Malay, Chinese and the Indians); each group prefers associating with their own kinship members.

Therefore the international students should not feel rejected but instead it should be seen as a common norm and practice peculiar to Malaysia. Another reason, could be due to the fact that the Asian society in general is not all that complex or multi-racial society compared to other regions of the world like Africa, United States or Canada. Generally, is hard for the Malays to easily assimilate or accept a strange culture outside their own enclaves, but on average they do not reject people. It can easily be said they are preserved people.

In addition, separation from families is another great challenge to the Nigerian postgraduate students. Majority of the postgraduate students were married couples; is hard for many of them to mobilize their families to Malaysia due to air-fare and other financial implications. The separation from their respective families creates a kind of psychological and emotional difficulties. Furthermore, due to non-provision of accommodation facilities on campus, married students had to look for accommodation outside the campus, with specific preference to get nearby the campus for easy access. This had created opportunities for some landlords and their agents to resort to exploitation of international students by charging high rental fees when given-out their accommodation for rent.

Finally, there is increasing stereotype and stigma on Africans in general and particularly Nigerians due to media propaganda and distorted information about Nigerians and Africans. Many of them accuse the media in Malaysia of been bias in reporting all negative reports about Africans specifically where Nigerians are involved. The newspaper were accused of not being fair to Nigerians; they resort to exaggerating negative stories about Nigerians and also ignoring or failing to acknowledge their positive contributions to the Malaysian society and economy.

In conclusion, communication is one of the most important means that can facilitate better understanding among individuals as well as societies. It helps in enhancing relationship, eliminates unnecessary suspicion between the emigrants and the local population in every



country. The problem of Nigerians in Malaysia is that of communication; the issue of international crime is not confined to a particular country, tribe, region or people. Many of Nigerians involving in various criminal acts were usually fronting for others. There is need to educate and sensitize the local people to appreciate the positive contributions of migrants to their host communities. This is in parallel with the finding expressed by International organization for migration (World Migration Report, 2011: 12).

### Conflict of Interests

The author have not declared any conflict of interests.

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